

A theft from your vehicle can happen at any hour of the day or night. By reporting suspicious activity, *while it is occurring*, you could save yourself or your neighbor from being victimized. **If you see or hear something that seems unusual or suspicious;**

*Try to get a description of the suspects and their vehicle from inside of your house.  
Call 911 immediately and stay on the line---*

- If you hear glass breaking (a popping sound)
- You see someone looking into cars or ducking around them
- Someone tampering with a car
- A person carrying tools or property that doesn't fit the setting in your neighborhood
- Activity that "just doesn't look or feel right"

Don't even *think* you are "bothering" the police by calling them to report suspicious activity. It's their job to detect and apprehend criminals--but they need your help because they can't be in everyone's neighborhood 24 hours a day. If your suspicions prove to be unfounded, you shouldn't feel embarrassed. The police prefer that you call them so they can investigate the suspicious activity. Remember,

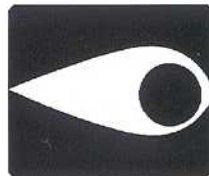
*It is more desirable to be mistaken, than to be a victim!*

If you locate property that may have been stolen or discover that you have been the victim of a theft from your vehicle, call your local law enforcement agency immediately.

### WHAT ADDITIONAL SECURITY MEASURES CAN I TAKE?

Outdoor security lighting left on from dusk to dawn is inexpensive and also helps to displace such crimes as theft, vandalism and burglary. In addition, many citizens are now equipping their cars with alarm systems. In some cases, the value of the vehicle and/or its contents are worth the cost of installation.

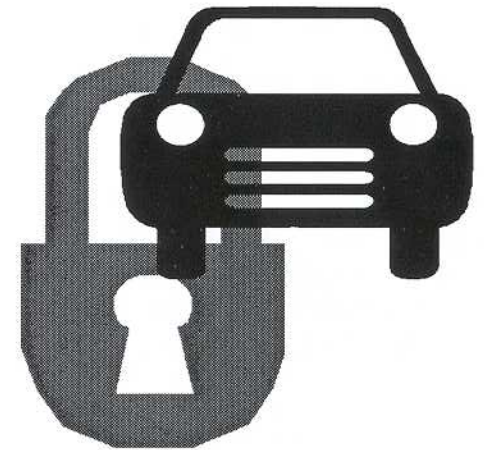
You can increase the chances of your property being recovered if it is stolen by recording the serial number and marking the item with an **Operation Identification** number available at no charge from the police or sheriff's department in the city you reside in. To obtain additional crime prevention information and literature at no cost--call your local Crime Prevention Specialist, Minnesota Crime Watch, or your insurance agent.



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CRIME WATCH

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# THEFT FROM VEHICLES



## An auto owners guide to prevention

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Thefts from vehicles have dramatically increased over the past several years. Many of the thefts occur in our own driveways. The popularity of radar detectors and expensive sound systems, which are quickly and easily stolen, has seemed to encourage car prowlers. Your insurance company and your local police and sheriff departments would like to help you avoid the frustration and inconvenience of being the victim of this type of crime. Please take a few minutes to read this information and pass it along to others.

## COMMON METHODS OF ENTRY INTO VEHICLES

- Smash out a window
- Use a tool to unlock the door
- Crawl through a pick up truck topper and force or pry the sliding window
- Enter vehicle in unsecured garage
- No force necessary, door unlocked

## THE MOST LIKELY TARGETS FOR THEFT

- Any vehicle with a visible radar detector, visible power cord, or mount
  - Vehicles containing a brief case, purse, gym bag or other valuables left in sight
  - Vehicles equipped with a mobile phone
  - Vehicles left running unattended at convenience stores and other public places
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## PROPERTY MOST OFTEN STOLEN FROM VEHICLES

- Gym bags
- Brief cases
- Purses
- Sunglasses
- Radar detector and power cord
- Cassette tapes and Compact Disks
- AM/FM radios, cassette or CD players, speakers, boosters, and equalizers
- Car batteries (especially in the colder months)
- Handtools, toolboxes, power tools
- Spare change from glove box/ash tray
- Checkbooks
- Auto parts
- Rings/watches
- Camera gear

## WHAT DO THIEVES DO WITH THE PROPERTY THEY STEAL?

Many things can be sold to other thieves or to someone who is "looking for a deal". Other items can be sold for cash at pawn shops. Some thieves *look* for purses to steal. They will immediately make large purchases on the credit cards and alter the victim's ID so they or an accomplice can forge the checks. This can cause an incredible amount of worry, hassle and inconvenience for a victim. The thief doesn't care about you, your feelings or the hardship the theft will put you through. His or her point of view is, "Why should I pay for something when I can steal it?"

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## HOW CAN I PREVENT A THEFT FROM MY VEHICLE?

To deter a criminal from breaking into your car, lock your vehicle and put valuables out of sight, preferably in the trunk or bring them into the house at night. Thieves will break into any vehicle if they think there is something of value to be stolen from it. Thieves know that checkbooks, wallets, watches, calculators, and other small electronics may be contained in a brief case. Similarly, they are aware that many gym bags contain valuable jewelry, keys, cash, and "Walkman" type radios, etc.

Thieves have also told police that many times they look for suction cup markings on the windshield which would indicate a mount for a radar detector. If they see such marks, they may break into the vehicle and search for the radar detector. A visor mounted radar detector may prove to be a less visible device, providing it is removed, along with the power cord, when the vehicle is parked.

After removing valuables from view, lock your car doors. This will discourage some of the more casual thieves, the ones looking for the *opportunity* to steal. It will also deter those who would go into an unlocked car to look for a trunk or hood release button in order to steal auto parts or the contents of the trunk.

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