REPORTING SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY TO POLICE

Don't think you are "bothering" the police by reporting suspicious activity. It's their job to detect and apprehend criminals — but they need your help because they can't be everywhere all the time. If your suspicions prove to be unfounded, you shouldn't feel embarrassed. The police prefer that you call them so they can investigate. *Remember, if you see or hear something that seems unusual or suspicious:*

- glass breaking (a popping sound)
- someone looking into vehicles or ducking around them
- someone tampering with a vehicle
- a person carrying tools or property that doesn't fit the setting in your neighborhood
- activity that "just doesn't look or feel right"

try to get a description of the suspect and their vehicle from a safe place. **Call 911 immediately and stay on the line!** It is more desirable to be mistaken, than to be a victim.

If you locate property that may have been stolen, or discover that you have been the victim of a theft from your vehicle, call your local law enforcement agency immediately.

ADDITIONAL SECURITY MEASURES

Outdoor security lighting left on from dusk to dawn is inexpensive and also helps to deter such crimes as theft, vandalism, and burglary. Many citizens are equipping their vehicles with alarm systems. In some cases, the value of the vehicle and/or its contents are worth the cost of installation.

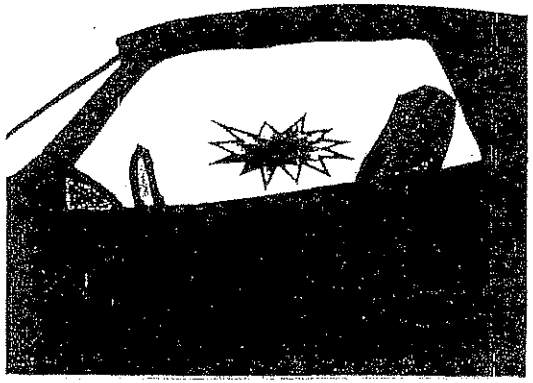
You can increase the chances of you property being recovered, if stolen, by recording the serial number and marking the item with an Operation Identification number available at no charge from the Crime Prevention Unit of your local police department or sheriff's office.

PREVENT THEFT OF YOUR CAR

- Never leave your car running.
- Never leave your keys in the car or ignition.
- Always roll up you windows and lock the car, even if it's in front of your home.
- Always park in busy, well-lighted areas.
- Always leave just the ignition key with the attendant, if you park in a commercial garage or lot.

West Des Moines Police Dept.
250 Mills Civic Pkwy
West Des Moines, IA 50265

PREVENTING THEFT FROM VEHICLES



WEST DES MOINES POLICE DEPT.

West Des Moines Police Department
Crime Prevention
(515)222-3333

Thefts from vehicles have dramatically increased over the past several years. Many of the thefts occur in our own driveways. The popularity of CD players, cell phones, and expensive sound systems, which are quickly and easily stolen, has seemed to encourage car prowlers. You can avoid the frustration and inconvenience of being the victim of this type of crime. Please take a few minutes to read this information and pass it along to others.

COMMON METHODS OF ENTRY INTO VEHICLES

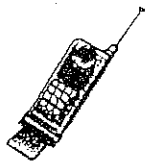
- Smash out a window
- Use tool to unlock the door
- Crawl through pickup truck topper and force or pry the sliding window
- Enter vehicle in unsecured garage
- No force necessary, door unlocked

MOST LIKELY TARGETS FOR THEFT

- Vehicles with a visible radar detector or mount or power cord
- Vehicles containing a briefcase, purse, gym bag or other valuables left in sight
- Vehicles with a mobile phone
- Vehicles left running at convenience stores or public places

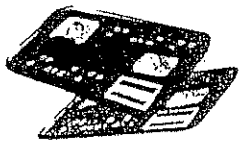
PROPERTY MOST OFTEN STOLEN FROM VEHICLES

- Gym bags
- Briefcases
- Purses/wallets/checkbooks/ change
- Jewelry
- Cell phones
- Auto parts/car batteries
- Sunglasses
- Camera gear
- Radar detectors and power cords
- AM/FM radios, cassette or CD players, speakers, boosters, and equalizers
- Hand tools/tool boxes/ power tools



WHAT DO THIEVES DO WITH YOUR PROPERTY?

Many things can be sold to other thieves or to someone who is "looking for a deal". Other items can be sold for cash at pawn shops. Some thieves look for purses to steal, immediately making large purchases on the credit cards and altering the victim's ID so they can forge checks. This can cause an incredible amount of worry, hassle, and inconvenience for the victim. The thief doesn't care about you, your feelings, or your hardship. The thief's point of view is, "Why should I pay for something when I can steal it?"



HOW CAN YOU PREVENT A THEFT FROM YOUR VEHICLE?

To deter a criminal from breaking into your vehicle, lock it and put valuables out of sight in the trunk, if possible, or bring them into the house at night. Thieves will break into any vehicle if they think there is something of value to be stolen from it. They know that checkbooks, wallets, watches, calculators, and other small electronic items may be contained in a briefcase. Similarly, gym bags may contain jewelry, keys, cash, and walkman type radios.

After removing valuables from view, lock your vehicle. This will discourage some of the more casual thieves, the ones looking for the opportunity to steal. It will also deter those who would go into an unlocked vehicle to locate the trunk button or hood release to take auto parts or trunk contents.

A theft from your vehicle can happen at any hour of the day or night. By reporting suspicious activity while it is occurring, you could save yourself or your neighbor from being victimized.