

Prevent Auto Theft and Vehicle Prowls

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As a thief drives or walks around looking for a vehicle to steal, he wants to find one that he can open up and start as quickly as possible. One of the best opportunities is a vehicle that is left running to warm up and defrost the windows while the owner finishes their cup of coffee inside of their warm, cozy house. Officers in the City of Everett respond to these thefts every morning during the winter months. Never leave your motor vehicle running unattended, even if it is just for a few minutes.

There are several items on the market that can help prevent your vehicle from being stolen. A steering wheel locking device is an item that attaches across your steering wheel and does not allow the steering wheel to be turned until the device is removed. A

steering wheel locking device can be cut with a hacksaw,



but thieves want to bring as little attention to themselves as possible. An alarm system in the car is also a deterrent. Here again, an alarm can be disabled, but it takes time and brings attention to the would-be-thief.

There are several different reasons a thief would want to steal your car. The first is to take anything of value that can be found

inside of the vehicle. Purses, wallets, stereos, sports equipment, tools, etc. If you do nothing else, form the habit of never, and we emphasize never, leaving these types of things in your vehicle, especially where they are visible to someone looking into your car. This is true even when you park your car at your home, especially if you have to park on the street, or if you

have an open driveway or carport that your vehicle is parked in. Not only are these things attractive and



offer an incentive for someone to break into your car, but if your checkbook or wallet is stolen you will, in all likelihood, become the victim of forgery and identity theft.

Another reason for the taking of motor vehicles is joyriding. We find this popular with the younger thieves who want to get from point A to point B. They will steal a car in Everett to drive to Seattle and dump it. When it is time to come back home they will steal another car in Seattle, and that vehicle will be dumped in the Everett area. The final reason is to be chopped up and parted out, or stripped and bought back through the insurance auctions. These vehicles are rarely ever recovered.

In the Seattle Metropolitan area, older Toyotas and Hondas are the most common stolen vehicles. The simple reason is

that they are easier to steal. The only item a thief needs is a set of various keys that have been filed down. These keys are called "shaved" or "jiggle keys" and can be inserted into the door lock and ignition. The key is jiggled around until the lock turns and the door opens or the vehicle starts.

As the auto industry comes up with more ways to protect our cars, the thieves think of more ways to overcome these deterrents. If we take a few basic steps, we can prevent from becoming the victim.

Vehicles Left Running

Each year thousands of cars left running unattended for a few moments are stolen by car thieves. Examples of this include warming a vehicle up in a driveway before leaving for the day or stopping for a cup of coffee at a local convenience store. It takes the average car thief less than a minute to steal a locked car. Imagine how long it takes to steal one that has been left running!

This winter, patrol officers will be on the look out for vehicles left idling unattended. They will leave a friendly notice reminding drivers that warming their vehicle up unattended places them at a higher risk for auto theft. Help us by locking your car doors and taking your keys with you when you park.