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# NEWS RELEASE

## Durango Police urge residents to take steps to curb rising vehicle theft

**Durango, CO:** People living in small, close-knit communities such as Durango tend to think they are immune from crimes that plague big cities. That is not the case with property crime, particularly vehicle theft, which is skyrocketing in our community. Theft of vehicles in Durango increased from 36 in 2019 to 54 in 2020. There have already been 11 vehicle thefts in 2021.

If those statistics do not get the community's attention, this one should: Nearly 100% of vehicle thefts in Durango could easily have been prevented by the property owner.

Durango Police officers and detectives track down most stolen vehicles, but investigations can be time consuming and complicated. Even the best police work cannot undo damage and the sense of loss associated with having your property stolen. Theft often affects a person's sense of security and can cause secondary loss in the form of higher insurance costs or reduction in coverage.

"Educating those around us is key to helping keep our communities safe and less vulnerable," Durango Police Commander Ray Shupe said. "These thefts can be very traumatic for the victims and family members involved. Protect yourself and don't become the next victim."

The Durango Police Department urges residents to take these precautions to protect their property and help curb the rising trend of vehicle theft.

- Park in safe, well-lit areas.
- If you must keep valuables in your vehicle, hide them from view.
- Lock your car and close the windows. Keep all vehicle keys with you or secure in your home.
- Secure firearms so they cannot be stolen or accessed by unauthorized persons.
- Do not leave your vehicle running unattended. It is risky and may be illegal.
- Report suspicious activity quickly by calling 9-1-1 for emergencies or (970) 385-2900 for non-emergencies.

Durango Police will be undertaking an informational campaign to lower property crimes in Durango by encouraging community members to take these prevention steps. The department will use every method available to get this message out to citizens. If officers find your car or property vulnerable, they will tell you about it. Lowering vehicle and property theft cannot happen without the community's awareness and support.

For more information on the campaign, contact Shupe at (970) 375-4771 or [Ray.Shupe@DurangoGov.org](mailto:Ray.Shupe@DurangoGov.org)

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