



LANCASTER CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

NEWS RELEASE

City of Lancaster
Bureau of Police, 39 West Chestnut Street, Lancaster, Pa. 17603
www.lancasterpolice.com

Author: Det. Steve Owens

Contact Number:

Date: October 24, 2009

Unlocked Vehicles and Vehicle thefts

Now that the weather has turned colder people are prone to start their vehicles and then return inside their house as the car warms up. Between October 1st and October 22 there have been 4 vehicle thefts between the 1st Blk N Charlotte St and the 500 Blk N Charlotte St. All of these thefts resulted from the keys to the vehicle being located in the unlocked vehicle.

Residents of Lancaster City are reminded that Lancaster City Ordinance prohibits this practice:

§ 285-105. Leaving key in lock.

The owner or person in charge of any motor vehicle shall not permit it to stand unattended on any street, private driveway, public or private parking lot, used or new car sales lot or any other unattended open space which is readily accessible to any person without having locked the ignition of such motor vehicle and removed the ignition key from its lock

In addition, the Ordinance authorizes the Police Officer to seize the keys to the vehicle and requires the owner to retrieve the keys at the Lancaster City Police Station, 39 W. Chestnut St., Lancaster, PA.

§ 285-106. Removal of key by police officer; notice of violation.

Any police officer of the City who finds a motor vehicle left in the condition set forth in § 285-105 may immediately lock such vehicle's ignition, remove the key from the lock and deliver it to the officer in charge at the Police Station in the Public Safety Building. The police officer shall leave a notice of any violation found in a conspicuous place on such vehicle, which notice shall also state where the ignition key has been taken and held.

In addition, the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code (Title 75) also prohibits the practice of leaving the car unattended:

(Sec 3701) Unattended motor vehicle.

No person driving or in charge of a motor vehicle shall permit the vehicle to stand unattended without placing the gear shift lever in a position which under the circumstances impedes the movement of the vehicle, stopping the



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engine, locking the ignition in vehicles so equipped, removing the key from the ignition and, when standing upon any grade, turning the front wheels to the curb or side of the highway and effectively setting the brake.

The Lancaster Bureau of Police, Uniformed Patrol Division and Lancaster Bureau of Police Auto Theft Unit intends to increase enforcement and awareness of the above violations. It is the intention of the Lancaster Bureau of Police to minimize the opportunity for vehicle theft suspects to steal cars.

Residents are reminded that in order to prevent the theft of their vehicle they should:

1. Always lock your vehicle no matter how short a period of time you will be away from the vehicle.
2. Never leave keys for your vehicle in the vehicle, even using "hidden" locations. The suspects are well aware of these hidden boxes and check those areas for keys.
3. Never leave your vehicle running unattended, even with the doors locked. Suspects can, and have, broken windows to gain entry.
4. Never leave valuables, electronics, purses, or wallets in plain view within your vehicle. Often the suspects target the vehicle solely for those items and happen across a key for the vehicle.
5. Remove all "valet keys" or other spare keys from the glove box that were included with your vehicle.

Anyone with information on people responsible for the theft of vehicles or Theft from Vehicles is encouraged to call the Lancaster City Police Auto Theft Unit. Callers may remain anonymous
717 735-3300.

(end of release)