

Dear Community Friends -

Please see the information below regarding Car Prowls and Package Theft. For some of you, this information will be familiar from previous email newsletters and Nextdoor posts. We felt it important to repost these tips as we continue to see an unacceptable level of both crime categories across our neighborhoods.

CAR PROWL

We feel we have an unacceptable number of reported Car Prowl incidents for our Precinct. The level of Car Prowls, Auto Accessory Thefts and theft of license plates for the Southwest Precinct shows a 14% increase compared to this time last year.

Car prowls are crimes of opportunity that are committed within seconds. They are expensive, inconvenient, and aggravating for victims.

Thieves are targeting vehicles of all makes and models for valuables, including:

packages, GPS devices, laptops, cellular phones, cameras, purses, luggage, cash and garage remotes

Most stolen property is traded or sold within minutes of the crime, lowering the chance of recovery. Thieves commonly break windows for entry, but many are also successful at defeating door and trunk locks.

Prevention: Be Consistent

Remove all valuables from your vehicle every time you park.

If valuables must be left behind, hide them out of sight or place them in the trunk before parking at your destination.

Disable internal trunk releases per your owner's manual instructions.

Audible alarms or other theft deterrent devices can be effective.

Security garages are only secure if entering and exiting drivers watch the door fully close behind them every time. This is to deter someone from sneaking into the garage behind you.

Remote controls for security garages should never be left inside parked vehicles. They provide future access to returning thieves.

Be Observant And Report

Report all crimes and suspicious activity to 911 immediately. We know the frustration some feel about crime reporting, thinking that calling 911 doesn't make a difference. For police to identify crime trends and devote resources to addressing those trends, we need information from the public. Your reporting provides that information.

PACKAGE THEFT

You may have seen recent local news broadcasts regarding package theft. Package thefts are crimes of opportunity. Thieves will often follow or watch for FedEx, UPS, US Mail and other delivery trucks and then target a home after a delivery is made. Often packages are simply left at the doorstep of the home and in plain view of the street. Package thefts from doorstops and front porches during the day usually increase between the months of October and January. There are steps you can take to be proactive in keeping your package safe from theft. To reduce the chances of being victimized by package delivery thieves, we offer the following advice:

Tracking and Delivery

Track your shipment: All of the major delivery companies offer package tracking, some providing free alerts letting you know where your package is in the shipping process.

Choose a shipping option that requires you to sign for delivery.

Arrange to have the package shipped to another location where someone can receive it. This could be your workplace, a friend or relative's home, with a trusted neighbor, the leasing office at your apartment complex or even the local "mailbox" business that may agree to accept shipment of your item for a fee.

Ask the delivery service to hold your package for customer pick-up at their local shipping facility.

You can buy locking bins that your packages can be stored in safely until you return home to retrieve them. You just give the key code to the delivery company so they can store the package and use your key code to retrieve it. While locking bins are an option, it is recommended you bolt the locking bin down so that it can't be carted away. Also, be mindful that these locking bins run \$500-\$800 on average.

If none of the above are viable options, at the very least request the package be placed in a discrete location not visible from the street.

Package Not Received or You Suspect Theft

If you do not receive your shipment on time, check with the company of origin and confirm the delivery. If something you ordered cannot be located, contact the sender of the package to initiate a trace process. The sender will then follow up with you on the progress of your shipment.

If the item was delivered and you did not receive it, report the theft or loss to the original company, the shipping company, and the Seattle Police Department's non-emergency line at 206-625-5011.

Many package thefts occur during daylight hours. As always, be alert to suspicious behavior in your neighborhood, especially if you see a delivery truck making the rounds and a vehicle following behind or unfamiliar subjects on foot or on your neighbor's property. Be prepared to call 911. Your calls **do** have an impact on crime and criminals.

Delivery Company Liability

Once the package has been delivered, whether signed for or not, it's no longer the shipping company's responsibility. Bottom line, if the package is stolen after delivery, the delivery company is not liable.

We hope this information is useful to you.

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