



## **Coldspring Community Association**

### **Crime Watch Information**

#### **YOU CAN HELP REDUCE CRIME & AVOID BEING A VICTIM**

Taking simple precautions can dramatically reduce your chances of being a victim of property crime according to Major Ross Buzzuro, Northern District Police Commander. Auto theft, larceny from auto and burglary are all increased when people forget to lock doors and windows and leave things in plain view. For example, nearly fifty percent of auto break ins currently involve portable GPS systems that are easy to resell.

To reduce the chances of having your automobile stolen, use some form of visible steering wheel lock. You can also have a hidden “kill switch” installed in your vehicle so that it can’t be started. And, don’t leave your car running and unlocked while you quickly run into the store to pick up something. Never leave your keys in your car, even when you are pumping gas. Lock your doors and close your sun roof.

Some people think that leaving their car door unlocked or a window open is a good way of reducing damage when someone wants to break into their car. Not a good idea. It is better to reduce the temptation by not leaving anything in plain view. Coins in the ash tray or cup holder, CD’s on the seat, cell phones, and even a package from a store are all of interest to the thief who is looking for items that can be quickly turned into cash. If you carefully hide an electronic device, remember to hide the cigarette lighter cord as well. Handicapped permit hangers on the rear view mirror are especially prized targets because they are easy to resell. When you don’t need to have one displayed, keep it out of sight.

More than fifty percent of burglaries occur where a house door is unlocked or a window is open. Most thieves are seeking targets with easy access. Unlocked garages and storage sheds are especially convenient targets. Don’t wait until you are a victim to make a list of your belongings. Make a list that includes the serial numbers of every item you can think of – computers, TV’s, stereo equipment, cameras, watches, power tools, bikes, etc. You can also use an engraver to place your Maryland Driver’s License number on your belongings. This way, police can quickly track that number if they recover stolen property (contact the Northern District to borrow an engraving device). You can also take photographs of valuables to help with identification. Many of the items that the Baltimore Police Department recovers can’t be returned to owners, because there is no way of identifying them.

Please do not wait until after you are victimized to become aware and take action. A few hours of preventative work and a little bit of awareness can prevent a lot of heartache.