

**FROM THE OFFICE OF WELD COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
KENNETH R. BUCK**



# Fraud Alert!

## PROTECT YOURSELF FROM AUTO THEFT



**No one wants to be a victim of a crime;** that's why we shred personal documents, install home security systems, and walk in well-lit areas at night. Many of us take every precaution we can to protect ourselves and our property from harm. I want to remind you, however, of another area in need of protection—your car.

Don't leave personal belongings in your car such as purses, wallets, check books, iPods, cell phones, GPS devices or other valuables. There is no place in your car (including under the floor mat, in the trunk or behind a pile of coats) that a thief hasn't already thought to look for your "hidden" valuables.

Make a habit of rolling up your windows, locking your car, and removing the keys when you park your vehicle regardless of how short of a time you will be away from your car.

If possible, park your car in a garage and lock both your car and your garage door. If you park in a car port, leave external lights on at night to discourage prowlers. Motion detectors on external lights are very effective in deterring prowlers. If you have to park on the street, park in a well-lit area.

It only takes an average of 30 seconds for a prowler to break into your car—many times gaining access through an unlocked door or smashing the windows. Depending on what the thief sees in your vehicle, the theft can take a few seconds (to grab a purse or an iPod) or a few minutes (to remove stereos or speakers). More often than not, the thief is looking for items to pawn or trade, often for cash or drugs, so anything of value left in your car is susceptible.

If you have been a victim of an auto prowl, please call the non-emergency line for the police department to report the crime. Leave the vehicle undisturbed, if at all possible, until the police can examine the scene. If you come across someone trying to break into your car, do not confront them. Instead, call 911 and give the dispatcher as complete of a description as you can about the thief.

The fine officers of Weld County are committed to reducing auto prowls on the street, and the outstanding men and women of the Weld County District Attorney's Office are committed to aggressively prosecuting those thieves in the courtroom. Experience tells us that the thieves who commit auto prowls are also committing other offenses in our community including drug-related and gang-related crimes.

In order to reduce crime as a whole in our community we must all do our part to confront it from every angle. Law enforcement will do their part on the street, the DA's office will do our part in the courtroom, and we are asking you to do your part with regard to your personal property. Together we can make a positive difference for our community.

**Contact your local police agency if you think you are a victim of a crime. To contact the Weld County District Attorney's Office, call (970) 356-4010 ext. 4702.**