

**Watchwords by Officer Tom Hanshaw**  
**November 12, 2010**

Although we only experience a few incidents annually in Amesbury, the larceny of a motor vehicle remains one of the more prevalent crimes today. Certainly there are more incidents in larger cities but car thefts can occur anywhere and anytime. With the holiday shopping season just around the corner as well as the colder weather, the number of incidents is likely to increase. Every owner can take a few steps to reduce the odds of his or her vehicle being stolen. In many cases the car is recovered but often with items missing or significant damage. Here are a few tips to remember before leaving your car, truck or mini-van unattended.

Regardless of the make, model, condition or value of the car, a thief will take anything. In many cases, a car thief is using the vehicle to get to another location and “borrows the wheels” to make the trip easier. Younger thieves may also take a vehicle to use for a joy ride, cruising around until being caught, becoming tired of the vehicle or damaging it. In some cases, a vehicle is stolen, stripped for parts or even transported to another country. The goal is to make stealing your car tougher, so it’s less likely to be taken for a ride.

As the mornings get colder, many motorists will allow their vehicle to idle and warm up. Leaving a vehicle unattended can be a dangerous practice, so you’ve got to keep an eye on it. This also applies when stopping for a moment to run an errand. A quick stop at the bank, convenience store or restaurant can be just enough for a thief who is looking for an opportunity. Don’t try to save a few seconds by leaving your keys in the ignition either. It’s best to park in busy, well lit spaces in parking lots and never leave valuables, like a GPS or GPS holder in plain sight to those passing by. Consider an alarm or other deterrent device, that audible warning may scare off a thief or certainly cause people to look. Be sure to lock doors, close windows and store any packages in the trunk. Finally, if your car is missing or stolen, report the incident to police immediately. Be sure you know your registration number and be provide a good description, including the time it was last seen. Quick reporting of a stolen vehicle increases the chances it will be seen by an officer on patrol thanks to the availability of radios and computers.

Thanksgiving, the Holiday Season and winter are quickly approaching. The annual, “Fill A Cruiser with Food” Drive to support “Our Neighbor’s Table” will be held on Saturday November 20<sup>th</sup> this year at the STOP & SHOP Plaza on Macy Street, Rte. 110. This event has been quite successful in previous years and we are hoping the community is generous again. The items collected will be distributed through the Food Pantry at Our Neighbor’s ’able to assist families during the upcoming months. Joan Bukosky of Our Neighbor’s Table, told me the Pantry is in need of many items this year, including canned soup, canned meals like beef stew, beans or spaghetti, canned fruits and vegetables, boxed pasta and juice. The items may be dropped off at the Super STOP & SHOP on Saturday November 20<sup>th</sup>, between 9:00 AM and 2:00 PM or at the Police Station, 19 School Street at anytime. Donations of money are also used by the Program to purchase perishable food items each week, such as milk, bread and dairy products.