

Tips to Prevent Thefts from Vehicles:

It's easy to prevent being a victim of car related thefts: Most burglars will not break into a car if they can't see what they're getting – **Don't leave your valuables in plain sight!**

Some police departments have instituted a "If I were a thief" program, where notices that look just like parking tickets are being distributed with this message: "If I were a thief I would have broken a window, entered your car and taken..." Then there is a space for the officer to write in the valuables that were left in plain view in the citizen's car.

Steps to help prevent your contents from being stolen from your vehicle:

- 1 When you park the car, remove cellular phones, cassette players and other valuable possessions. Do not leave gift-wrapped packages, or cameras lying on the seat. Lock all valuables in your trunk or glove box BEFORE you reach your destination or take them inside with you at your destination. Remember, thief's stake out parking lots and easily spot persons bending over or appearing to be placing items under or between seats.
- 2 Thieves watching parking lots also will note women leaving a vehicle without a purse. This is often a sign that it is still in the car. Most of the time it is easy to spot a purse strap or hidden item sticking out from under a car seat.
- 3 Since so many people now drive sport utility vehicles or minivans that do not have a trunk, a simple solution is to carry only what is needed for that trip or errand in a pocket. Cash, a credit card and a driver's license do not take up much room when folded together.
- 4 Don't leave an auto in unattended public parking lots for an extended period. A car is five times more likely to be stolen from an unattended lot than from the street or attended lot.
- 5 If possible, park your car in a lot where you don't have to leave your keys.
- 6 Never attach a tag with your name and address to your key ring. If the keys are lost or stolen, the tag will lead the thief directly to your car and your home. If you have to leave your keys with a parking attendant, leave only the ignition key.
- 7 Be sure to remove automatic garage door openers from the car, as this could give thieves easy access to your house.
- 8 At night, park in well-lit areas with lots of people around.
- 9 If your car is stored in a carport or parked near your house, leave your exterior lights (front and back) on throughout the night. Consider replacing the light fixture closest to your car with a motion detector unit. The light will be off routinely, but will come on if the car is approached.
- 10 Consider replacing the door lock knobs with smooth knobs that are more difficult to open from the outside.
- 11 Consider adding a car alarm system, but remember to be neighborly and respond to the alarm promptly should it be set off.
- 12 Be alert to your surroundings of people around your vehicle. If there are any suspicious persons or occupied vehicles hanging around the lot, leave immediately and call police.

- 13 Keep your windows rolled up and your doors locked whenever you leave your vehicle. If you have a security system on your vehicle, make sure it is operating properly.
- 14 Keep records of the serial numbers of all stereo equipment. You may also want to engrave your driver's license number on your property. This will help police identify the owner in the event the property is located.
- 15 Report all suspicious persons to a police officer immediately.
- 16 If you find your vehicle broken into, do not touch anything and call police immediately. Be sure you have made a copy of all items with account numbers so that you can give these to police and notify financial institutions of the theft without delay.