

DeKALB POLICE SERVICES - NORTH PRECINCT

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NEIGHBOR NEWS

CAR REPAIR RIP-OFFS!

On the way to work you had to hit the brakes to keep from rear-ending the car in front of you, and when you did, your car pulled sharply to the right. You take it to one of the brake shops that advertises a “special, complete brake job for the low, low price of only”...whatever. The mechanic tells you that your front disc brakes need to be adjusted, asks you to leave your car, and says he'll call with an estimate. What should you do?

The answer: Find another repair shop. Front disc brakes are self-adjusting, which means that something else—maybe a problem with the left front caliper—is causing your car to pull to the right. But like most unscrupulous repair shops, this one preys on—and profits from—the fact that relatively few drivers have a clue about what's under the hood, or how to fix it.

Americans spent more than \$20 billion last year on faulty or unnecessary auto repairs. In fact, auto repair rip-offs consistently rank among the top five consumer complaints, and older drivers are often targeted for these scams.

Virtually all auto repair scams are variations of the old ‘bait-and-switch’ routines that begin with advertised “specials” that seem too good to be true—for example, \$99 for a complete brake reline job. “They say they'll do a particular service for a specific price, but the price almost always escalates for your particular model of car, or they will sell you something additional,” says Richard Mundy, Deputy Chief of Consumer Federation of America. “Very rarely does someone get the service for the price that's advertised.”

So how do you protect yourself against auto repair fraud? Here's some advice from the experts:

***Find a good auto repair shop before you need one.** Go to someone you know. Don't wait until you're broken down to find a shop.

***Protect your rights as you go.** Get a written estimate before authorizing repairs, request that parts be returned and insist on a detailed invoice of work done, including an itemized description of parts and labor charges.

***Let them know up front that you will not pay for any work that you did not authorize.** This will prevent a lot of unnecessary grief later on.

***Don't be intimidated into agreeing to unexpected repairs.** An unscrupulous mechanic may seek to frighten customers by saying something like, “It's lucky you made it into the shop because your faulty brakes need to be replaced before they cause an accident and kill someone.”

***For all major repairs, get a second—or even a third—opinion.** A second opinion might show the truth about what's really needed, or **if it's really needed.**

Much of the above article was taken from the AARP BULLETIN – July/August 2002 issue.

IS THIS A 'NO-BRAINER'?

How would you like to reduce the odds of your car being broken into by over 80%?

In each of the past three years, the North Precinct statistics for entering auto crimes around Perimeter Mall have shown that in over 80% of all break-ins to automobiles, the victim left valuables in plain view to anyone looking into the automobile. These valuables (such as laptop computers, cell phones, briefcases, purses, cameras, golf clubs, designer clothing, gym bags, etc.) are like a magnet to anyone looking for something to steal. Even the little “change trays”, containing coins from the drive-through food lines have been known to attract the attention of thieves.

The majority of all crimes today are either crimes of opportunity, or drug related. And when someone gets hooked on drugs, they must feed their habit. They first convert all their money to drugs, and when that's gone, they convert all their possessions to drugs. And when they have

nothing left of their own to convert to drugs, they resort to crime and stealing to feed their habit.

But how does all this relate to you and reducing the odds of having your car broken into? Well, imagine someone with a drug habit entering an area where there are several cars parked. He looks into the first car and the windows are rolled up, the doors are locked and there are no valuables anywhere in sight. He then turns to the next car and he sees a cell phone or a briefcase or a camera or something else of value. **Well...DUH!** Which one of the two cars do you think he is going to break into, the one where he sees nothing of value, or the one that he knows contains something valuable that he can convert to drugs?

So, how do you reduce the odds of your car being broken into by over **80%**? By locking your car, rolling up all the windows, and by **NOT LEAVING ANYTHING OF VALUE IN SIGHT!**

HOW TO SURVIVE A HEART ATTACK WHEN YOU'RE ALONE

Since many people are alone when they suffer a heart attack, this article seemed to be in order.

Let's say it's 6:15 p.m. and you're driving home (alone of course), after an unusually hard day on the job. You're really tired, upset and frustrated.

Suddenly you start experiencing severe pain in your chest that starts to radiate out into your arm and up into your jaw. You are only about five miles from the hospital nearest your home; but unfortunately you don't know if you'll be able to make it that far. What can you do? *You've been trained in CPR but the guy that taught the course neglected to tell you how to perform it on yourself.*

Without help, the person whose heart stops beating properly and who begins to feel faint, has only about 10 seconds left before losing consciousness. However, these victims can help themselves by coughing repeatedly and very vigorously.

A deep breath should be taken before each cough. The cough must be deep and prolonged, as

when producing sputum from deep inside the chest. And a cough must be repeated about every 2 seconds without let up until help arrives, or until the heart is felt to be beating normally again.

Deep breaths get oxygen into the lungs and coughing movements squeeze the heart and keep the blood circulating. The squeezing pressure on the heart also helps it regain normal rhythm. In this way, heart attack victims can get to a hospital.

ALERT! ALERT! ALERT!



This photo shows an ATM at a metro bank location that has been altered to capture ATM and credit card info. This info is subsequently

used to commit Access Device Fraud. The scheme involves the emplacement of a false front to a standard ATM machine with a "skimmer" device attached to the false front (*note the card swipe reader in the picture*). A visible placard indicates the machine has "*enhanced security features,*" and directs customers to "swipe" their card rather than insert it into the machine. After swiping their card, the screen then flashes a message that there has been a transaction error and directs the customer to contact their bank.

The device is attached just after banking hours, it's use is closely monitored by the criminals, and then removed much later in the evening. The fraudulently obtained customer credit information is then used by criminals to complete a variety of schemes, such as counterfeiting credit cards and unauthorized transactions.

The U.S. Secret Service, in conjunction with State and local police agencies and bank security departments, are all working to dismantle this fraud enterprise. If you discover one of these devices, contact the U. S. Secret Service at 404-331-6111 (24 hour response) or your local police department.

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