

City of Portland

Vehicle Prowl Prevention

Car prowl is defined as the unlawful taking of motor vehicle content or parts. Most vehicle prowls are done as a crime of opportunity. An offender will often choose a car to break into based on the perception of the items of value visible in the vehicle. A car prowl can be completed in a minute or less at any time of day and in a variety of settings from street parking to parking lots and garages.

General methods of entry include: through an unlocked door, breaking through the window, hacking keyless entry systems, using older model vehicle keys, or wedges and other tools.

Items frequently stolen from car prowls include: laptops and accessories, electronic devices, mail, personal documentation, purses, wallets, luggage, gym bags, money, credit cards, and cell phones and accessories.

How to prevent Car Prowls

The following list includes some things anyone can do to help reduce the chance of their vehicle becoming a target for car prowls.

- Close vehicle windows and lock vehicle doors every time.
- Remove all valuables and bags when leaving your vehicle.
- Before reaching your destination, if possible, place items in your trunk or out of visual access.
- Keep unused chargers and accessories in your glove box.
- Do not keep credit cards or sensitive information in your vehicle unattended.
- Do not leave garage door openers or keys in the vehicle unattended.
- Park in a garage, secured parking or a well-lit area.
- Be observant when you exit or enter your vehicle, check for suspicious behavior.
- Consider installing a security system in your vehicle.
- Be sure to set your alarm every time you leave your vehicle.
- Try not to leave your vehicle unattended in a parking lot for extended periods of time.
- Avoid parking near things that limit visibility and provide hiding places.
- Get a key lock for your glove compartment to store sensitive docs (e.g. insurance cards).
- Do not start your vehicle and leave it running unattended.

Chloe Eudaly,
Commissioner
Suk Rhee, Director

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1221 SW 4th Avenue,
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503-823-9333
portlandoregon.gov/civic

The City of Portland is committed to providing meaningful access. To request translation, interpretation, modifications, accommodations, or other auxiliary aids or services, contact 503-823-4000, Relay: 711.

Traducción o interpretación

Traducere sau Interpretare

Chuyển Ngữ hoặc Phiên Dịch

Письмовий або усний переклад

الترجمة التحريرية أو الشفهية

翻译或传译

翻訳または通訳

ການແປພາສາ ຫຼື ການອະທິບາຍ

Письменный или устный перевод

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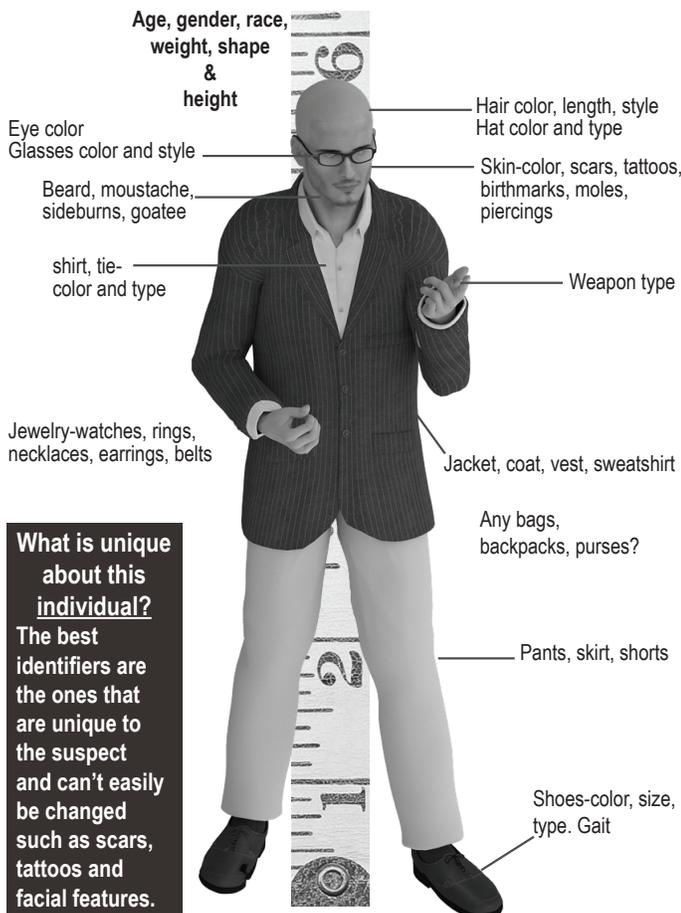
Identifying Car Prowlers

Car prowls are often a gateway to other crimes such as, identity theft, burglaries and even vehicle theft. Being able to identify a car prowler in action can be a key to prevention and keeping the crime from escalation. The most common time for prowling and thefts is between 10pm and 4am when people have gone to bed and their is less chance of someone seeing them. Some suspicious behaviors to look for when identifying a car prowler include:

- Someone looking into windows of multiple vehicles
- Someone testing and pulling door handles
- The same person walking by vehicles slowly multiple time over a short period of time
- Someone loading items from a vehicle onto a bike or secondary transport or backpack

Reporting suspicious behavior

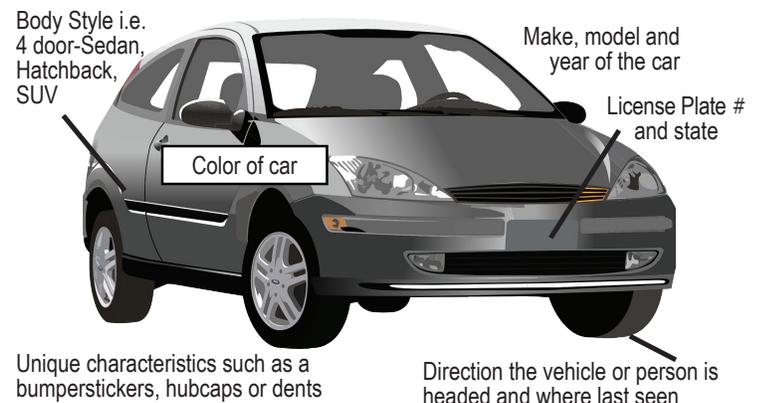
When identifying a potential car prowler it is important to focus on specific behaviors. Behavior is what makes someone's activities suspicious, not their appearance, race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, or housing status. Things to identify include: what the person is doing that is suspicious, when the suspicious activity began, if it is still occurring, location of the activity, and if the suspect leaves in what direction they went. For immediate threats to life or property or a crime in progress call 9-1-1. When you observe suspicious activity that is not an immediate threat call non-emergency at 503.823.3333. If you are not sure if you should call 9-1-1 or non-emergency, error on the side of caution and call 9-1-1. When describing the suspect to the call-taker try to identify as many key features as possible. See examples below:



What is unique about this individual?
The best identifiers are the ones that are unique to the suspect and can't easily be changed such as scars, tattoos and facial features.

Note: if you do not have evidence of the burglary (e.g. witness, surveillance etc.) still file a police report. Report crime every time, with or without evidence.

Is the suspect walking or driving a car, motorcycle or bicycle? Take note of:



Working with your neighbors to prevent Car Prowls

Encourage your neighbors to watch for suspicious activity and organize together before or when there is car prowls, known suspects (if any), and notices of suspicious activities and behaviors in the neighborhood. A good way to share the information with neighbors is by creating a Neighborhood Watch. If you are interested in organizing a Neighborhood Watch, contact your Crime Prevention Team online at portlandoregon.gov/civic/cp.

For more information on how to start a Neighborhood Watch go online to portlandoregon.gov/civic/62587.

Reporting Car Prowls



Reporting Toolkit

Is it an immediate or life-threatening emergency?

YES

Dial 911 - Be prepared to provide information (i.e. location, suspect details, involved persons). Do not hang up until instructed to do so.

NO

Are you calling to report a crime or suspicious activity?

YES

Does the incident involve any of the following:

- Known suspect(s)
- Stolen vehicles
- Domestic violence
- Vehicular accidents
- Firearms
- Hit and runs
- RX Medication
- Require police presence

NO

NO

YES

Report online:
portlandoregon.gov/police/cor/

Call Portland Non-Emergency
at (503) 823-3333.

Are you reporting livability issues and violations (e.g. campsites, potholes, illegal/abandoned vehicles)?

YES

NO

Go to pdxreporter.org and file a report (you will need a portlandoregon.gov account to login).

Do you need help and/or training for your business, neighborhood or residence, but don't know where to start?

YES

To get more training and connect with your Crime Prevention Team go online to:
portlandoregon.gov/civic/cp

Your Crime Prevention Team's mission is to organize and support community partnerships to prevent crime and the fear of crime. You can also find online resources and training tools on the Office of Community & Civic Life, Crime Prevention Program website portlandoregon.gov/civic/cpadvice.



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