

?Lock It, or Lose It?

The Ontario Provincial Police are participating in the Province-wide Lock it OR Lose it Campaign and warning motorists about the dangers of property and identity theft resulting from unlocked vehicles or the leaving of valuables in plain view. The campaign is sponsored by the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police's (OACP) and encourages drivers to take precautions to protect their vehicles and vehicle contents from theft, particularly during the holiday season.

Leaving vehicles unlocked or valuables in plain sight is an invitation for thieves to steal your values. Our police service wants people to take the time to keep their property safe, Thieves are also looking for anything in a vehicle that allows them to engage in identity theft. Don't give them the opportunity. Keep anything with your personal information with you

During the Lock it OR Lose it Campaign, police officers examine parked vehicles to confirm they are locked and that no valuables have been left in plain view. Officers place a small notice on vehicles checked indicating what safety precautions were neglected and offer simple prevention tips for drivers to protect their vehicles against theft. The notices also congratulate drivers who have secured their vehicle.

?The insurance industry remains a strong supporter of the Lock It OR Lose It Campaign. We know it works,? said Rick Dubin, Vice-President, Investigative Services, Insurance Bureau of Canada. ?While actual vehicle thefts have dropped, we are very concerned about identity theft and identity fraud. Cases of identity theft and fraud have increased across Canada from 10,807 to 11,594 in 2013 ? a 6% increase.?

Dubin urged motorists not to keep personal documents such as vehicle ownership, liability pink slips, credit card invoices, or other documents containing personal information in their vehicles. Identity thieves are looking for such documents so they can assume identities, secure credit card accounts, lease vehicles for export, and even take out a mortgage against victims' properties without their knowledge. Victims may not realize they have been victimized until it is too late, costing them time and money to rectify the damage.