



PRESS RELEASE

O'Fallon Police Department

May 31, 2011

Burglary to Motor Vehicles - "Smash & Grab"

Det. Lt. Mick Hunter (Investigations Commander)

On May 30, 2011, at approximately 10:45 am, Officers with the O'Fallon Police Department conducted surveillance on the Gold's Gym parking lot utilizing an unmarked squad car. The purpose of the surveillance was in reaction to several "Smash & Grab" type vehicle burglaries which have occurred in the area located on and around the I-64 corridor.

During this surveillance, the officer involved witnessed 3 Male suspects looking into the windows of several parked vehicles. One of the suspects, observing the unmarked unit, warned the other suspects, and they all entered into a green minivan and fled the area, eluding the police's attempt to stop them. Approximately 25 minutes later, the van was once again spotted at the Moto Mart store, located in front of the O'Fallon Sports Park. The suspect vehicle, once again fled, after officer attempted to stop the vehicle. Soon after the vehicle eluded the police, the O'Fallon Police Department received notice of two "Smash & Grab" type Motor Vehicle Burglaries which had just occurred at the O'Fallon Sports Park. The subjects in the minivan were later located, apprehended, and awaiting pending charges.

It is very common in the "Smash & Grab" type Burglaries that no evidence is located that can link the perpetrator to the crime scene. The suspects in these types of Vehicle Burglaries are often successful, due to the way in which the crimes are committed. The perpetrators will walk through a parking lot and look into multiple vehicles until they find a vehicle with the purse or valuables sitting on the seat or on the floor board in plain view. By breaking the glass and reaching in to grab just the item they are after, they leave no fingerprints or other evidence at the scene. Unless they are caught in the commission of the crime, it is difficult to charge them with the crime.

The main target for these types of crimes are locations where citizens tend to leave their valuables inside the vehicle unattended. Fitness clubs, Sports Facilities, and large Grocery Store and Restaurant parking lots are the main targeted locations. It is very important for everyone not to leave newly purchased items, purses, and wallets laying out in plain view with in the vehicle. By doing so, it only makes you a potential victim, and O'Fallon a hot spot for crime.

The O'Fallon Police Department is hoping that through public awareness and cooperation, these types of incidents can be eliminated with in the O'Fallon area.