



QLD MEDIA RELEASE

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Beware of summer holiday beach thieves

Leading national motor, home and travel insurer AAMI today urged beachgoers to take extra care of their personal belongings and safeguard their car keys while swimming or sunbathing this holiday season.

AAMI spokesperson Mike Sopinski said a significant number of vehicles were stolen from Queensland beach areas over the summer holidays last year while their owners were relaxing in the sun.

“We are especially urging Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast holidaymakers to be careful with their car keys if they are taking their vehicle to the beach. Thieves are targeting beaches in particular at this time of year, removing car keys from the belongings of beachgoers and helping themselves to their cars,” Mr Sopinski warned.

“Car owners should be aware that once someone has an unsuspecting owner’s keys, the thief is able to casually return to the beach-side car park and without attracting attention or suspicion, drive off with the stolen vehicle,” he said.

“It is often not until sometime later, when the vehicle owner leaves the beach, that he or she realises the car keys are missing and the car has disappeared – allowing the thieves plenty of time to make their escape.

Mr Sopinski said with most new cars being fitted with central locking, a savvy thief didn’t need to know which car the keys belonged to – they simply needed to operate the remote key for the relevant car to flash its lights and unlock the doors.

“Clearly, opportunistic or even professional car thieves have discovered it is easy pickings on the beach over the summer as relaxed holiday-makers appear to forget about the security of their car and their personal belongings.

“Motorists should be aware that once a thief has their car key, the car is unprotected, no matter what alarm system or immobiliser is installed.

“Car keys should be treated like cash – make sure the keys are with you or at least always in sight. Where keys can’t be kept secure beachgoers should consider operating a buddy system with their friends, taking turns swimming and keeping an eye on belongings.

“Car thieves are very aware of the fact that people relaxing tend to let their attention wander – especially at the beach – and sadly, all too often that means an avoidable theft ruins people’s day out,” Mr Sopinski concluded.

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