



KITSAP COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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Car thefts on the rise

Silverdale, Wash. -- Motor vehicle thefts are on the rise in Kitsap County, specifically the geographic area consisting of Central Kitsap east of Silverdale and East Bremerton.

Kitsap County Sheriff's patrol deputies noticed the start of a trend in car thefts earlier this month and began to track reports of stolen vehicles. Those stolen are primarily foreign imports, typically those manufactured by Honda and Toyota.

As of this date sheriff's detectives are working a case file that includes investigative reports of 30 vehicles stolen since June 2.

The cars are being taken from apartment complexes, major retail store vehicle parking, shopping mall parking lots, private residences and restaurant parking areas. They are usually stolen between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. In most cases the vehicles are located within hours and within close proximity from where they were taken. The vehicles are usually found missing high value pilferable items such as in-dash stereo equipment, personal property and, in some instances, actual vehicle components such as seats.

Auto Theft Precautions

- When leaving your vehicle, regardless of the length of time, ***remove the key from the ignition, close all windows and lock the doors!***
- Install smooth, non-flared locking buttons on car doors.
- At night, park in a well lit area. When at home, and if equipped, park your vehicle inside of a garage.
- Remove personal identifying items from your car when you get out: wallets, driver license, credit cards, check books, other identification cards, etc. These items, once stolen, can be used to commit crimes involving fraud, forgery or identity theft.
- Do not leave personal articles (cameras, i-Pods, GPS devices) in plain view. Take them with you or lock them in the trunk.
- Additional security may be obtained by installing a vehicle security system or other anti-theft device, such as steering wheel or brake pedal locking device.

What to do if your vehicle is stolen?

- Call 9-1-1 and report the theft to law enforcement immediately.
- Provide the investigating sheriff's deputy or police officer with the following information:
 - ** Vehicle license plate number.
 - ** Vehicle identification number (VIN), if possible.
 - ** Year, make, model and color of vehicle.
 - ** Any personal identifying marks, such as bumper / window decals or obvious damage.
 - ** A list of items contained in the vehicle.
- Circumstances surrounding the vehicle, ie: last known location before theft, last driver, any suspicious activity or other information.

As sheriff's detectives continue with their investigation they are asking the public to be especially vigilant. Please note activity that is suspicious in nature or out of place for your neighborhood and report it to 9-1-1.

Persons with any information about motor vehicle thefts are asked to contact Detective Chad Birkenfeld at (360) 337-5619.

Those who wish to remain anonymous may contact Crime Stoppers of Puget Sound at 10800-222-8477.

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