

Orston Neighbourhood Watch: Car Key Burglaries – Thwart the criminals

Orston and surrounding villages have been targeted more than once in the last few months by criminals breaking into homes to steal car keys and subsequently the vehicles themselves, i.e. Car Key Burglaries. The thieves will scout residential areas looking for opportunities to exploit security weaknesses

This type of burglary often targets the more sought after, high end models and makes including VW, Audi, BMW and Land Rover. However, many other brands are also chosen, especially Ford Fiesta's which seem to be targeted mainly for parts as the model is now discontinued. Other makes and models include the likes of the Toyota Hilux where offenders have identified a security flaw in the design. .

The vehicles stolen often end up being used in other criminal offences, sold on or broken down for parts.

Methods Used

1. Keyless Car Theft: Thieves use devices to capture the signal from keyless entry fobs, allowing them to unlock and start the vehicle without ever physically handling the keys ("relay car theft"). This method can take as little as 20-30 seconds
2. Home Break-Ins: Criminals break into homes to directly access car keys, often looking for keys left in visible or easily accessible locations

Prevention Tips

To protect against car key burglaries, we should consider the following actions:

- **Secure Your Home**: Always lock doors and windows, and consider installing a high-quality burglar alarm and security lighting
- **Store Keys Safely**: Keep car keys hidden out of sight and away from doors and windows. Avoid leaving them in easily accessible places like kitchen counters or hooks
- **Use Signal Blocking Pouches**: For keyless entry vehicles, use a RFID wallet, pouch or tin (Faraday bag) to block signals from being captured by thieves
- **Park Wisely**: Obviously in a garage if possible. If you have multiple vehicles, park the more valuable one behind the less expensive one to deter thieves
- **Install Additional Security**: Consider using steering locks, immobilizers, or tracking devices. Steering locks are relatively inexpensive and a strong visual deterrent but don't keep your steering lock key and car key together.

Conclusion

“Car key burglaries” are a growing concern. By implementing effective security measures and being vigilant, we can significantly reduce the risk of becoming victims. Always report any suspicious activity to the local police.