



Crime Prevention Information



Auto-Theft Prevention

Vehicle theft is a national problem, but in Charleston, the primary problem is not professional car thieves taking new, expensive cars to “chop-shops” or shipping them overseas. Instead it is juveniles and others driving them to show-off, to use for free transportation, or to loan to a drug-dealer in exchange for drugs.

OWNERS MAKE CAR THEFT EASY WHEN:

- The vehicle was left running, unattended
- A key was left in the ignition, OR
- Owner’s hidden spare key was found (glove-box, ashtray)
- The vehicle was left unlocked or a window left open
- The vehicle was not protected with any anti-theft devices
- The vehicle was parked in an isolated area

COMMON TARGETED AREAS INCLUDE:

- Mall/Shopping Center lots
- Apartment Complex lots
- New & Used Dealership lots
- Short-term Parking lots downtown

PROTECTION MEASURES:

- Keep car-doors locked and windows closed
- Remove keys from vehicle
- Locking devices on steering wheels or brakes (like The CLUB)
- Park in your garage (Keep garage doors closed!)
- Alarms
- Have your vehicle’s identification number etched in the window glass
- Use tracking devices to assist police in locating your vehicle (like Onstar or LoJack)
- Kill switches

USE COMMON SENSE!

Do not leave the vehicle running unattended! This in itself is against City Ordinance, subject to a fine in the City of Charleston (on City streets and in lots under police jurisdiction) and may lead to civil liability on the operator/owner of the vehicle if the car is taken and causes damage or injury.

Approximately 1/3 of the reported stolen vehicles in the Charleston area are due to keys left in the vehicle. Most of these vehicles are stolen for short term transportation and some may be used in committing other crimes.

Common reasons people leave cars running unattended are:

- “I was only a minute.”
- “I was paying for gas.”
- “I was just getting a pack of cigarettes.”
- “I was warming the car.”
- “I was delivering a pizza.”

For more information on this and other topics contact:

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