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## CRIME PREVENTION: Stolen Vehicles and Thefts

Hopefully the frigid temps and slippery roads are on their way out and spring can make an appearance soon!

The Dane County Sheriff's Office and other local law enforcement agencies have been responding to numerous reports of stolen vehicles and thefts from autos throughout the winter. There are no signs of this slowing down, but you can help prevent yourself from becoming a victim.

Recent statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show a vehicle is stolen every 45 seconds and nearly 42 percent of these vehicles are never recovered. The estimated total value of vehicles stolen nationwide is more than \$5 billion.

There are simple steps to take to prevent your vehicle from being stolen. Many vehicles have been stolen because they were left unlocked and running. Never leave your vehicle unattended while it's running and always take your keys. Don't leave your keys in or on your vehicle. Close and lock all windows and doors when you park, even in the warmer months.

Thefts from autos are also a concern year round. Again, you should always lock your vehicle doors and keep the windows closed. Park close to light sources, in highly visible areas. Limit the amount of personal information kept in the glove box or console to avoid identify theft. Remove expensive items or conceal items visible in your vehicle that might make you a target such as purses, laptops, GPS units, and loose change.

These types of crimes are often committed because the opportunity is there and the suspect sees the easy target of an unlocked vehicle. Don't make it easy for thieves and make it a habit to lock your vehicle and protect your valuables.

Always be vigilant of suspicious persons or behavior and call 911 right away if observed.

If you would like more information on these topics, please contact Deputy Leslie Fox at the Dane County Sheriff's Office at 608-283-3964 or [fox.leslie@danesherriff.com](mailto:fox.leslie@danesherriff.com).