



*To organize and support  
community partnerships to prevent  
crime and the fear of crime*

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This document is available at the  
ONI website:

[www.portlandoregon.gov/oni/cp](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/oni/cp)



# ***Bicycle Theft Prevention***

Office of Neighborhood Involvement Crime Prevention Program  
Summer 2015

Thousands of bicycles are stolen in the City of Portland each year. Thieves are motivated by financial gain or the use of bikes for transportation. This type of theft can occur anywhere in the city. Places with high concentrations of parked bicycles such as college campuses are especially vulnerable to theft. Offenders will pick, cut, pry, or saw through locks or steal removable parts. If you can increase the time and effort it takes to steal your bike with locks and other security measures, it will reduce the likelihood that your property will be targeted.

When police officers are not provided with the serial number or other identifying information, they may not be able to link a recovered bike to its rightful owner. Additionally, this is an underreported crime so there may be no record of the theft when a bike is found. As a result there are hundreds of bicycles that are unaccounted for in the police property room.

Some proactive measures that you can take to protect your property:

- Choose sturdy locks such as a U-lock or very heavy-gauge chain. Talk to a store employee or do some research about a device's safety rating. Many cable locks are easily cut and should not be used as primary security.
- Secure your bicycle to a strong and immovable rack or fixture. Make sure that your bike can't be lifted from it. Be wary of locking your bike to the end of a rack where the bolts can be removed to access your bike.
- Lock your tires to the frame and rack.
- Take all removable parts including the seat with you or lock them up.
- Consider using more than one type of lock, which will require more time, effort and tools to steal your property.
- Don't leave a lot of slack between your lock and the fixture as this gives a thief more room to access your lock with his or her tools.
- Even if you are parking in a secured garage of a condominium or apartment complex, lock your bike to a rack or store it in your unit.



*The helmet, tire, and frame  
are all locked up*

## City of Portland's Crime Prevention Program

To contact a Crime  
Prevention Program  
Coordinator  
in your Portland  
neighborhood:

503-823-4064

onicpa@  
portlandoregon.gov

www.portlandoregon.  
gov/oni/cp



*Park in a visible, well-traveled location*

- Don't leave your property unlocked and unattended even if it is for a short time. Many bikes are stolen from open garages, unlocked basements, sides of homes and apartment or condominium hallways when owners leave them for a few minutes.
- If you store your bike in a garage or shed, make sure that the doors and windows are secured with sturdy locks and security hardware.
- Keep bicycles out of view from garage and other windows that are easily seen by passersby.
- Park your bike in a well-lit and visible location where there is a lot of pedestrian traffic. This way

more people can survey what's happening, which is a deterrent, and contact the police if there is criminal or suspicious activity.

- Consider investing in a GPS tracking device that isn't easily identified or removed from your bike.
- Don't leave a bike that is locked to a car rack unattended for long, and bring it in with you at night.
- Maintain the serial number and a photo of your bicycle on file and provide this information to the police if it is stolen.
- Proactively register your bike with a national registry such as bikeindex.org or project529.com. If your bike is taken, it will be included on a list of stolen bikes that is searchable by pawn shops, potential buyers, and others who are researching the validity of a bike for sale. Bikeportland.org/stolenbikes is also a good resource.
- If there is no serial number, etch or mark an identifier on the crank shaft or other bike part and keep record of it. Some people use a driver's license or state id number that the police can easily look up. Whatever you choose, **don't** etch personal information that can be used for identify theft such as your social security number.
- Use caution when purchasing a bicycle that is listed on Craigslist and other websites at a price well below market value. It may be stolen, and you don't want to unwittingly contribute to the crime. Check the serial number of the bike on national stolen bike registries before you purchase the item. Serial numbers that have been painted over or tampered with may also indicate a theft.
- If you are a victim of bicycle theft in Portland, file a police report online at <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/cor> or call 503-823-3333. If you know your serial number and want to find out if your bike is at the Property Evidence Division, call 503-823-2179.
- Report all suspicious activity in Portland to the police. Your call may stop a crime. Call 9-1-1 for immediate threats to life or property; otherwise call the police non-emergency number at 503-823-3333.