

## Property Theft Prevention

Keep your vehicle doors locked & take your valuables inside or lock them in trunk out of sight. Many thefts from vehicles are crimes of opportunity. Persons walking by see something nice, try the door, and if it is open take your valuables.

Ask yourself...When you go, to the store, out to dinner, or to a movie, do you lock your vehicle? Most people do. Why? Is it because it is a public space with lots of strangers walking through. You will only be away from your vehicle for a couple of hours. Is someone really going to steal from your vehicle, or worse, steal the vehicle itself in that short time? Many of us do not want to chance it. I myself always hit the lock button to hear the Road Runner like "Beep Beep" at least twice.

Are you as diligent at home? Why not? Your vehicle is most likely parked at your home more than any place else. In addition, you are probably asleep for 6-8 hours of that time...not returning to your vehicle after an hour or two as you would at the store or restaurant. So, why would you leave your car unlocked at home? Unless you have a garage, you are still parking in a public space. The only difference, there are much fewer people around, especially in the overnight hours, to deter a thief.

Please lock your vehicles and remove or hide valuables from sight to prevent theft. Remember, if a thief gets away with it once, he will likely come back to the same area for more.

While outside doing yard work, washing the car, or just taking a walk, take a moment to speak to your neighbors.

Take it one step further and acknowledge a stranger walking by or coming out of the post office.

The more friends and acquaintances we make, the safer our town will be. Let's make an effort to get to know our neighbors.

Strive to be more diligent and observant. One of the best deterrents to crime is acknowledgement. When you see someone walking by, acknowledge them with a hello or a nod. This lets the person know you have seen them and are aware of them. Typically, if it is someone thinking of checking cars to see if they are locked or looking at your neighbor's house thinking it is unoccupied, they will move on because they see neighbors are observant. At the same time, if you feel a person is where they should not be, appears dangerous, or has you feeling uncomfortable, do not speak to them or approach them, do not go over to your neighbor's house because you see someone lurking around the side of the building, CALL 911 immediately. Do not hesitate.

Vary your routine. Do you go to the post office every day at the same time? Do you always close your blinds tight when you leave home? Do you only turn your outside lights on when you are going out and returning home after dark? It only takes a few days observation for a thief to know when your home is empty. Be sure to vary your routines to prevent yourself from being an easy target. In addition, make sure your neighbor is looking out for your property when you are away. Good neighbors are more valuable than gold! Be a good neighbor too. If you see something, say something.

Do you make it obvious you are away from home?  
Are there uncollected newspapers left in the front of the house?  
Is the porch light on all day and all night for days?  
Do you advertise on Facebook or other social media sites when you are away on vacation?

*When the weather is appropriate, and you open the windows for fresh spring or fall air, remember to keep your property secure. Trim hedges so they are not giving thieves hidden access to your windows. Lock up ground floor windows before leaving home or going to bed. Continue locking car doors and keeping valuables out of sight. Take electronics, wallets, purses and other valuables into the house or lock them in your trunk. And most importantly, keep looking out for your neighbor.*

When it is VACATION time many folks make their way to North Beach for vacation, we, the residents of North Beach often go elsewhere for vacation. Remember, when you go on vacation, a few tips to keep your property safe;

Use timers to have lights come on in various rooms at various times, to give the appearance someone is home. Timers or dusk to dawn porch lights are also great to have. A porch light on 24/7 is a sure sign to a thief that no one is home.

Stop newspaper delivery or have a neighbor pick up your papers. Nothing says no one is home more than multiple days' worth of newspapers scattered in front of your home. An important asset in keeping your home safe is your neighbors.

Let your closest neighbors know you will be away and for how long. If they can, have them park in front of your home or in your driveway to give the appearance someone is home. Let them know if you expect anyone to stop by to water plants, feed the fish, etc. Otherwise, ask them to say something if they see something! Ask them to Call 911 immediately if they see anything suspicious at your home while you are away.