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Dufferin OPP warn of increase in vehicle thefts]

Officers from the Dufferin detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) are investigating multiple new thefts of motor vehicles.

Dufferin County is impacted by an increased vehicle theft trend affecting the entire Greater Toronto Area. Recent reports indicate that RAM pick-up trucks, years 2020 to 2023, are predominantly targeted. On many occasions, thieves are observed in neighbourhoods prior to the thefts occurring to record VIN numbers and to disable alarm systems to facilitate the theft later. These crimes are often occurring in the early hours of the day, between 2 a.m. and 5 a.m.

If you observed suspicious activity in your neighbourhood, report it immediately by calling 9-1-1.

Today's auto thieves are increasingly turning to technology that bypasses security systems allowing vehicles to be stolen. Electronic auto theft is on the rise as more vehicles are equipped with technology such as keyless entry fobs. In fact, the insurance industry has seen the growing trend that thieves are able to copy fob information and steal cars right from your driveway. The term ?relay thefts? involves the use of equipment designed to boost and exploit the signals sent out by a vehicle's legitimate key fob. This allows for a thief to unlock and start an engine of a vehicle remotely.

Residents can help protect their vehicles by taking any of the following crime prevention measures:

? Ensure your vehicle keys are kept well away from doors and windows

? Use a signal blocking pouch/box - they can block your key fob from transmitting its code to the vehicle as the pouch is lined with layers or metallic material

? Turn off the keyless fob wireless signal at night (refer to your car manual for instructions)

? Use a steering wheel lock or car alarm - this could add a significantly delay or be a deterrent for thieves

? Consider a secondary audible car alarm - which works by using sensors placed in different points of your vehicle

? Park in the garage (if possible)

? Insert a car tracker - unusual activity is monitored, and car can be tracked using GPS if stolen

Police and its insurance industry partners also want to raise public awareness about the opportunities for criminals who intend to steal personal identification from unsecured vehicles. Licenses, insurance, vehicle ownerships, passports, as well as mobile devices or laptops, offer criminals the opportunity to further victimize individuals who do not lock their vehicles, or who leave their valuables in plain view.

Vehicle owners/passengers can do simple things to decrease the risk of being victimized, such as:

? Never leave a running vehicle unattended

? Lock your doors

? Roll up your windows

? Keep valuables out of sight

? Keep your registration and proof of insurance in your wallet or purse, not in the glove box

? Pocket your keys

? At night or during extended parking periods, always park in a well-lit area.