

Dartmouth Police advise residents to lock their car doors during national vehicle theft prevention month

Chief Brian Levesque and the Dartmouth Police Department would like to advise residents to properly secure their vehicles to prevent break-ins and avoid being easy targets for thieves this season.

The summer season is most popular for vehicle thefts and break-ins, and July is recognized by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) as National Vehicle Theft Prevention Month. According to the NHTSA, each year over 770,000 vehicles are stolen and 40.9% are never recovered.

Additionally, the NHTSA warns that vehicle parts and valuable items left in vehicles are also targets for thieves. Parts that may be targeted include radios, wheel covers, doors, engines, transmissions, air bags and radios, as well as items such as GPS units, cellphones, iPads, laptops and purses.

"Most vehicle break-ins are crimes of opportunity and often occur when valuables, like purses or cellphones, are left inside cars," Chief Levesque said. "We recommend always locking your car and bringing all valuables with you when exiting your vehicle."

The NHTSA and Dartmouth Police remind vehicle owners to use common sense when parking and exiting your vehicle.

- Take your keys. Don't leave them in your vehicle.
- Close all windows and lock all doors.
- Never leave valuables in your vehicle. Anything stored inside your vehicle should be out of sight or in the trunk.

- Never leave credit cards/debit cards, cash or your wallet or purse inside of your vehicle overnight.
- Park in well-lit areas or preferably inside a garage, if possible. Park in visible areas where your vehicle is not hidden by foliage or larger vehicles. Install lights with motion sensors near where you park your vehicle.
- Get in the routine of double-checking that your vehicle is locked and secure each night around 9 p.m. This is known as the 9 p.m. Routine.

If your vehicle has been stolen or broken into, follow these steps:

- Call the police to report a theft or break-in. A copy of the police report and/or a case number will be needed to provide to your insurance company.
- You may be asked to provide the license plate number, make, model and color of the car, the VIN number and any identifying characteristics.
- Contact your insurance company to file a claim within 24 hours of when you discovered your vehicle was stolen or broken into.
- If you find your vehicle before authorities, contact the police immediately and then your insurance company.

VEHICLE THEFT PREVENTION TIPS



Each year, over 770,000 vehicles are stolen.

40.9%

of these vehicles are never recovered.

\$6B

In 2017, this amounted to an estimated loss of \$6B.

IN ORDER TO AVOID THEFT:



Take your keys. Don't leave them in your vehicle.



Close all windows and lock all doors.



Never leave valuables in your vehicle.



Park in well-lit areas or preferably inside a garage, if possible.



Call the police to report a theft or break-in.

VISIT [NHTSA.GOV](https://www.nhtsa.gov) FOR MORE INFORMATION