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News Release

For Immediate Release

Preventing auto theft with simple tips

Criminals are often opportunists. When citizens allow a crime to be easily committable, a criminal is more likely to take advantage of that opportunity. SPD has received calls for approximately 30 stolen vehicles in the past month where victims left the keys in the car.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, car-related thefts are among the most common offenses requiring a police report. Most of these occur when the car is parked on the street or in the driveway of the home. Often, these vehicles are not even locked. Other times, car owners may leave the key in the ignition while making a quick run inside a convenience store. This is never a safe idea, no matter how quick the trip may be.

During summer months, some people choose to keep their garage doors cracked open for ventilation or simply forget to close them at night, offering thieves easy access inside the garage where keys may also be accessible.

To avoid auto theft, consider the following prevention tips:

Remove the keys from the vehicle and always lock the doors. Twenty percent of all vehicles stolen have the keys left in them.

- If the vehicle is an older model, replace the standard door lock shafts with ones that are tapered.
- Do not leave paperwork in the glove box or elsewhere in the vehicle that has your address or personal information about you or others in your family.
- If you use self-service to fuel your vehicle, do not leave your keys in your vehicle when going in to pay. Consider locking it as well to prevent theft of items while you are away.
- Do not hide a spare key somewhere on the outside of the vehicle. These are usually easy to locate.
- Periodically check your license plates to make sure they have not been stolen or altered.
- Do not invite a break-in by leaving things in plain sight in the vehicle. If you would not want them stolen, do not leave them in the vehicle. Remove them or secure them in the trunk.
- Possibly use a locking gas cap, not only to prevent theft of gasoline, but to limit a thief to the amount of driving he can do on one tank.
- When possible, park in well lighted, busy areas.
- Never leave your vehicle running and unattended in order to allow it to warm up.
- If you do not have the luxury of parking your vehicle in the garage, and must park it in the driveway or on the street in front of the house, be sure to remove the garage door opener. This is a key to your home.

If someone is going to attempt to steal your vehicle, do not make it easy for them.

Media Contact: [Lisa Cox](#), Public Affairs Officer

O: 864-1786 | C: 839-5301

Release authorized by: Lt. Kevin Grizzell