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Vehicle thefts often increase during the colder months. Many of these thefts occur when cars are parked but left running in driveways or at convenience stores. In addition, thefts from vehicles have increased over the past year. Many of these thefts occur when cars are parked in driveways or along neighborhood streets.

The popularity of GPS, radar detectors, cell phones, computers, and other electronic devices often attract thieves. Teenagers as well as adults often commit these crimes in residential areas, walking from vehicle to vehicle, lifting door handles to see if they can find one unlocked and/or running.

“These circumstances are categorized as crimes of opportunity because unless the opportunity presents itself, the perpetrators usually do not commit the crime.

The opportunity arises when vehicles are left unsecured, running, and items of value are left in the vehicle. When the perpetrators find an unlocked vehicle, they will open the door and take whatever is easily removable from the vehicle.

The Plainfield Police Department offers the following tips to reduce the risk of being a victim of theft from your car.

- Always turn your car off when not occupied.
- Always lock your vehicle when it is parked. Criminals prey on the easy victim. By simply locking your vehicle the criminal will usually move on.
- Hide or take it with you. Do not leave purses, wallets, or loose money in your vehicle. If your purse or wallet is taken you could become the victim of other crimes such as stolen checks, credit cards, or even identity theft. Electronics and their accessories including cell phone holders, suction cups, power cords, etc., should be placed out of site, when you are not in your car.
- Park your vehicle in your driveway or garage when possible. If you have a garage or access to a garage, use it and lock it. If you have an attached garage make sure the door between the house and garage is always locked. If your garage door opener is stolen from your vehicle, you risk giving the criminal access to your entire home.
- Park in a well lit area. Lighting is a deterrent. If a thief has to work in the light, the greater the chance he/she will be caught.

Consider starting or actively participating in a Block Association Program. Block Association Programs are designed to reduce criminal opportunity and prevent crime through awareness, education, and cooperation between the Community and the Plainfield Police Department.