



“De-Frost – Don’t De-Part!”

As the first frosts of the winter arrive, Cheshire Police are keen to get off to a head start in combating a crime trend associated with the cold weather.

Detective Chief Inspector Darren Hebden, Strategic Lead for Vehicle Crime in the force is promoting the following message about a crime with a sting in the tail ...

“Christmas may come early for criminals who use the cold weather to steal cars. The arrival of frost-filled mornings normally brings a series of "De-frosting" thefts. Thieves target cars which have been left with their engines running to defrost the windscreens.

“For years opportunist thieves have been seizing the opportunity to steal cars whenever they are left unattended for a few minutes - whether from petrol station forecourts or outside schools and shops. Now they have caught on to the idea of nipping in while motorists try to multi task and save time in the mornings. As the driver pops into the house for a quick cup of tea or to grab a packed lunch, leaving the car engine running, the thief makes off with the vehicle, complete with keys.

“The moral of this one is obvious. Never leave keys in the ignition and doors unlocked when your car is unattended, even if it is only for a couple of minutes and the vehicle is sitting on your own driveway!

“We always urge drivers to be sensible and defrost their screens before moving off, because driving with only a few inches of the windscreen clear is dangerous.

“The sensible approach is to build in extra preparation time to allow the car to defrost and for you to stay with the vehicle while it warms up. Alternatively, use a de-icer spray and windscreen scraper.

“Any solution which involves leaving the car and the keys unattended should be avoided at all costs. The consequences of losing your car in this way could be more far reaching than most people realize.

“When making an insurance claim in a situation where a driver has left a vehicle unattended insurers may argue that reasonable care has not been taken. This invalidates the claim. Victims are then faced with the loss of their vehicle with no means of replacement, even though they are fully insured.”