

# Auto Theft Tips

- 1. Do not leave or "hide" your car keys in or on your car.** Every day we have vehicles that are stolen by using a key that the victim left in the car. Suspects are very skillful at finding the hidden key. Often a suspect who breaks into a vehicle to steal items will find the key or a firearm and the result is more crimes.
- 2. Lock your vehicle and engage your alarm system.** When a car thief has to force entry by breaking a window, he takes more risks at getting caught, both on the scene and while driving. Driving around town in a vehicle with a shattered window is a pretty good indicator that the vehicle is stolen. Alarms do deter some thieves. A suspect will often just go to another unsecured or unprotected vehicle.
- 3. Secure your vehicle tag with one-way screws.** Most suspects steal a tag to put on a stolen vehicle. Making it difficult to remove your tag increases the chance the tag will not be changed which makes it easier for police to spot.
- 4. Reduce attention to your vehicle.** Do not leave ANYTHING in plain view in the seats of your vehicle. Firearms, packages, cellular phones, purses etc. draw attention to your vehicle. Never leave the title to your vehicle in the vehicle itself. This makes it easier for someone to forge your name and sell your vehicle.
- 5. If you have your vehicle "For Sale by Owner" be careful who "test drives" your vehicle.** Do not assume the vehicle he is driving when he comes to your house is his. It could be stolen. Ask for identification before handing your keys over.
- 6. Any extra security devices are a good idea.** There is lots of information on the different types of anti-theft devices. Everything from steering wheel locks to hidden cut off switches can give you added protection.
- 7. Call us about suspicious activity.** We frequently interview suspects whose parents, friends, and neighbors have knowledge or have seen the suspects in driving numerous vehicles on their neighborhood streets. Suspects use dent-pullers and screwdrivers to "hot-wire" the ignitions. If friends pick up your kids and have windows that are broken from their vehicles, be suspicious. A screwdriver in the ignition or a missing ignition are significant indicators of a stolen vehicle. You should be suspicious when you see this in your home or neighborhood.
- 8. Lock your car and take the keys.** We still have suspects who hang around shopping centers, gas stations, convenience stores, day cares, etc. waiting for a victim who leaves his or her car keys in the vehicle while paying for gas, "running in for a minute", etc. **Do not be a victim. Lock your car and take the keys!**