

Common Sense Prevents Vehicle Burglaries

Orland Park Residents Reminded To Close Garage Doors

ORLAND PARK, IL – The Orland Park Police Department has issued a community alert to make residents and visitors to Orland Park aware of recent criminal activity.

“We’ve received a number of reports of vehicles being broken into,” said Orland Park Police Chief Tim McCarthy. Both commercial and residential areas of the village have shown an increase in motor vehicle burglaries.

“The Police Department has compiled a list of simple reminders to help the public prevent vandalism to their vehicles,” said Lieutenant John Keating of the department’s Investigations Division. “The most obvious reminder is to lock the doors on your vehicle. Locked doors are the first deterrent to vehicle break-ins,” he added.

“During the holiday season, law enforcement agencies across the country remind shoppers to not leave valuables or purchases in plain sight,” McCarthy explained. “This rule holds true throughout the year --- not just when you’re Christmas shopping,” the chief said. “Electronics left on windshields and recent purchases left on the seats make your vehicle a target,” McCarthy said, adding that power cords tell thieves that there’s an electronic device inside of the vehicle.

“Don’t leave purses or bags that look like purses where potential thieves can see them in a vehicle,” the chief warned. “All of our tips are common sense but we oftentimes forget that we need to take that extra step to prevent someone from stealing our personal property,” McCarthy added.

The Police Department’s Investigations Division warns that car burglars will watch the parking areas of restaurants, fitness and entertainment centers, watching for people who place items in the trunks of their cars before entering the establishments.

“Once the thieves see someone place valuables in their trunk, they wait for them to enter the building, break the window and use the automatic trunk opener inside of the car to access the trunk,” McCarthy explained. “This is all done within a matter of seconds and the vehicle owners don’t know what’s happened until they later return to their cars,” the chief added.

“Be aware of your surroundings,” Keating cautioned. “If you have to move valuables to the trunk of your car, don’t do it in a public area where people may be watching you,” he added. “Leave the valuables at home or move them to the trunk before you’re in a public area,” Keating said.

McCarthy noted that the department is working with local businesses asking that they post signs reminding patrons to lock their vehicles and to not leave valuables where they are visible.

“We’ve created a cooperative public education effort, reminding people to take that extra step necessary to protect their personal belongings,” the chief said.

Residents leaving garage doors open have also invited unwanted thefts. “We’re reminding everyone to pay attention to their garage doors, making a conscious note to close the door after entering or leaving their garages,” McCarthy said.

Keating echoed, “When residents leave their garage doors open, they not only give thieves access to their bikes, tools and other garage items, more often than not, they’re giving them access to their house because many families leave their inside garage service doors unlocked. This is a very preventable crime. Close your garage doors.”

Police officials ask that residents pay attention to what’s happening in their neighborhoods.

“If your neighbor’s garage door is open, call them on the phone or go ring the bell to let them know,” McCarthy said. “Or, you can call the Police Department and we’ll either try to close the door or contact the family to let them know,” he added.

Residents are encouraged to pay attention to vehicles in their subdivisions, knowing which of their neighbors travel during the winter months and keeping a watchful eye on their surroundings.

“Neighbors helping neighbors is the best way to deter crime in residential areas, both single and multi-family,” McCarthy said. “And, using common sense with valuables in your vehicle in public areas will prevent unwanted thefts,” Keating added.

Residents who witness suspicious activity are encouraged to contact the Orland Park Police Department at 708/349-4111 or if it’s an emergency by dialing 9-1-1.

