

## VEHICLE CRIME

The South Bay and surrounding communities continue to see an increase in vehicle burglaries and thefts from vehicles. These crimes are spread out all over the area, during all times of the day, and all days of the week.

Law Enforcement is doing all they can, but need the public's help in preventing and stopping these crimes.

Most of these crimes occur because people leave car doors unlocked or leave valuables in plain sight. The most likely targets for theft are briefcases, purses, wallets, expensive sunglasses, watches, camera gear, MP3 players, PDAs, gym bags, sports equipment, auto parts, CDs, speakers, power tools, spare change, and mail.

Vehicle burglaries & thefts from vehicles are crimes of opportunity, and carelessness often results in vehicles being broken into. However, citizens can minimize their chances of being a victim by taking a few simple steps.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Keep all car doors and windows closed and locked – even if it's a quick errand. This sounds like common sense, but about 60% of vehicle burglaries are from vehicles where the doors were not locked or a window was down.
- Do not leave valuables or packages in plain sight in your vehicle. This may sound like a simple solution, but it happens all the time where items of value are left in plain view. It automatically makes you a target. If you must leave valuables in the car, put them in the trunk.
- If your vehicle has a built in security system, use it. If you don't have a security system installed, it is worth the investment - it may also qualify you for a discount on your auto insurance.
- Park your vehicle in an area that is visible to the public and well-lit at night. If possible, park your car in the garage. If garage parking is not available, the next best option is to park your car in the driveway and install motion-sensor security lighting on your home.
- Never leave an electronic garage opener in the car. It can provide a thief easy access to your home.  
Headed to the beach? Burglars are, too. When you pack the car, bring as few items as possible with you - leave jewelry, watches, laptops, etc at home. Keep any necessary valuables like keys, identification, and credit cards on your person.
- Keep a list of serial numbers (include make and model information, as well) for the commonly used electronic equipment you may keep in the car, like CD players, stereo faceplates, MP3 players, etc. Keep a copy of this inventory in a safe place such as a safe deposit box. We also suggest that you engrave your driver's license number on your valuables to aid in their recovery, should they be lost or stolen.
- If your car is burglarized, please report it to the police department immediately.

These simple steps should be used whenever you park your car, whether you are just "running in for a minute" or parking for the evening.

In addition to protecting your own property from criminals, you can be a good neighbor by watching out for suspicious persons or activities in your area. No one knows a neighborhood better than the

people who live there, so Law Enforcement depends on the assistance of concerned, responsible residents to report suspicious persons or activity. If you see something that looks suspicious, report it at once! - if you witness a crime in progress call 9-1-1 immediately!

### **WHAT IS SUSPICIOUS**

- A person looking into parked cars may be looking for a car to steal or for valuables left in plain view inside.
- The sound of breaking glass or car alarm could mean a vehicle break-in.
- Any vehicle without lights at night, cruising slowly, or following a course that seems aimless or repetitive is suspicious in any location. Occupants may be "casing" for a burglary.
- Persons walking around a neighborhood pulling on car door handles may be looking for unlocked vehicles to steal from.

Ultimately the timely response of Law Enforcement towards any crime relies on you the citizen, as it is you who are on the front lines of crime prevention within your neighborhood.