



Vehicle Thefts

There has been an increase in reported thefts from vehicles across the area. Some of these reports have involved vehicles that have been left insecure. Having your car or van broken into and losing your possessions to thieves can be very distressing. Here are a few simple steps you can take to keep your vehicle, and what is in it, safe.

1. Always lock your vehicle (even when parked on your driveway)

Popping back into your house to get something or fuelling up are perfect examples of how easy it is to turn your back for a moment and forget your vehicle is unsecured. Get into the habit of locking your vehicle even if you are only going to be away from it for a moment.

If your vehicle has wing mirrors that fold in automatically when locked, make sure you lock it properly. Criminal gangs are looking for vehicles like these where the wing mirrors are still out because it shows the vehicle may have been left unlocked.

2. Take it with you or hide it

Your mobile phone, coins for the car park, sunglasses, packs of medication or other items that can earn quick cash are irresistible to the opportunist thief. The cost of replacing a window or door lock is often much more than the stolen items. It should go without saying that wallets, handbags, purses and credit cards should never be left in an unattended vehicle.

3. Hide electrical items and leave no clues

Leaving sat nav mounts, suction cup marks on windows or cables on view could make a thief think you have left a Sat Nav, smartphone or other device in your car. Even if they cannot see it they may break in to see if it is stored in the car, out of sight.

4. Never leave documents in your vehicle

Having a vehicle as registration and insurance documents could let a thief pretend to be the owner, which means they could sell it on quite easily. So, never leave any documents in the vehicle.

5. Tool theft from vans

Vans are often targeted by thieves for the tools stored inside. If you have to leave tools in a van overnight, it is a good idea to mark them clearly with your name / company name and address using paint pens and seal with a clear lacquer spray. Alternatively, you can use a variety of other property marking systems. Items that are clearly marked are less desirable and more difficult to sell on.

Consider using a lockable cabinet within your van to store tools a number of security rated products are available. Small cameras are also designed to record inside vehicles. Visit Secured by Design for more details.

You can also take photographs of items of value, make a note of the serial numbers and consider registering them online at a property register site.

It is important to report all incidents of vehicle crime so they can be investigated and analysed to help build a clearer picture and understanding of criminal activity in the area. You can do this online at www.thamesvalley.police.uk or call us on 101. Alternatively, you can call Crimestoppers anonymously on free phone 0800 555 111.

Message Sent By

Justine Pritchard (Police, Neighbourhood Policing Administrator , Thames Valley)