

Dear Homeowners:

It has been brought to our attention that a vehicle break-in and theft have taken place within the neighborhood. Please be aware of your surroundings and contact the authorities should you witness any suspicious activities.

Locking your car and setting your alarm are just a couple ways to prevent a burglary to your vehicle. However, despite locking and alarming your vehicle, if you leave valuables (or a hint of valuables) in plain sight, a thief may target your car anyway. Without a clear prize in sight, a locked or alarmed car will likely be bypassed for an easier target.

To prevent and reduce the threat of falling victim to this crime, here are a few tips:

- **Don't leave valuables in your car:** It seems like common sense, but drivers or passengers leave items of value in plain view every day. If you leave valuable items visible in your car, your car is automatically a target. If you must leave packages or shopping bags in your car unattended, lock them out of sight, in the trunk. This includes leaving loose change in the console or cup holder.
- **Leave no trace:** Don't leave any sign that there may be valuables out of sight in your vehicle, such as docking stations or connector cables. Leave nothing in plain view that could make your vehicle worth targeting by a thief, especially coins or phone chargers. Additionally, remove your garage door opener from sight. Depending on how it is programmed, it could be used to open your garage, attached residence, or building.
- **Lock all vehicle doors:** Every year, we have items stolen from unlocked vehicles where the owner was only going to be gone just for a second. It only takes seconds to steal your belongings!
- **Set any alarm or anti-theft device:** If you have one, use it! Many people believe that car alarms no longer make a difference, but they can be an effective deterrent to an auto-burglar, who most often chooses the easiest target.
- **What to do if your car is burglarized:** As soon as you notice something has been stolen or your car has been broken into, do not touch/adjust anything in, on, or around the car. Call the police as soon as possible to report it and let the responding officer determine if evidence is present.

Going Away

- Make your home appear occupied when you go out.
- Leave lights on and the radio playing.
- Keep your garage door closed and locked.
- Use timing devices to turn inside lights on and off.

- If you will be gone several days, arrange to have the mail and papers stopped or picked up. Half of all home burglaries occur during the day when alert neighbors could spot and report the thieves.

Ten Things You and Your Neighbors Can Do

- Work with public agencies and other neighborhood-based or community-wide organizations to solve common problems. Don't be shy about letting them know what your community needs.
- Make sure the youth in the neighborhood have positive ways to spend their spare time through organized recreation, tutoring programs, part-time work, and volunteer opportunities.
- Set up a Neighborhood Watch or a community patrol with the police. Make sure your streets and homes are well-lit.
- Build a partnership with police, focused on solving problems instead of reacting to crises. Make it possible for neighbors to report suspicious activity or crimes without fear of retaliation.
- Take advantage of "safety in numbers" to hold rallies, marches, and other group activities to show your determination to drive out crime and drugs.
- Clean up the neighborhood! Involve everyone: teens, children, and senior citizens. Graffiti, litter, abandoned cars, and run-down buildings tell criminals that you don't care about where you live or each other. Call the city public works department and ask for help in cleaning up.
- Ask local officials to use new ways to get criminals out of your building or neighborhood. These include enforcing anti-noise laws, housing codes, health and fire codes, anti-nuisance laws, and drug-free clauses in rental leases.
- Form a Court Watch to help support victims and witnesses, and to see that criminals get fairly punished.
- Work with schools to establish drug-free, gun-free zones; work with recreation officials to do the same for parks.
- Develop and share a phone list of local organizations that can provide counseling, job training, guidance, and other services that neighbors might need.

Regards,

Board of Directors
White Oak Springs HOA, Inc.

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