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News Release

*For Immediate Release*

### **Colder weather may cause spike in auto thefts**

Although it is tempting as the temperatures are dropping, the Springfield Police Department (SPD) would like to warn drivers not to warm up their vehicle while leaving it unlocked and unattended.

Springfield's Uniform Crime Report for the first half of 2013 showed a 20.69% increase in stolen vehicles as compared to the first half of 2012. The SPD has commonly found that a large number of the vehicles reported as stolen were those with keys left inside the unlocked car. These auto thefts often occur while the vehicle is parked in a driveway, at a convenience store, or on the street, and they have been reported in locations all over Springfield – not one area of the city is immune to this type of crime.

"Many times thieves are looking for fast, easy opportunities, and it can be rather simple for them to case neighborhoods looking for unoccupied running vehicles and make a quick getaway," said Sgt. David Meyer of the SPD's Property Crimes Unit.

If drivers absolutely insist on letting their vehicles warm up without being inside the vehicle, they are encouraged to get a remote starter or have an extra set of keys so the vehicle can still be locked while another set is in the ignition. They also need to keep an eye on the vehicle while it is running as this type of theft can occur in a matter of seconds. In case a theft should still occur while using these cautionary tips, they should avoid having the "warm-up" key on the same ring as other keys to keep from a thief from also having access to the home or any other vehicles.

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