

## **Burglary and Theft Prevention Tips from the River Forest Police Department**

As the weather warms up, River Forest and its surrounding areas have suffered a number of thefts and burglaries. The majority of these thefts and burglaries are preventable through basic practices. RFPD would like to remind residents of some strategies to prevent becoming a victim of theft.

**-Always lock vehicles**, whether they are parked outside or in a garage. This way, even if a garage door is inadvertently left open, access cannot be gained to the inside of the vehicle.

**-Do not leave spare keys inside a vehicle.** Cars made in the last fifteen years are nearly impossible to steal without a key or a tow truck. As such, cars are rarely stolen in our area, but when they are, it is typically because the thief had access to the vehicle's key.

-When investigating vehicle burglaries, we are occasionally told by victims that they left the vehicle doors unlocked so that a criminal would not damage their windows or doors to steal items. However, it is very rare for offenders in our area to damage vehicles to steal items as it greatly increases their likelihood of getting caught.

-In the rare event an offender damages the vehicle to gain entry, it is **likely** because the vehicle contains valuables visible from outside. As such, do not leave valuable items (including GPS devices) in your vehicle. If you must leave valuables in your vehicle, make sure they are out of plain view from the outside.

**-Keep garage doors closed and/or locked**, even when you are home. We have seen cases where items were stolen from an open garage unbeknownst to homeowners inside the home.

-Invest in a quality bike lock, and keep your bikes locked even when parked inside your garage, yard, or house. U-Locks seem to be the strongest; avoid flexible rope or chain locks as they can be easily cut.

-Register your bike with the village. It is not required, but it is free, easy, and will help us recover your bike if it is lost or stolen.

-If your home is equipped with an alarm system, activate it when you leave home and consider activating a "stay" function (exterior alarmed but no interior motion detectors) when you are in bed. Keep windows and doors closed and locked when you are out of the home or in bed.

Feel free to contact Ofc. Czernik of the Crime Prevention Unit at [gczernik@vrf.us](mailto:gczernik@vrf.us) or at 708-714-3543 if you have any questions or comments.