

DeKALB POLICE SERVICES - NORTH PRECINCT

MAY 2002

NEIGHBOR NEWS

Crime in the grocery store!

There have been several thefts involving elderly females' wallets and/or pocketbooks in Metro Atlanta grocery stores such as Publix and Kroger. The offenders appear to be going into these stores on senior citizen discounts days, and targeting elderly females who are shopping alone.

The typical incident occurs like this: An elderly female is approached by a man and a woman pretending to be shoppers, who ask the victim to read a label to obtain the ingredients. The male offender states that he is a diabetic and needs to know the contents. While the female offender continues to speak to the victim, she positioned herself between the victim and the male offender, who then removed the victim's wallet from the unattended purse in the shopping cart. The offenders are described by victims as clean cut and well dressed. After the theft the offenders go immediately to big busy stores, such as Target, Office Depot, Circuit City, Home Depot, etc. where the victim's check card and/or credit cards are max'd out.

Please be careful. These thefts are occurring right here in Metro Atlanta grocery stores. Never allow yourself to be distracted and never, ever leave your purse unattended.

CLICK-IT or TICKET?

North Precinct Police Commander, Major T. W. Bush has asked the parents of DeKalb to team up with his officers in a concerted effort to declare **ZERO TOLERANCE** for the violators of the child restraint and safety (seat belt) laws of the State of Georgia. According to Major Bush, "Traffic crashes account for the majority of deaths of people between the ages of 1 and 35 years, and analysis data shows that either

the lack of, or the improper use of child restraints and seat belts are directly related to this bleak statistic.

Georgia Traffic code 40-8-76 states that each occupant (regardless of age) of the front seat of a passenger automobile, and each minor over four years of age who is an occupant (regardless of seating location), must be restrained by a seat safety belt. Passenger automobile means any vehicle designed to carry ten passengers or less (excluding taxicabs), and includes any sport utility vehicle and pickup truck for any occupant under 18 years of age. 40-8-76 also states that it is the responsibility of every driver to insure that **all children four years of age or under are properly restrained in a child safety seat** which has been approved by the U.S. Dept. of Transportation under Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 213. ***(This approval will be noted on the child safety seat)***. The seat must be installed and being used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, and the child must be restrained by straps, harness or restraint device **and** the child safety seat must be secured correctly with the vehicle's belt system. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration strongly recommends that you have your child safety seats inspected by a certified child safety seat technician and follow the four steps of child passenger safety:

1. Use rear-facing child seats for children from birth to at least 20 pounds and at least one year of age.
2. Use forward-facing child seats for children over 20 pounds and at least one year old to about 40 pounds and about age four.
3. Use belt-positioning booster seats for children from about 40 pounds to about 80 pounds and 4' 9".
4. Use seat belts for older children large enough for the belt to fit correctly: at least 4' 9" and about 80 pounds.

Major Bush has instituted proactive policing efforts such as "*education of the public to seat*



belt laws" as well as roadblocks and high profile techniques dedicated to enforcing these laws. And he is urgently appealing to all citizens to remind their friends and loved ones to **BUCKLE UP**. If you get stopped for a seat belt violation, there will be **ZERO TOLERANCE**. It's either **"CLICK-IT or TICKET"**!

10 Tips To Keep Your Vehicle From Being Stolen

Auto Theft - it's a national crime epidemic! It's sad but true. Consider these facts:

- About \$7.5 billion worth of vehicles are stolen each and every year!
- One auto is stolen every 20 seconds!
- Vehicle theft is the No. 1 property crime
- It takes an expert car thief just seconds, to break into your vehicle - and less than one minute to drive it away!

But there are some things that you can do to reduce the risk of your vehicle being stolen. Here's a few prevention tips.

1. Today many vehicles are "ripped off" while the keys are still in the ignition. Don't make it that easy for the "bad guys." When you park it, lock it (including completely closing your windows) and take your keys. And never hide a second set of keys in your car.
2. When possible, park in well-lit areas and attended parking lots. If you must leave your key with a parking attendant, leave only the ignition key.
3. Don't tempt a thief - do not leave any valuables (such as laptop computers or cell phones) in plain view. Secure your valuables in the trunk or at least hide them from view before you get to the parking lot.
4. Park your vehicle as close as possible to a business that is open.
5. Never get out of your car and leave it running. Unattended cars are frequently stolen at convenience stores, ATMs and other "quick-stop" locations.

6. If your residence has a garage-use it, and be sure to close and lock your garage door (even when you are at home).

7. If you will be gone for an extended period of time, you may want to consider removing your vehicle's distributor cap or the coil wire.

8. Never leave the car's registration or title in the vehicle. (Georgia law no longer requires this)

9. Have your Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) etched on your windows.

10. You may want to consider purchasing enhanced vehicle protection such as:

- A. Electronic security systems.
- B. Vehicle tracking systems.
- C. Ignition and fuel "kill" switches.
- D. Steering wheel locks.
- E. Floorboard locks that prevent the use of the gas and/or brake pedal.
- F. Wheel or tire locks.
- G. Protective collars around the steering column, that deter criminals from reaching the ignition wires.

NOTE: If you decide to add any additional security devices to your vehicle, it is best to get quality products, and please be aware that certain security items should be installed only by qualified professionals.

A final thought - If your vehicle is stolen, please report it at once to your local police agency. It is vital to have your vehicle's license plate number and/or its VIN available so it can be listed as stolen. Your prompt reporting is the best chance you have to recover your vehicle before it is delivered to a "chop shop" and chopped into parts, or used in a crime (stolen autos are frequently used to commit other crimes). *Ideas for this article were taken from the Tuesday, April 2, 2002 edition of "Staying Safe with Bruce Mandelblit," in "NewsMax.com Magazine."*

The DeKalb Sheriff's Office is currently conducting citizen group tours of their facilities. If you would like to take advantage of this opportunity to tour the DeKalb Jail and Sheriff's Headquarters facilities, please contact Ms. Mikki Jones at 404-298-8105.

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