



Preventing Car Break-Ins and Car Theft

With budget cuts preventing the Sheriff's Office from responding to and investigating many property crimes, we are looking towards prevention and education to help prevent our community members from being victimized. Many of our rural communities have been hit hard by car thefts recently. Car thieves are finding new ways every day to victimize you, and the items they steal from your vehicle could lead to other crimes such as identify theft and fraud. Being the victim of car theft or having your vehicle broken into can feel like an invasion of space and personal safety, but there are things we can do as community members to deter thieves. Here are a few tips to keep your vehicle and its contents safe:

- Park in well-lit areas away from larger vehicles, trees, and bushes that may offer privacy for a thief to break into your car. Many retail parking lots have security cameras that you can park in view of for added security and deterrent purposes.
- Roll up your windows and lock your doors. Almost 25% of theft from vehicles is from unlocked cars. Don't make it easy for someone to steal from you!
- Don't keep **anything** in your car. What you consider to be a non-valuable item may be what prompts someone to break into your car.
- If you have to keep items in your vehicle, store them away in the trunk or other non-visible area of your vehicle prior to your arrival. Thieves watch people in parking lots and may see you stashing your valuables in the trunk.
- Remove or hide electronic accessories such as MP3 adapters and navigation system cords and holders. These items make a thief believe that the electronic devices are someone in your vehicle which may prompt a break-in.
- Park in a garage if you have one. Don't leave your keys in your vehicle, even if it is in the garage.

- Keep a spare key in your wallet, not on your vehicle. Thieves know where to look for hidden keys.
- Utilize a steering wheel locking device. It's a cost effective device that deters car break-ins and car theft. The Sheriff's Office sells a steering wheel locking device called *The Club* to community members at cost, which is \$12.50. If you are interested in purchasing one, please call Sgt Carrie Carver at 541-682-4179.
- Chain motorcycles to stationary objects when they are unattended. If you are riding in a group, chain your bikes together.
- Use your car alarm, and consider getting a car alarm if you don't already have one. Thieves don't like noise or anything that brings attention to them.