



## Crime Prevention Tip of the Day: Residential Vehicle Break-Ins

Vehicle break-ins normally occur during the nighttime hours, when we (and our vehicles) are at home. However, the majority of vehicle “break-ins” aren’t BREAK-ins at all. They are the result of vehicles being left UNLOCKED by the owner! This is the definition of Crime of Opportunity. If a thief isn’t given the opportunity to break into a car and steal, he/she will move on to somewhere else. They don’t necessarily want to break the glass or the door, mainly because they don’t want to draw attention to themselves by setting off the alarm or breaking the glass itself.

If everyone makes it more difficult for these types of criminals, then the number of vehicle break-ins WILL go down. Please consider the following simple, but very useful tips:

1. **TAKE** your valuables with you. If a thief looks through the window and sees something to steal, this gives them the “opportunity”. However, if they see nothing in plain view, they will move on to somewhere else.
2. **LOCK** your vehicle! Many times these thieves will start at one end of the street and make their way down to the other, simply lifting up on car door handles. If yours is locked, they move on. If it is unlocked, then they are in, looking to see if there is anything to take.
3. **PARK** your vehicle inside the garage if you can. If your vehicle is inside, then they can’t get to it in the first place.
4. **LIGHTS!** If you do park on the street or in the driveway, make sure the exterior lights shine on the vehicles. Thieves LOVE the darkness, because they can’t be seen. Make it more difficult for them...turn those exterior flood lights on!
5. **SERIAL NUMBERS.** Write down all makes/models/serial numbers for electronics, phones, and firearms, ANYTHING that has an identifying number. If you don’t have this information written down and kept in a safe place, then it is extremely difficult for Police to track your property down and hold someone accountable for stealing it.
6. **LEAVE** no trace or sign of electronics (docking stations, connector cables, etc.). Also, the following are particularly attractive:
  - a. Cell phones, GPS receivers, laptops, Ipads/Ipods
  - b. Check books, Credit/Debit Cards
  - c. Cash/Coins in plain view (cup holder, console)
  - d. Private Mail
  - e. Wallets and Purses! (If it wasn’t happening, I wouldn’t mention it!)
  - f. Garage Door Opener (you know you have it on the visor!) Hide in the console. This can give someone unforced entry to your house...treat it like a key!
7. **REPORT** Suspicious Activity. If you see someone looking into vehicles, lifting up on door handles, “casing” the neighborhood, or anything similar, CALL US! The non-emergency number is (205) 822-5300.



Crime is everywhere. Don't make the mistake of thinking because you live in a low crime neighborhood, that you can leave items in your car or leave doors unlocked. STAY VIGILANT and call us if you need us. For more Crime Prevention information, visit our site at <http://www.hooverpd.com/crime-prevention.php>