



# WESTPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT

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## Press Release

### **Westport Police Department Urges Residents to Lock Vehicles**

(Westport, CT) In a July 10, 2020 press release by this agency, the pronounced spike in property crimes within Westport was detailed at length. Unfortunately, this upward trend has only continued since that time, especially as it relates to the perpetration of motor vehicle thefts and motor vehicle burglaries occurring in the overnight hours.

Since that last release, Westport police have taken a total of fourteen additional stolen motor vehicle reports and have recovered one stolen vehicle from another jurisdiction. From the time period of Thursday July 30, 2020 through Tuesday August 4, 2020, the Department took a total of eight of these reports of stolen motor vehicles; the highest known total within the shortest period of time in the nearly twenty-year period that it has maintained computerized incident records. Calculating the total manufacturer's suggested retail prices of just these eight cars alone yields a total value of approximately \$400,000 in property stolen within just under a six-day timeframe. With all but one exception, these vehicles were stolen from the driveways of private residences. In every single case, these vehicles were left unlocked and ignition keys were left within their passenger compartment. On each of these dates where stolen vehicle reports were taken from these private residences, complaints of numerous reports of motor vehicles being entered and/or burglarized have also been received from the surrounding neighborhoods. These burglaries can be presumed to be attempts at stealing these vehicles; however, the perpetrators will also help themselves to any valuables found within them if ignition keys cannot be located. For those questioning whether this activity is limited to specific areas of Westport, the data has shown that this is clearly a town wide issue. It is indisputable fact that the frequency of these crimes

is certainly increasing and will most likely only continue at the same pace if the perpetrators of these actions continue to be successful.

Although repeatedly stressed numerous times in the past, once again, the Westport Police Department is imploring our residents to lock up their homes and vehicles at all times. The easiest and most effective way to reverse this negative trend is to take these simple preventative measures. Do not ever leave the ignition keys inside the vehicle when it is otherwise unoccupied, especially in circumstances where it will be left unsupervised for an extended period. Do not make a habit of leaving valuables in the vehicle such as wallets or electronics, especially not in plain view or in unsecured areas where they are otherwise easily accessible.

These stolen cars are undoubtedly being used in the perpetration of other crimes, including but certainly not limited to additional motor vehicles burglaries and vehicle thefts. This is evident by the frequent encounters our officers have with confirmed stolen vehicles in the overnight hours, especially when responding to or investigating reports of motor vehicle burglaries or suspicious persons observed on private property. However, this is certainly not all these are being used for by the individuals seeking to steal them; a recent case illustrates this point. A vehicle taken from the driveway of a Westport residence during the early morning hours of Friday August 7, 2020 was recovered within a twenty-four-hour period within the city of Hartford. Noted by Hartford Police during the recovery were multiple bullet holes on the frame of the vehicle. The circumstances surrounding that apparent discharge of a firearm are unknown at this time.

Again, those seeking to perpetrate these crimes will not cease this behavior as long as they continue to encounter what they perceive as a target rich environment. Please understand that police are extremely limited in their capabilities of being able to quickly apprehend these suspects and that investigations can be drawn out over extended periods of time. Even in situations

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where vehicles and/or personal items are recovered quickly, in most cases significant damage has already been done. This can refer to actual damage to personal property, damage to personal credit, identity theft or direct monetary loss; with all of these circumstances being highly preventable through minimal effort. Simply stated, do not allow yourself to be victimized by those that seek to prey upon this community, please take the few seconds it requires to effectively secure your personal property from theft.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – August 12, 2020**

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