



Community Alert – Vehicle Break-Ins

Falcon Division

December is here and with it comes holiday celebrations and end of the year events. Traditionally this time of year brings an increase of vehicle break-ins. It takes less than a minute for a thief to break into your vehicle window or open an unlocked vehicle door and then steal an I-pod, laptop, cellular telephone or purse on the front seat. Each year \$1.26 billion in personal items and accessories are stolen from vehicles. In the Falcon Division to date the division has had 663 reported vehicle break-ins. In the year 2010 the City of Colorado Springs had a total of 3,956 reported vehicle break-ins. Please do not leave valuable items in your vehicle that are in view and always lock your vehicle doors.

Preventing Vehicle Break-Ins

1. Keep your car visible: Park in well-lit areas, near people or with a parking lot or garage attendant on duty. Avoid having your car concealed by larger vehicles, fences or foliage; thieves like to work in private.

2. Don't make it easy: Keep windows and sunroofs closed and doors locked. Almost one-fourth of thefts from vehicles are from unlocked cars.

3. Activate your vehicle's alarm: Don't have one? Factory-installed anti-theft systems are best, but a professionally installed alarm can discourage a car break-in thief who likes to work in silence.

4. Hide your valuables: Many smash-and-grab thieves act on impulse. So keep your stuff out of sight – either with you or in a locked trunk. Don't count on the glove box; thieves know to look there, and they're easy to break into.

5. Hide your valuables 2: If you have a wagon or SUV that leaves your cargo area open, get a retractable fitted cover to keep shopping bags or other belongings hidden.

6. Don't hand a thief your keys: Take your keys with you. And if you think you have a great hiding place for a spare key, car break-in thieves know to look above the visor, in the center console, under the floor mat, in the trunk well, etc.

7. Stow your stuff before arrival: Experienced thieves often stake out parking lots to watch for people putting items in their trunk. Help prevent car break-ins by putting valuables, like laptops, messenger bags and electronic devices, into your trunk before you get to the parking lot.

8. Stash the evidence, too: After you've put your stuff in the trunk, don't forget such telltale evidence as power plugs, MP3 adapters and navigation system windshield suction-cup mounts. Thieves know what they're looking for, so hide the electronic accessories, too.



9. Trust your instincts: If you see suspicious activity, find another spot to park. If you're concerned, tell the attendant or report your suspicions to police. You may be helping keep another person from being a victim of a car break-in – or worse.

10. Take it one more step: Many vehicles are broken into with the intent of stealing the vehicle itself. Visible anti-theft devices, like steering wheel locks, steering column collars or brake pedal locks, may discourage the would-be thief from breaking in and trying.