

South Precinct Email Community Newsletter
January 6, 2010



Dear Community Friends –

Welcome to 2010. We hope that your New Year's celebrations were joy-filled and safe.

Car Prowls

As we begin the new year, we have been reminded that crime does not take holidays. In one of our neighborhoods, it appears least 11 vehicles were prowled in one night. The bulk of the thefts appear to have occurred between 10pm on January 2nd through 4am on January 3rd. Car door windows were broken out and the cars ransacked. In a few instances, property was stolen (iPod, cash, CDs). While the bad news is that car windows were broken and need to be replaced, the good news is that majority of the car prowls, no property was taken, meaning that vehicle owners are doing a good job of not leaving items of value in their vehicles. With that said, we did have a recent car prowler where the victim had left a spare set of house keys in the glove box of his unlocked car; the car prowler found the keys and used them to enter the victim's home, committing an early morning occupied burglary. In a separate incident, car prowlers used the automatic garage door opener from the car to gain entry into the home. These incidents show the importance of not only not leaving valuables in the car – like a laptop, GPS, i-Pod or even a duffle bag full of clothes - but also of not leaving a spare set of house keys or an unattended garage door remote in the car.

Car Prowl Prevention Measures Reminders

- **Leave No Valuables in Your Car.** Never leave valuables in your car. Items of little or no value to you still look inviting to a thief. Even pocket change is enough of an enticement for some thieves.
- If possible, store your car in a closed and locked garage. Make a habit of locking your garage door and car doors.
- If your car is stored in a carport or parked near your house, leave your exterior lights on throughout the night.
- If you park on the street, choose a well-lit, open space even if it means adding additional street/yard lighting & trimming back trees/bushes that block your view of your vehicle.

Residential Burglary

We also have recently seen numerous residential burglaries. These have not been concentrated in any one area; they seem to be spread throughout our neighborhoods. These have been forced entry burglaries, with usually a broken window or kicked in door to gain entry. Jewelry, laptops, gaming systems and cash are the items most often taken.

Burglary Prevention Measures Reminders

- **Close And Lock Windows:** Always close and lock windows whenever away from the home.
- **Lock Your Doors:** Install good quality dead bolt locks with at least a 1" throw on all exterior doors.
- **Replace the existing screws in the strike plates with screws that are 3"-4" long.** When a door is forced open, it is the jamb that splinters and gives, not the door. By securing the strike plates with 3"-4" long screws, you secure the jamb to the wall stud. When the deadbolt lock is engaged, the bolt is now secured into the framing of the home. This makes it much more difficult for a person to force open a properly locked door.
- If you're going to be away for an extended time, ask a friend or trusted neighbor to watch your home. If they see suspicious activity while you are gone, make sure they know to call 911 to report it.

Inventory Your Valuables; Engrave Where Applicable

Many of us have received new items for the Holidays. Now is a good time to take an inventory of your property. On a sheet of paper, just mark down the item name, make, model and serial numbers (as applicable) and approximate value. With jewelry, write a description of the piece and its value. Take pictures so you have a visual record that can be used for identification if the jewelry item is lost or stolen. For jewelry and important papers, consider storing them in a fire safe that can be bolted to the floor. For your electronic items (laptops, i-Pods, digital cameras, flat-screen TVs, gaming systems), we encourage you to engrave them with your driver's license number. Engraving is a theft deterrent because the item can be identified more easily as belonging to a particular person. Engraved items are also easier to recover and return to the owner. You can purchase an engraver from any hardware store for about \$25. Pass it around the neighborhood so everyone can engrave their valuables.

It doesn't take that long to do an inventory or to engrave your property. I was able to take care of all my inventory and engraving in about an hour one Saturday afternoon. I keep the inventory list somewhere safe - and where I can also find it.

Until next time, Take Care and Stay Safe!

Captain David Emerick, South Precinct Commander Mark Solomon, Crime Prevention Coordinator