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Morris County Residents Urged to Secure Their Vehicles, Remove Key Fobs

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Morris County Acting Prosecutor Robert J. Carroll, Morris County Acting Chief of Detectives Chris Kimker, Morris County Sheriff James Gannon and President of the Morris County Police Chiefs' Association, Chester Police Chief Thomas Williver, remind residents to always lock their vehicles and residences, and to take key fobs and valuables out of their vehicles, even if the vehicle is parked in a driveway or garage.

The Morris County Prosecutor's Office Intelligence Unit, Morris County Auto Theft Task Force, and Morris County Sheriff's Trends and Analysis Team (MCSTAT) has been combating the recent trend of thefts of unlocked vehicles throughout northern New Jersey that are stolen by organized thieves targeting our communities. Specifically, during 2018, 2019, and 2020, Morris County law enforcement identified a significant increase in motor vehicle burglaries and thefts within the county. In total, there were 640 motor vehicles stolen in Morris County during this three-year period. Law enforcement has found that these vehicles are often stolen or burglarized during the overnight hours while residents are sleeping. Many of the vehicles taken by thieves were left unlocked, with key fobs left inside the car. **87% of the vehicles stolen in Morris County in 2020 have had keys or a key fob located within the vehicle.** Thieves often target luxury vehicles but also steal other vehicles to commit violent crimes, including robberies.

It is also important that residents remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity to local law enforcement. A recent criminal behavior has also included vehicle entry to steal garage door openers enabling access to the home itself, clearly escalating the potential danger to our citizens. It is imperative that each night, residents follow a routine of checking if their vehicles are locked and doors secured, including their garage doors, portable openers and keys before going to sleep.

Morris County Law Enforcement is working collectively to disrupt these organized thieves. We are asking the public to do their part by taking preventative steps to secure their homes, garages and motor vehicles.

We also ask you to help us solve crimes by reporting to us any suspicious activity that you view on your personal surveillance cameras. **Please report this information to us even if you are not the victim of a crime because it may assist law enforcement in solving other thefts.** Please provide a copy of this suspicious camera footage to your local police department.

Acting Morris County Prosecutor Robert J. Carroll stated, “The Morris County Prosecutor’s Office is committed to working with local law enforcement to make our communities safe and secure. The Morris County Prosecutor’s Office Intelligence Unit, in conjunction with local law enforcement, will continue to be guided by intelligence and respond to crime trends in our community to make Morris County a great place to live and work.”

Morris County Sheriff James Gannon stated, “Almost all of the cars stolen in Morris County this year were taken because the fob was left in the vehicle. These criminals have several ways of determining which vehicles contain the electronic keys before approaching them. My strong recommendation is this - take your key fob in the house and place it on your nightstand. Making your car inaccessible is the greatest deterrent. Not only does this habit safeguard your vehicle but if you hear activity outside, you can remotely turn on your car lights from bed, or activate your car alarm to scare the would-be thieves away.”

Morris County Chiefs of Police Association President Thomas Williver stated: “This pandemic has not slowed down the car thieves a bit. The Morris County Chiefs of Police Association can't stress to our citizens enough to remember to take your key fobs out of your vehicles and lock your doors at all times. The task force is making great progress and will continue to work hard to bring these thieves to justice.”

Together, law enforcement and residents can prevent these crimes from occurring.


Inquiries concerning this press release should be directed to Public Information Officer Meghan Knab at mknab@co.morris.nj.us or by phone at 973-829-8159.

The public is reminded to report any unfolding crime to their local police department by calling 911 or for non-emergencies the public should use their local police department’s non-emergency phone number.



**LOCK IT
OR
LOSE IT**



**LOCK
YOUR CAR**



TAKE



ALL BELONGINGS

**EVERYDAY A CAR IS STOLEN
IN MORRIS COUNTY
DON'T BECOME A VICTIM**

IF YOU HAVE INFORMATION, CALL YOUR LOCAL POLICE DEPARTMENT