



For Immediate Release
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CRIMINALS TARGETING UNLOCKED CARS

Harrisonburg, VA – The Harrisonburg Police Department is asking for the community's help with information related to a string of vehicle break-ins. The offender is targeting unlocked vehicles primarily in Harrisonburg's District 7, which includes, but is not limited to, Laurel Street, Toppin Boulevard, Neyland Drive, Ohio Avenue, Maplehurst Avenue, and Sharpes Drive. Other districts have fallen victim to vehicle break-ins as well, but not to such extent as District 7. You can view the entire district and find out what district you're in, along with who your district officers are, by visiting <http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/geographical-policing>.

The vehicles were entered primarily through unlocked doors, but there has also been forced entry into vehicles by breaking a window in some cases. The thieves have taken various items, including electronic devices, purses, and cash. In some incidents, nothing appears to have been taken. Police believe the vehicles targeted for this activity reside in the same areas as the thieves and they will continue with the burglary spree until they are caught.

Alert citizens are the eyes of their neighborhoods. Officials are asking anyone who observes suspicious activity in their areas to contact the police immediately.

Here are some general safety tips to remember in order to help prevent becoming a victim:

- **Lock your car.** Yes, it seems obvious, but it still needs to be mentioned. No matter how little time you will be away from your car, ALWAYS LOCK your car! The majority of local vehicle break-ins occur with unlocked car doors.
- **Remove valuables.** This tip is just as obvious, yet many people are guilty of leaving valuables in plain sight. It's a fact that most thefts from vehicles are crimes of



opportunity. For the most part, people try to break into others' property when there is reason to believe they will be rewarded for their risk. Keeping your belongings safe is as simple as hiding them when leaving your car in public.

- **Find lighting.** Park in well-lit areas, and avoid parking between two vehicles that are larger than yours. If you put your vehicle in a secluded area that provides great cover for a thief, it makes it an easy target.

Common sense and instincts prevail, and prevention is the best key. If something seems wrong, or you see any type of suspicious behavior in your community, report it.

HPD encourages anyone in the community who observes suspicious or criminal activity to report it by calling 911. Callers who have information about crimes and wish to remain anonymous may call Crime Solvers at 540-574-5050. Crime Solvers offers cash rewards for anonymous tips leading to arrests. Tipsters may also text "HPD" plus their tip to CRIMES (274637).

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