

Don't be a victim. Common sense can save you thousands!

Vehicle thefts are on the rise, 70-80% of thefts in the fall/winter are people who leave their cars "warming up" in the morning. Thieves drive around just looking for running cars. The week before it got cold, 7-8 cars were stolen in the county areas. Temperature dropped, 26 cars taken that next week! Get a remote start to warm your car, or at the very least, an extra key, and lock it while it's running in your driveway.

***Leaving your car running while going into a gas station, friend's house, "real quick" is a similar opportunity. Crooks cruise gas stations, or stand outside until someone runs into McDs', then you're walking home... ☹

****Most popular stolen cars in NM (separate handout)**

LOCK YOUR DOORS! We had a rash of auto burglaries in the north valley last month, upwards of 20+ cars got burglarized in a single night, all in the same 3-4 block area. EVERY ONE was unlocked. Thieves will walk up and down the street, thru the parking lot, checking every single door, knowing that they will find several unlocked.

TAKE YOUR STUFF INSIDE! Don't leave your laptop that has your whole life on it, on the front seat. Purses, cameras, cell phones, anything they can see will attract them. If they can see it, they won't care if your car is locked, a window can be broken with very little effort.

If you are Christmas shopping, leave stuff in the trunk, or cover it with a blanket if you don't have a trunk. Visible, new, expensive items in your car are like a steak to a dog.

Residences – Again, common sense. LOCK YOUR DOORS. Even if you are home! Thieves are brazen, high, drunk, or desperate. They don't always care if people are home, especially if they have a gun or weapon. They might turn a burglary into a home-invasion robbery.

They can run in and grab whatever's closest to the door and be gone before you get out of the bathroom. (How many of you leave your purse/car keys/laptop bag near the front door?)

LIGHTS! Motion activated, or bright porch lights. Leave lights outside on, if you're not getting home til after dark. Or get solar (dark-activated) outside lights, and timers for inside lights to come on before it gets too dark. Crooks like to work in the dark.

Cameras! They are getting cheaper and more user-friendly. Get cameras outside, inside, etc. You see crooks caught on camera every day on TV. It may help us ID the crook, and a visible camera is a deterrent for crooks. (sometimes)

Action! Be aware of your surroundings! Know your neighbors, and make sure they know you. Share with each other who belongs at your house, and who does not. If you have a druggie son/daughter, crazy ex-BF/GF or someone they may recognize, but you still don't want near your house, TELL YOUR NEIGHBORS. Cops catch more crooks from nosy neighbors calling us than any alarm system in the world. They know if their neighbors are on vacation, and there shouldn't be anyone at the house. Especially the guy crawling into the window...

** (Alarms are also a good deterrent if there are signs and stickers on your property saying you have an alarm, but 98% of alarm calls we get are false activations, so they are a low priority call.)

DOGS! Big dogs are a great deterrent if they can be seen, even little dogs are a good warning system in the house, but be careful if you have a doggie door, it's an easy way for a crook to get in.

Watch your trash! Because crooks are doing it too. If you got a new laptop, TV, camera or whatever that came in a box, DON'T throw the box in the trash that goes out on the curb. Use a box-cutter to slice the big boxes into pieces so it will fit in your car, and take them to the recycle place, or a dumpster.

* Especially after the holidays, when everyone goes crazy on Black Friday and Christmas.

Remember, Privacy works both ways. If you have a big wall/fence around your property so nobody can see you, nobody can see the burglar who just climbed over it either. Trees, bushes by your windows, stuff crooks can hide behind, etc.

Install Steel security doors, not glass/screen doors. If your front door has glass panels in it, it's an easy target.

Deadbolts, not 'door-chains', on ALL the doors that go into your house.

Wrought-iron on the windows will keep most crooks from even looking at your house.

Put long 3-inch screws on your strike plates, so they go into the frame. Standard screws make a door easy to kick in. (We kick in a lot of doors, and some are much harder than others.)

*****If the thief gets in, PROTECT YOURSELF INSIDE AS WELL.**

I take dozens of burglary reports where people have \$10,000 rings, \$6,000 bracelets, diamonds, CASH, etc. 15-20 firearms stolen, enough to supply a whole gang of thieves, all just sitting in the closet or under a bed. *Newsflash: burglars look there.... A jewelry box on the dresser with \$40,000 worth of jewelry inside, seriously? LOCK IT UP.

** A large high-quality vault-style gun safe that would take a torch and a crowbar and an hour to break into, might cost you \$800-1200.

Walk around your room, closet, etc., and add up how much all your jewelry, watches, guns, etc. are worth. As soon as the total is more than \$800, BUY A SAFE! You can also keep the documents that the identity thieves steal in the safe. (Birth certificates, car titles, passports, etc.) These get stolen ALL THE TIME.

****A great deal of our cases are derived from victims who knew and trusted the offenders. Roommates, new boyfriends/girlfriends, House sitters, Cleaning ladies, medical caregivers, people allowed to "stay for a few days", relatives w/ drug problems, etc, etc.**

People are getting victimized by people they allow into their homes; willingly loan their vehicles too, etc. They come home, and discover a large amount of valuable jewelry, a great deal of cash they keep in their dresser drawer, etc., has been removed and they didn't even realize it for a week or more.

Lock up your jewelry, valuables, keep them in a safe at home, a safe deposit box, don't keep hundreds of dollars in cash in your sock drawer!, It sounds bad, but don't trust every single person you let into your house. If you just met this girl/guy you're dating, or a new roommate, ask yourself what you have that's worth stealing and easy to do so, and exercise some prevention!

Don't leave things lying out to tempt a potential thief. Very often, thefts are a simple crime of opportunity. They saw it so they took it, plain and simple.

Crooks are lazy and opportunistic, make it harder for them to take from you, and they will pick an easier target.