Preventing Vehicle Prowling

Vehicle prowling, the theft of property from your vehicle, is an increasingly persistent crime in many communities.

What Do They Steal?
Expensive mobile electronics, like stereo systems, CD’s, cell phones, Ipods, Ipads, tablets and more.
Wallets, purses, checkbooks, and cash.
Tools, computer equipment, and even golf clubs have been popular items to steal.
Your car registration, insurance information, or any document left in your vehicle that contains information about you. The information is then used to commit fraud and/or identity theft against you.

Any item of value is fair game to the vehicle prowler!

Why Do They Steal?
Motivations for vehicle prowling vary.
The criminal may be supporting a drug habit and will go to great lengths to remove valuable items
The criminal sees it as an ideal opportunity to commit a crime with little risk of getting caught. In other words, you may have offered a “crime of opportunity.”

How Do They Do It?
There are several approaches.
The thief may roam a busy parking lot trying door handles in search of unlocked vehicles.
If they notice something they particularly want, they may choose to break in. Breaking a window is a common method of entry.
A vehicle parked in an isolated area is often targeted because the criminal’s activity will go undetected.
In residential areas, especially apartment complexes with a high concentration of vehicles parked outside, the cover of darkness is used to conceal their activity.
What You Can Do!

Securely lock your vehicle!

Avoid parking your vehicle in an isolated area where other citizens will not be able to see it.

If possible, park your vehicle in the garage. If you do not have a garage, park your vehicle in a well lit area close to your residence. Avoid parking on the street or in dark areas.

Keep your valuables out of site. Athletic bags, backpacks, purses, shopping bags or other containers are enticing objects to the prowler. When possible, remove them from your vehicle. At a minimum, lock them in your trunk.

Any important document that a criminal could use to commit fraud and/or identity theft should be LOCKED in the glove box or removed from the vehicle. Sensitive information, like your name, date of birth, address, social security number and/or account numbers, is attractive to these types of criminals.

Remove garage door remote controls from vehicles parked outside. If not removed, they may also enter your garage.

Advertising your expensive stereo equipment by attaching large stickers to your vehicle of your chosen brand is not recommended.

You may consider installing an alarm on your vehicle. Advertising your alarm with a sticker on your vehicle is recommended.

Record brand name, model and serial numbers of all your valuable items. In the event your property is stolen, this will aid law enforcement in investigation and recovery efforts.

Consider engraving your driver’s license number on your valuable items with an electric engraver. This will help law enforcement determine status and ownership of property they encounter under questionable circumstances.

Use the following format to engrave items like stereos, computers, tools and so on: W.A. (license #) D.L.