

Property Crime Prevention



Office of the 13th Judicial District

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Vandalism Prevention Tips

An empty campus can be a temptation for both mischievous kids and adults. The warm summer months allow for late outside activities and often the neighborhood children are finding themselves on school campuses looking for something to do. What can you do to protect your campus from vandalism? Here are a few suggestions:

- Check to be sure your fire and intrusion alarms are working properly. Repair all elements that are malfunctioning.
- Check lighting on campus. Replace all burned out bulbs. Install lighting in currently dark areas. Consider installing motion sensor lights.
- Add or increase nightly patrols of campus, especially around the 4th of July when fireworks are plentiful.
- Cut back weeds and other vegetation around the campus to reduce fire risk and hiding places.
- Shut Down the gas supply to science rooms when school is out of session.
- Remove garbage cans when school is out of session. Garbage has been used as an ignition source for arson firms.
- Check fences and gates for damage. Make repairs and keep gates locked.
- Get to know your neighbors and ask them to help keep an eye on your campus.
- Keep window coverings closed to hide room contents.
- Store high value equipment (computers, TVs etc.) in secure rooms, preferable without windows.

EXTERIOR DOORS AND WINDOWS

- Lock all doors and windows at night and whenever leaving your house, even if it's just for a few minutes
- All exterior doors should be solid core or metal clad.
- All exterior doors should have a deadbolt with a minimum 1" throw.
- Inspect exterior door frames. Consider reinforcing the strike area of wood door frames with a steel strap to hinder forced entries. Gaps between door and frame should be minimal to ensure that latches and bolts are fully engaged.
- Install a wide-angle peephole at exterior doors.
- Install a porch light at exterior doors.
- Glass panes at exterior doors and windows should be laminated glass to prevent shattering.
- All operable windows should have an adjustable stop to allow fresh air but still prevent entry. Use a metal rod if there is no stop.
- Install opaque window coverings such as drapes or blinds. Sheer curtains are attractive but they allow burglars to look inside.

GARAGE AND SLIDING DOORS

- Doors leading from garage to the interior should be treated as exterior doors.
- Lock the garage door. Do not rely on an automatic opener to secure the door.
- Install pins or screws to prevent sliding doors from being lifted out of their tracks.
- Replace single pane plate glass or tempered glass panes at sliding doors with laminated glass.
- Verify that sliding doors are installed correctly. If the sliding half is on the outside it can be easily lifted out of the track.

INDOOR SECURITY

- Install timers on several interior lights, radio, and/or television. Schedule them for different times.
- Etch or mark your valuables with your driver's license number, preceded with the letters "CA". Post Operation ID decals on doors and windows.
- Perform a complete inventory of your valuables and photograph them. Keep a second copy of the inventory at an alternate location and keep both up to date. Record the make, model, and serial numbers of appliances and electronics.
- Consider having a dog as an indoor companion. A barking dog, regardless of size and breed, is an effective deterrent. Note that dog doors are not secure.
- Consider installing a home security system. Even if it is not remotely monitored, the loud bell will alert neighbors.

OUTDOOR SECURITY

- Leave your spare keys with a trusted neighbor, not in obvious hiding places. Burglars will check under the doormat, flowerpots, and ledges.
- Never leave a note on your door indicating you will be out. This is an invitation for robbery.
- Install security lights with motion detectors all around the house. Consider a battery-powered security light with photovoltaic panel that eliminates the need for new wiring.
- Make sure your address is clearly visible to emergency services.
- Install a high security padlock at all gates and storage sheds.
- Store BBQ's lawn mowers and other valuables in a secure area or hide them from view and securely lock them to a stationary point.
- Plant roses or cacti next to windows to discourage entry.
- Lock your car and store any valuables in the trunk. Consider a car alarm.
- Move your garbage and recycling bins after they are emptied. Bins at the curb indicates that no one is home.

NEIGHBORHOOD SECURITY

- Be observant of unknown persons or vehicles in your area. Do not hesitate to call the police if you witness any suspicious activity.
- Ensure that streetlights are functioning properly. If there is a problem, note the streetlight number on the pole and call them for repair.
- Stop mail and newspaper deliveries, or arrange for a neighbor to pick them up, if you are away for an extended period.
- Ask several neighbors to take care of your yard and watch your home if you are away for an extended period. Leave them a trip plan and contact phone numbers.

Consider Starting a Neighborhood Watch Association on your street. Gather with your neighbor's then plan to attend 'Crime Prevention Program meetings.' Remember the more eyes the safer for you, your family and property.

VEHICLE SECURITY:

Although a professional car thief can defeat most security measures and quickly break into and steal a locked vehicle, most vehicle thefts and break-ins are carried out by amateurs who take advantage of the carelessness of drivers in leaving vehicles unlocked, valuables within their sight, etc. Security conscious drivers lose less than those who are careless. According to the FBI, most cars are stolen because they are easy to steal. Eighty percent of all cars stolen last year were unlocked at the time. And 40 percent actually had the keys in the ignition.

During cold winter months, do not leave your car unattended while the engine is running to get it warm for you. In the long run it is better to stay with your car while it is in the process of getting toasty warm.

The tips in this section deal with preventing vehicle theft, preventing vandalism, and buying a used vehicle. You can significantly enhance the security of your vehicles by following them.

- Preventing Theft or Break-ins
- Recovering a Stolen Vehicle or Property Taken from a Vehicle
- Preventing Vandalism
- Buying a Used Vehicle

PREVENTING THEFT OR BREAK-INS

- The following tips help prevent vehicle break-ins, which could lead to theft of the vehicle itself or of property items from the vehicle.
- Park in open, well-lighted, and populated areas near your destination. Avoid parking near trucks, vans, dumpsters, and other objects that obstruct visibility and provide hiding places. Avoid parking near strangers loitering or sitting in vehicles.
- Park in lots or garages where you don't have to leave your keys.
- Park in your garage, if you have one. Don't leave your vehicle on the street, in an alley, or on your driveway. If you have to park on a street, avoid dark or isolated areas.
- Turn off your engine, roll up all windows, lock all doors, and take your keys with you even if you are making a quick stop at a store or gas station, or even in your driveway. Close all windows and lock the trunk and hood.
- Don't leave spare keys in your vehicle. An experienced thief knows all the hiding places. Store spare keys in your wallet.
- Don't leave your vehicle in an unattended public lot for an extended period of time.
- Buy a vehicle with interior hood and trunk lock releases. Install a secondary hood lock if your car does not have one.
- Replace knob-type door lock buttons with tapered ones.
- Install an alarm system that will sound when someone attempts to break in, move tilt, or start your vehicle. Always activate the system when leaving the vehicle.
- Check your vehicle if you hear the alarm sound. But don't try to stop a person attempting to break in. Get a good description of the person and call the police.

TO PREVENT THEFT OF THE VEHICLE ITSELF:

- Turn your wheels sharply toward the curb when parking on a street.
- Use anti-theft devices that can be attached to the steering wheel or column, or brake pedal. Use one every time you leave your vehicle unattended. Steering wheel locks are inexpensive and are recommended by some experts to be the most cost-effective theft deterrent on the market today.
- Install fuel or power cut-off switches.

- Buy a vehicle with a locking ignition or steering column.
- Chain motorcycles and bicycles to stationary objects when unattended.
- Consider having your VIN (Vehicle Identification Number) etched on the entire window.

RECOVERING A STOLEN VEHICLE OR PROPERTY TAKEN FROM A VEHICLE

- Call the police immediately and provide a complete description of the vehicle and any property taken from it, including a license plate. Vehicles should be described by year, make, model, color(s), VIN, insurance company and policy number, license plate number and state, and name of any tracking and locator system installed in the vehicle. Property should be described by type, make, model, serial number, and fair market value.
- Etch your driver's license number on all removable valuable items, e.g., audio equipment. Also etch the number on various places on the vehicle itself.
- Don't leave your driver's license in the vehicle.
- Keep a record of the VIN, license plate number, and insurance information in your wallet or purse. Also be able to provide the information listed above for any property that might be stolen from the vehicle.
- Install a vehicle tracking and location system that can be activated after the vehicle is reported as stolen.

PREVENTING VANDALISM

- Park in open, well-lighted, and populated areas near your destination. Avoid parking near trucks, vans, dumpsters, and other objects that obstruct visibility and provide hiding places. Avoid parking near strangers loitering or sitting in vehicles.
- Park in your garage, if you have one. Don't leave your vehicle on the street, in an alley, or on your driveway. If you have to park on a street, avoid dark or isolated areas.
- Don't leave your vehicle in an unattended public lot for an extended period of time.
- Buy a vehicle with interior hood and trunk lock releases. Install a secondary hood lock if your car does not have one. Also install a locking gas tank cap.

BUYING A USED VEHICLE

- Be suspicious of a ridiculously low price or a fresh paint job on a late model vehicle.
- Make sure the seller is the owner named on the vehicle title. Don't be afraid to ask to see some photo identification.
- Verify past insurance and financing, and current registration and license plate sticker.
- Make sure the VIN has not been tampered with and matches the number on the vehicle title.
- Obtain both sets of the original keys.
- Make sure registration fees paid to dealer are sent to DMV promptly.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS:

- Emergency: Dial 911. If you are calling from a landline this connects you to the police department communications center. Program the non-emergency number below into your mobile phone to quickly report community emergencies.
- Non-Emergency: Dial (505) 242-COPS (2677) to reach the Police Department Communications Center. Request the call or incident number from the operator so you can track the resolution of your call.
- Always state your location if you are calling from a mobile phone.

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