City of Richmond

4th Quarter - 2026

CRIME PREVENTION

WORKING TOGETHER TO PREVENT CRIME NEWSLETTER

Theft from Auto: Secure More Than What's Inside

Theft from auto does not only happen inside your vehicles. It can also involve items on the exterior, such as roof cargo, catalytic converters and license plates. These items can be valuable on their own or be used for other crimes. For example, winter sporting equipment stored on the roof rack and catalytic converters can be resold for a high price. Stolen license plates can be used for fraud or other crimes. Below, we highlight ways to secure exterior items and help prevent theft from auto.

Roof Top Cargo



There are several ways to store equipment on the roof of your vehicle. If you have your sports equipment strapped directly on the rack, avoid leaving your car unattended. An opportunistic thief can easily steal items by sliding the items out or cutting the straps. If you need to step away, have someone you trust stay with the vehicle. Roof cargo bags are another option for storing items that is more secure than strapping equipment directly to your vehicle. You can put padlocks on the zipper pulls, but anyone with a knife can still cut open the bag and steal items. Cargo boxes offer better protection, especially robust models with high quality locks. Ensure that it is locked properly when you put items in the box. If thieves are not able to break into the box, they may try to steal the box itself. Ensure that it is secured properly to your vehicle. You can also mark or decorate your box so that it can easily be recognized uniquely.

License Plates

A stolen license plate can lead to unwanted fines, speeding tickets, or even calls from the police. Drivers may not realize their plates are missing because it is not something they regularly check. Removing a license plate can take only a few seconds with a screwdriver. We recommend installing license plate fasteners or special security screws which require a special wrench to remove. This makes it very hard for someone to remove the plate quickly. License plate theft can happen anywhere, including at the mall or in your driveway. When out, park in busy, high traffic areas where your vehicle is visible to others. At home, consider parking inside your garage. If you do not have a garage, park your vehicle within the range of your security cameras and exterior lights. This can help deter thieves and alert you when someone approaches your vehicle.



Catalytic Converter

A catalytic converter is part of a vehicle's exhaust system. They are targeted because they contain precious metals that have high resale value. To protect it, install secondary products designed to prevent theft such as protective cages, alarms, or straps. In addition, Richmond RCMP has partnered with several shops and garages in Richmond to etch the last eight digits of your vehicle's VIN onto the converter. The VIN can be used by police to identify and determine if the catalytic converter has been stolen.

Don't Let Theft Crash the Party

As we head into the festive season, gatherings and celebrations often mean more people coming and going from homes and neighbourhoods. Whether you are hosting or attending a gathering, taking a few precautions can help prevent opportunistic theft and keep your home safe. By staying aware and taking a few extra steps before, during, and after a gathering, both hosts and guests can help reduce opportunities for theft and contribute to a safer community.

Imagine you're heading to a family potluck and have board games in a box on the back seat of your vehicle. You arrive at your relative's apartment, bring the food inside first, and return to find your window smashed and the games stolen. While this exact situation may not happen to you, similar incidents occur frequently when items are left unattended in vehicles. Make sure to keep items in your vehicle hidden at all times. If you must keep valuables in the car, put them in the trunk before you head to your destination. In this scenario, asking for help can save you a trip and reduce the chances of your vehicle being broken into. Secondly, pay attention to your home before you leave. Make sure all windows and doors are closed and locked. Remember to lock points of entry on the second floor as well. Check your cameras and alarms and make sure they are in working condition. If your cameras are connected to your phone, ensure that your notifications are on so you will be alerted if anything happens. Plan ahead and make sure you are not rushing to leave. Rushing makes you more forgetful and you may miss details such as closing a window. Lastly, be mindful of what you share online. During the festive season, it is tempting to post photos or updates while attending a gathering. However, real time posts can unintentionally let others know that your home is unoccupied. Wait until you are home before sharing photos online.



If you are planning to host gatherings this season, you can maintain an effective crime prevention mindset while still having fun. A common practice is to leave the door unlocked so guests can walk in at their convenience. However, this is an invitation for opportunistic thieves because an unlocked point of entry gives them the easiest way to enter your home. Depending on what you have by your front door, they could easily grab something. Remind guests to lock the door behind them or take an extra step to greet your guests and lock the door yourself. If you have smart locks installed, you can utilize certain features to keep your home safe while making it convenient for guests. For example, some locks provide a unique access code that only works during a scheduled time while others can be controlled by an app. Inside your home, close and lock doors you do not want guests to wander into. Put away valuables such as cash, keys, and wallets. After the gathering, do a quick check around your home. Ensure that all doors and windows are closed and secured. If items or decorations were left out in the yard, put them back in a safe location to prevent theft. For those who live in an apartment, remind guests to wait for the gate to close behind them as they enter and leave the parkade. Guests who are unfamiliar with apartment security practices may not realize the importance of waiting for the gate to close.



Pedestrian Safety: Everyone has a Role



Pedestrian safety is an important topic to emphasize during this time of year. Daylight ends earlier, and the change in seasons brings more rain and the possibility of snow, which can reduce visibility and make road conditions more challenging. The City of Richmond has also changed many residential streets to a 30 km/h speed limit, requiring drivers to adjust their speed accordingly. Fall and winter bring many activities that can increase foot traffic in neighbourhoods, parks, and malls. Whether you are a driver or a pedestrian, you play an important role in keeping everyone safe on the road.

For pedestrians, wear something bright or attach a visible reflector to your bag or clothing so drivers can see you more easily. This is especially important on dark and rainy days when visibility is limited. Always use a crosswalk and look both ways before crossing. Make eye contact with the driver and ensure they acknowledge you before stepping onto the road. For drivers, stay off your phone while driving. It is illegal to use electronic device while operating a vehicle. Slow down when driving through residential and school zones. This is especially important during school hours and events such as Halloween, when there is increased foot traffic. Always look carefully for pedestrians and children, particularly when backing up or making turns at intersections.

To Start a Block Watch Group

Interested in starting a Block Watch group? Let us tell you a little about Block Watch! Block Watch is a program that brings the police and the community together. This program helps you build connections and relationships with people in your neighbourhood and the police while striving for the common goal of crime prevention.

Select a Group Lead

- Each group lead has to submit an application and will be contacted for a suitability interview. Candidates will then need to complete a free Police Information Check.

Recruit and build your group

- Upon confirmation from the Block Watch office on completing and passing all required steps in becoming a Block Watch Lead, you may begin to recruit homes that are near to you with the provided recruiting materials from the Block Watch office. To build an effective Block Watch, try to involve 50-75% of households in your area.

Complete activation of your team

1. **Complete** Block Watch Lead/Participant training – invite everyone in your group to participate in a virtual/in-person training session.
2. **Submit** your participating household list.
3. **Qualify** for Block Watch street signs once the above steps are completed.

If you are interested in creating a Block Watch group in your area, email us your name and address at blockwatch@richmond.ca or call 604-207-4829.

BUSINESS LINK

WORKING TOGETHER TO PREVENT CRIME NEWSLETTER

Shoplifting Prevention: Layout



Shoplifting is unfortunately one of the rising crimes in Richmond. This time of the year is home to many shopping related holidays, which increases foot traffic for legitimate customers and potential thieves. One effective way to prevent shoplifting is to improve the layout of your store. A clear layout improves visibility within the store, increases staff awareness, and reduces the chances of shoplifting.

Keep Sightlines Open— Thieves look for chaotic, crowded aisles because a cramped space offers camouflage and makes it easier to slip something into their pocket or bag. Spread out the shelfing and have wide clear aisles. This will make it easier for staff or customers to witness that a crime is taking place. Secondly, be aware of blind spots such as corners, alcoves, and behind tall displays. Install mirrors and have security cameras in these areas to act as a second pair of eyes for your team. It is hard for a potential thief to steal an item if there are many eyes in the area.



Product Positioning— High risk products should be placed in a locked case or behind a merchandise hook lock. Thieves want items that are easy to grab. Having it locked behind something adds another layer of security which makes it difficult for people to quickly and discreetly steal items. In addition, this will give less pressure for employees to be constantly monitoring these high value items, so they can provide better customer service and have more capacity to monitor shoplifting.

Please report all suspicious or criminal activity to the police.

Richmond RCMP Non-Emergency line **604-278-1212**. If you witness a crime in progress, dial **9-1-1**.

Online reporting available at **bc.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/richmond/report** for the following:

- Damage/mischief to property under $5,000
- Damage/mischief to a vehicle under $5,000
- Hit and run to an unoccupied vehicle or property
- Theft of bicycle under $5,000
- Theft under $5,000
- Theft from vehicle under $5,000
- Lost property



