



WESTPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Press Release

Westport Police Department Notes an Increase in Property Crimes

(Westport, CT) As the COVID-19 quarantines and associated restrictions have gradually eased here in the state of Connecticut, you most likely have noticed the marked increase in daily vehicular traffic throughout Fairfield County. Unfortunately, traffic is not the only thing that seems to be on the rise. What has been the most striking to the Westport Police Department is a marked increase in the perpetration of various property crimes. When comparing an approximately forty day period from late May to early July in the year 2019 with the present, a number of statistics seem to indicate an upward trend in the occurrence of these types of incidents. The following data as has been detailed below is taken from that period in the year 2019 as well as the present.

Within this period in the year 2019, the department investigated a total of three stolen motor vehicle complaints. In 2020, we have investigated a total of ten within the same time period, with an eleventh stolen vehicle from another jurisdiction having been recovered here in our town. In every case, the vehicle that had been stolen was left unlocked with keys inside of it during timeframes which generally encompass the overnight hours. Some of these vehicles have been recovered within other jurisdictions, but many remain unaccounted for at the present time.

Almost always closely tied to motor vehicle thefts are burglaries of parked and unoccupied vehicles within the driveways of residences. In the specified timeframe in the year 2019, the department handled a total of 5 incidents of motor vehicles being entered/burglarized. In 2020, the department has handled 11 of these types of incidents in that same timeframe. In all of these recent cases, the

vehicles were left unlocked. In multiple cases, wallets containing credit cards were stolen and subsequently used fraudulently to make various purchases. The actual numbers of these types of incidents are almost always assumed to be higher than as reported, as many do not notify police in situations where vehicles were entered but nothing of any significant value appears to have been taken.

In this sample period in the year 2019, the department investigated a total of 3 burglary complaints; two of the commercial variety and one of a residence. In this same stretch of time in 2020, we have investigated a total of six residential burglaries, four of which featured forced entry into these structures. The most brazen of these burglaries was perpetrated in the overnight hours while the home was occupied and the residents were asleep. Entry had been gained through an unlocked door.

In the year 2019, the department responded to a total of 1 shoplifting type incident within this timeframe. In the same period in 2020, we have responded to 8 of these types of complaints.

We ask that you please let all of this data serve as a stark reminder that property crimes and theft seem to currently be trending upwards within our community. Again, this is only a small sample in time of slightly longer than a month, but still merits careful consideration and attention in order to reverse this trend. In cases where arrests have not yet been made, the Westport Police Department continues to actively investigate all of these recent crimes in conjunction with our law enforcement partners in the hope that those responsible will be held accountable for their actions. Additionally, measures are being taken by the department wherever possible to stop or slow this trend. However, as has been previously stated in prior releases, but simply cannot be stressed enough, preventative measures taken by the community such as locking doors, arming alarms and securing valuables coupled with the vigilance of our officers is the key to safeguarding our neighborhoods from being victimized.

Should you observe suspicious activity in your neighborhood, please don't delay in contacting us. It is an indisputable fact that maintaining public safety and security is only possible through a continued partnership with the residents that we proudly serve. We wish to reiterate our firm belief that no one knows your neighborhood better than you do; the information and feedback provided by our

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community will always be vital to our crime prevention efforts and overall effectiveness as a law enforcement agency.

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