



**BURGLARY OF MOTOR VEHICLES (BMV)
AUTO THEFT
CRIMINAL MISCHIEF TO VEHICLES**



Every 2.5 minutes, an automobile is burglarized in Texas. In addition, a car is stolen in Texas every 5.5 minutes. The Texas Automobile Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority (ABTPA) states that vehicle theft is often a “gateway” crime, meaning it leads to other, more serious crimes like drug smuggling and the buying and selling of weapons. The ABTPA also reports that a stolen vehicle from Houston was discovered in the hands of terrorists as it was being outfitted as a car bomb in Iraq (See related Boston Globe article: http://boston.com/news/world/articles/2005/10/02/us_car_theft_rings_probed_for_ties_to_iraq_bombings/).

The Briar Forest Super Neighborhood experienced approximately 58 thefts, many of which were BMVs in September and early October of 2009. The thefts represented less than one percent of thefts occurring across Houston. 36 percent of the thefts took place at single family residences while 41 percent occurred in apartment complexes. Briar Forest also experienced 13 auto thefts during the same time period. The auto thefts represented less than one percent of all auto thefts occurring across Houston. 85 percent of the auto thefts took place in apartment complexes. **These crimes are largely preventable!**

Please seriously consider the following suggestions:

- For single family residences, the key crime prevention method is parking your vehicle(s) in your garage and locking the garage doors.
- Do not leave valuables in your car or at the very least do hide your belongings from eyesight. Don't make your car a more desirable target for thieves by leaving valuables in plain sight.

In an emergency, phone 911

If you live in a contract neighborhood, phone the Constable: 281.463.6666



- Always keep your car doors locked, even if you are only leaving it for a few moments.
- Do not leave your keys in your car. The (ABTPA) reports that over half of the vehicles stolen last year in Texas were unlocked and half of those had the keys left inside. Extra keys hidden in a car can easily be found if a thief takes time to look. It is also illegal to leave your keys in your unattended vehicle and if your car is stolen with the keys in it, your insurance company may not cover your loss.
- Park in well-lighted areas. If you park in your driveway, consider installing at least motion sensitive security lighting.
- Completely close car windows when parking. Don't make it any easier for the thief to enter your vehicle.
- Park with your wheels turned towards the curb. Make your car tough to tow away. Wheels should also be turned to the side in driveways.
- If your vehicle is rear-wheel drive, back into your driveway. Front-wheel drive vehicles should be parked front end first.
- Don't leave the registration or title in your car. A car thief will use these to sell your stolen car. File the title at your home or office, and carry registration in your purse or wallet.
- Drop business cards, address labels, or other I.D. inside vehicle doors. Car thieves usually alter vehicle identification numbers. By marking your vehicle as much as possible, you assist police in identifying your car.



Register in the Texas H.E.A.T. Program

Car owners not normally using their vehicles between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. sign an agreement allowing peace officers to stop a vehicle and verify ownership if they observe it being driven during those hours. Owners may extend additional authority at the time of registration to have the vehicle stopped for verification 24-hours-a-day at the Texas-Mexico border. Register on-line at:

[https://records.txdps.state.tx.us/DPS WEB/Heat/index.aspx?PageIndex=Caveats](https://records.txdps.state.tx.us/DPS_WEB/Heat/index.aspx?PageIndex=Caveats)

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