



Community Crime Prevention Newsletter

Plymouth, MN

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Preventing Theft from Vehicle

Car break-ins are one of the most common crimes in Plymouth and the entire metro area. Car break-ins can occur anywhere you park your car: at home, at work, when shopping, at the park, or at the gym. Why is this crime so common? More people are installing expensive stereo equipment, DVD players, and GPS equipment in their cars, making cars more attractive targets. In addition, people tend to leave other items in their car that may encourage car prowlers. However, there are some simple steps you can take to reduce your chance of becoming a victim of this common crime.

What you can do:

- 🚫 **Do not leave valuables in your car.** Remember, cell phones, CDs, Ipods, portable TVs and DVD players, sunglasses, small change, cameras, tools, gym bags, laptops, purses, and briefcases are all tempting to thieves. The loss of a stereo or Ipod may be inconvenient, but the loss of a purse, briefcase, or computer could open you up to a more frustrating crime: identity theft.
- 🚫 **If you must leave valuables in your car, place them out of sight.** Car prowlers know that a common hiding place is under the seat. The safest place for valuables is in the trunk. Try to lock your valuables in the trunk *prior* to arriving at your destination. Don't forget, criminals often watch parking lots and see where people are putting their valuables.
- 🚫 **Lock your car.** Thieves target easy victims. Locking your car makes it harder for a crime to occur.
- 🚫 **Park in well-lit, easily observable areas.** This increases the chance of vandals or thieves being seen. Criminals prefer to work in dark, obscured places.
- 🚫 **Immediately report suspicious activity.** If you see people lurking around cars, hiding from passing traffic, or looking into cars, call 9-1-1 right away!

By taking a few simple steps, you can reduce your chance of becoming a victim of a theft from vehicle.

Did you know?

Parents often wonder when a child can be left home alone. Child Protection Services provides the following guidelines:

- Children under the age of 8, or functioning below an 8 year old level due to any disability may not be left alone.
- Children 8 or 9 may be left unattended for normal latchkey hours (up to 2 hours)
- Children 10-13 may be left unattended up to 12 hours
- Children 14-17 may be left unattended up to 24 hours
- No child under the age of 11 should baby sit younger children

The above guidelines apply unless the child does not know how to reach parents, the child is afraid, the child's basic needs are not met, the child has disabilities, or the child is involved in dangerous activities.

Solicitors and Peddlers

Spring brings warm weather, flowers, and door-to-door salespeople. If you do not want any solicitors, simply place a sign on your door stating, "Peddlers and Solicitors Prohibited" in a minimum of 48 point font. However, if you do make a purchase you have second thoughts about, Minnesota does have a "Right to Cancel" law. The law gives you 3 days to cancel any order over \$25 and receive a refund in most cases. For more information, request "Peddler & Solicitor Rules in Plymouth" or go to www.ag.state.mn.us.

Fraud Stop: Hitman Scams

Imagine you are checking your email when you receive a scary email from an anonymous source saying they have been paid a large sum of money to kill you. However, the "hitman" says that he has followed you around and realizes that you are not a bad person, so he is giving you the chance to pay them off and save your life. Information is given how to pay the "hitman" off. The "hitman" warns you not to contact authorities or he will be forced to carry out the hit.

While getting an email like this is very scary, is it real? Fortunately, NO! This is a simple extortion scam. Emails like this have been circulating since December 2006. The goal is to get victims to part with their money by scaring the victim into thinking their life is in danger. Be aware that there are variations to this scam. Sometimes the email does not ask for money; instead the email asks you to provide personal information to assist in the capture or prosecution of a hitman hired to kill you.

If you get an email like this, don't panic. First, read the email carefully. Does the email say specific things about you? Does the email name you specifically, list your address, phone number, family's names, or other identifying information? Or is the information generic, so it could apply to thousands of other people? If it is general, simply hit the delete button. If the information is specific to you, contact the police and report it to the FBI.

(Source: www.scambusters.com)

Featured Crime Prevention Program:

Project ChildSafe

To help keep children safe, the Plymouth Police Department offers [free](#) gun safety kits to anyone who has firearms in their home. The kits include: a cable-style gun locking device, lock installment instructions, and a safety booklet. The locks work on many different types of guns. Plymouth has distributed over 2,000 free gunlocks since the program began. If you would like a gun safety kit, please call 763-509-5147. Remember, firearm safety is no accident.

Traffic Tip!

Cell phones impair your ability to concentrate on driving. Moreover, it is illegal for youth under the age of 18 to use a cell phone when driving. So hang up and drive safe!

Especially for Business

Are you protecting your customers' private data, or are you unknowingly opening them up to ID theft? Insufficient security and weak business practices can result in big financial losses. Think about the following:

One lost laptop computer can cost a business \$90,000 in litigation costs, victim credit monitoring, PR damage control, and fines.

Set good, secure company policies when dealing with customer data. It's good for business.

Crime Free Multi-Housing Corner

Domestic Crisis Intervention: What Managers Can Do

The last homicide in Plymouth was in 2005 and was the result of a domestic situation. This was a very tragic situation and it was not easily foreseeable. The rental community had run proper background checks on the residents and police had never had any contact with the suspect prior to the incident. Although this situation may not have been prevented, it is important to remember that help is available for victims of domestic violence.

Many managers are concerned by repeated domestic disturbance calls and don't know what to do when faced with a situation like this. Domestic violence is not uncommon. In Minnesota, 63,000 women are abused each year. Due to confidentiality issues, managers can't ask Home Free, our local battered women's shelter, to contact a resident they suspect may be abused. However, managers can provide information about Home Free to suspected victims of abuse. Brochures may be handed out as needed and/or included with new resident welcome packets. Brochures are available from Home Free (763-545-7080.) **Don't ignore a problem. Give victims information they need to get help. Working together, we can make a difference!**

Emergency: 9-1-1 Non-emergency: 763-525-6210 Crime Information Line: 763-509-5177

If you have any comments about this newsletter, please contact Officer Angela Haseman at the Plymouth Police Department, 3400 Plymouth Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55447, 763-509-5147 or at ahaseman@ci.plymouth.mn.us. Thank you!