



## Program Guide - Reducing Thefts from Motor Vehicles (TFMV)

### 1. Overview

<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To reduce the incidence of theft of items from motor vehicles.</li> <li>To increase public awareness of the problem.</li> <li>To provide the public with information and tips which help them avoid becoming a victim.</li> </ul>
<b>Target Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced number of thefts, including number plates, from motor vehicles in the community.</li> <li>Increased public awareness of the high rate of TFMV.</li> <li>Increased public awareness of the measures required to avoid thefts from motor vehicles.</li> </ul>
<b>Success Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in the number of TFMV reported in the official crime statistics.</li> <li>Reduction in the number of valuables and other items sighted in parked vehicles during car park audits and other exercises.</li> <li>Increased awareness of motor vehicle security measured by public surveys at car parks.</li> </ul>
<b>Contact for Information</b>	<p><b>For more information contact state office by email: <a href="mailto:admin@nhw.com.au">admin@nhw.com.au</a></b></p>

### 2. Details

<b>Program Scope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This program is aimed at all residents and visitors to the target area.</li> <li>Particular attention should be paid to local 'hot spots' and identified vulnerable areas.</li> <li>Where possible, those for whom English is not their first language will be provided with information in multi-lingual or diagrammatic brochures.</li> <li>The program may consist of several individual activities, including;             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Articles in Newsletters (both printed and electronic), Social Media, local papers, talks, and/or community service announcements on community radio.</li> <li>Brochure/letter distribution in 'hot spots'.</li> <li>Car Park Audits ('Look, Lock, Leave').</li> <li>Promotion and distribution of security screws for number plates.</li> <li>Safe Plate Days (replacement of number plate screws with security screws).</li> </ol> <p>A future consideration may be the installation of warning signs in parking areas where vehicles are vulnerable (preferably in conjunction with local Council), and at Service Stations reminding drivers to lock their vehicle when paying for fuel.</p> </li> </ul>
<b>Program Planning</b>	<p>The following steps provide a guide to planning the implementation of the program.</p>



## **ESTABLISH THE TFMV SITUATION FOR THE LOCAL AREA**

- Contact the Crime Statistics Agency at [info@crimestatistics.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@crimestatistics.vic.gov.au) to establish the number of TFMV crimes that have occurred in the target area in the last six months.
- Based on the available statistics and discussions with the local Police, determine whether TFMV is a sufficient problem in the target area to justify a TFMV Program.

## **DETERMINE WHETHER TO PROCEED WITH THE PROGRAM**

- Discuss the proposal within your group and ensure you have sufficient volunteers who are prepared to take part in the program. The numbers you require will depend upon the activities undertaken. For a successful Safe Plate Day you will need a dedicated Co-ordinator and a minimum of 10 to 12 volunteers for a 3 or 4 hour operation.

Other activities such as Car Park Audits and brochure distribution may be undertaken with fewer volunteers (less than four is not normally effective) as the scope may be adjusted to suit the numbers available.

- Contact the local Police and ensure you have their support for the program. Establish from the Police whether there are any specific 'hot spots' or vulnerable areas on which to concentrate. Also, discuss with them the possible types of activities that could be part of the program eg Safe Plate Days, Car Park Audits, brochure distribution etc.

It is vital to have Police involvement at Car Park Audits to address any concerns from the public when NHW volunteers are seen closely inspecting vehicles. It is desirable to have Police involved in all of these activities as this attracts participants and demonstrates their support.

- Prepare a calendar of events for your group over the coming months so you can avoid the TFMV program activities clashing with other planned NHW activities.

## **PREPARE FOR THE START OF THE PROGRAM**

- Read the information from the 'Preventing TFMV' fact sheet on the Victoria Police website at [www.police.vic.gov.au](http://www.police.vic.gov.au) under the heading Crime Prevention and Community Safety. The fact sheets are available in 5 different languages.
- Check copies of other relevant brochures/letters etc prepared by other NHW groups and determine the activities your group can manage as well as a proposed timetable.

Articles for Newsletters and Social Media can be quickly prepared and distributed, whilst a Safe Plate Day requires significant organisation, equipment and lead-times. A list of necessary equipment is shown in the following section. It might be possible to borrow equipment from your NHW members or from a neighbouring NHW group.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check on the cost and availability of the printed brochures required for the program. The printers, Creative Branding Solutions (Tel: 1300 272 630), have all of the documents on their website at <a href="http://brandingthings.com.au/nhw">brandingthings.com.au/nhw</a> and can give you quotes for the printing. You are NOT obliged to use these printers to produce the handouts – however – if creating your own flyers or brochures you need to ensure you use the NHW style guide to protect our branding. If you don't have a copy of the style guide contact <a href="mailto:admin@nhw.com.au">admin@nhw.com.au</a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Equipment</b></p>	<p>Volunteers must wear high-visibility vests and name badges any time they are operating in public and sun protection where necessary.</p> <p>In addition, the following equipment is required for a Safe Plate Day;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHW Promotional banner/signs, including a large sign at the venue, if possible.</li> <li>• Traffic direction signs and traffic cones shelter for volunteers and table for promotional material.</li> <li>• Screwdrivers, pliers, multi-grips etc for screw removal and installation.</li> <li>• Battery operated screwdrivers, if available.</li> <li>• Kneeling pads.</li> <li>• Use of gloves is advised to protect the hands of volunteers. Supply of security screws (there are four different types and sizes) and special removal tool for security screws.</li> <li>• If available from screw supplier obtain a list of screw types required for particular vehicles. Note: Some vehicles have non-standard screws and it is often easier to remove old screws and match them to new screws rather than depend upon the list.</li> </ul> <p>As the Safe Plate Day will take place over several hours, some arrangements must be made for refreshments for volunteers.</p>
<p><b>Implementation</b></p>	<p>The following steps describe how the various activities in the program are implemented.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Articles for Newsletters, Social Media, local papers, community radio etc to increase public awareness of the problem and provide tips to avoid such thefts, including the promotion of the use of security screws on numbers plates:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare appropriate articles for each media type</li> <li>• Arrange distribution and publication</li> <li>• Maintain a register of articles etc</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Brochure/Letter distribution in TFMV 'hot spots' to increase public awareness of the problem as it affects a specific area and provide tips to avoid such thefts.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain a supply of TFMV brochures.</li> <li>• Prepare a timetable of dates for pre-arranged brochure/letter distribution events and arrange for sufficient volunteers to be available.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>



# Neighbourhood Watch

Let's watch out for each other

- Determine local 'hot spots' and/or vulnerable areas in conjunction with local Police and decide whether to distribute standard brochures or prepare and print a 'special' letter to inform residents of a current specific local problem. Any such letter should be identified with Police and display NHW logos.
  - Arrange with volunteers to meet and distribute brochures or letters as agreed with local Police. It is suggested that a maximum of two hours be allocated for the distribution – followed by a cup of coffee and debrief.
  - In addition, local Police may request an urgent or emergency distribution of letters in a problem area. It's necessary to maintain a contact list of available volunteers to approach for help at short notice.
  - Maintain a register of areas where brochures/letters have been distributed, including numbers and types of brochures, plus samples of any letters.
3. Car Park Audits (Look, Lock Leave) to monitor the number of cases where valuables have been left visible in parked vehicles. Local Police may then contact registered owners and advise them of appropriate security tips.
- Discuss the proposed activity with local Police and obtain their agreement as it cannot proceed without the attendance of at least one uniformed Police Officer. In addition, the Police would be required to determine registered owners and make contact with them if necessary. The Police may also advise on which car parks are most vulnerable. These would include railway stations, sports facilities and other long-term parking areas.
  - Prepare a timetable of dates for pre-arranged Car Park Audits and arrange for sufficient volunteers to be available.
  - Working in pairs, volunteers inspect parked vehicles and look for items left visible. This would include GPS devices on windscreens, money in the console, handbags, wallets, personal papers etc. Victoria Police would supply pads on which to record details of issues identified, including registration number and vehicle make/model, to enable them to identify the registered owner and make contact if necessary.
  - Volunteers are NOT to check the doors of vehicles to determine whether they have been left unlocked.
  - With the agreement of the attending Police Officer, vehicle security brochures can be placed under the windscreen wipers of the vehicles inspected. Note: this is NOT to be done if the driver of the vehicle indicates they do not want their vehicle touched.
  - It is suggested that a maximum of two – three hours be allocated for the distribution – followed by a debrief.
  - Maintain a register of car parks audited, including numbers of vehicles inspected and number of issues identified.
4. Promotion and distribution of Security Screws for number plates to inform the public of the problems of number plate theft and the benefits of securing number plates with one-way screws.
- Obtain supplies of the screws and package them for distribution.
  - Obtain or prepare any printed information to be distributed with the screws.



- Contact the shopping centre management, trader's association and/or local Council to obtain agreement or approval to set up an information booth or table at shopping centres or at public events.
5. A Safe Plate Day is an event held over several hours at a suitable venue to enable the public to attend and have their vehicle number plates fitted with security screws.
- Discuss the proposed activity with local Police and obtain their agreement as the attendance of uniformed Police Officer(s) for on-site promotion and traffic control is highly desirable. It is advisable to allow a lead-time of at least three to six months for the first running of this event.
  - Investigate suitable sites. The ideal location is high-profile, with easy and safe access and egress, plus adequate space for volunteers to safely work on both the front and rear of vehicles. The car parks at Bunnings hardware stores have been a successful venue and the company is a willing partner for these events. However, other locations could include parking areas at sports stadiums or transport hubs when these are not in their normal use.
  - Prepare a site plan taking into account access, egress, traffic direction signs, working locations, information table, shelter and refreshment/rest areas for volunteers etc.
  - Consult with Site Owner/Manager and Police to determine safe and efficient traffic flow. It is essential that traffic flow is managed and monitored on the day to ensure that other public users are not inconvenienced.
  - Determine the date of the Safe Plate Day in conjunction with local Police, the venue and taking into account the availability of volunteers.
  - Decide whether you will be providing a free service or asking for a gold coin donation. The public readily accepts that a donation is made, and this should be included in your promotional material.
  - Organise promotion of the event, which may include on-site billboard (local real estate agents are worth approaching), articles in local newspapers, NHW Newsletters, Social Media, flyers on community noticeboards, shop windows etc.
  - Obtain stocks of security screws. Major suppliers include, AB Bolts & Nuts of Thomastown (Ph 9464 2900) and The NHW Shop, South Australia – but there may also be more local suppliers.
  - Also obtain a number of removal tools to be used if required to remove incorrectly fitted screws and to be made available to local Police for the legitimate removal of number plates previously secured. There are a number of different sizes/styles of screws for different vehicles and some require different screws for front and back number plates.
  - Determine whether the screw supplier also has information on which screws fit which vehicles.
- BEWARE: Some car dealers may not have used the standard sizes for the particular vehicle and you will have to try others to fit. Whilst the vast majority of vehicles will have a standard fitting of the number plates, care needs to be taken if a non-standard fitting is identified.
- eg where plates have been secured by the owner in a different position to the manufacturer's standard, on 4WD with other accessories such as a winch, where a nut has been added to secure the plate rather than the normal screw.



# Neighbourhood Watch

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	<p>In these cases, it is often better to offer to supply the screws for the owner to make arrangements for fitting. Note: If the existing screws cannot be readily removed (eg they are rusted in), a thief won't be able to remove them either so they don't need replacing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check the availability of required equipment as listed above, plus general NHW brochures etc for distribution to motorists.</li> <li>• Ensure that sufficient screwdrivers, battery operated driver/drills, pliers, multigrips etc and security screw removal tools are available. These may be purchased, donated (Bunnings have been generous in some locations) or volunteers may bring their own. The batteries in the tools should be fully charged!</li> <li>• Seek commitment from volunteers to participate on the day and prepare a roster. It will be necessary to have volunteers arrive an hour before the public to set up the site and stay behind to pack up at the end of the day. Allow an overlap of volunteers in the roster to ensure continuity. In addition to NHW volunteers, you may seek assistance from local Police, service clubs, SES etc.</li> <li>• On the day, ensure you allow sufficient time to set up prior to advertised start time. Put out traffic direction signs, if needed, and arrange for a volunteer to be a 'Greeter' to direct motorists to the next available spot for replacing the number plate screws. Someone should be available to invite motorists to visit the Information Table to obtain brochures and make a gold coin donation.</li> <li>• The Greeter or another volunteer should maintain statistics of the activity. At the very least you need to know how many vehicles attended. For future planning, other details such as time, vehicle make etc may be useful.</li> <li>• If conducting a Safe Plate Day in a Shopping Centre Car Park, it may be useful to have Police or volunteers at the entrance to promote the activity and direct people to the event location.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Timing</b></p>	<p>Whilst the promotion and articles in Newsletters, on Social Media etc can commence with a minimum of delay, the organisation of the specific events will take time.</p> <p>It is suggested that the program would consist of an activity each month (except December and January). The events should be planned in conjunction with local Police to ensure the most prevalent types of crime are being addressed.</p> <p>As Safe Plate Days are dependent on reasonable weather, they should normally be scheduled for late Spring and Autumn.</p>
<p><b>Measuring Success</b></p>	<p>There are two key methods of measuring the success of the program.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The first method is to compare the situation for a period before the event with that for a similar period afterwards. The parameters measured could be crime statistics, or observed high risk practises such as leaving valuables in cars. If the program activity is concentrated on a fairly small area, use of statistics for a Postcode area may be more meaningful than those for a whole municipality.</li> <li>2. A second method of measuring success can entail surveying members of the public on their understanding of good crime prevention practice. A risk with this approach is that the people surveyed may provide the answers they believe are required whilst not undertaking the actual practice.</li> </ol>



<b>Reporting</b>	<p>A brief report should be prepared at the conclusion of each event including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Date, time and nature of activity.</li><li>• Location</li><li>• Volunteers and other participants involved.</li><li>• Statistics – how many brochures/letters delivered, how many number plates were secured etc.</li><li>• Difficulties encountered and possible solutions, including any suggestions or comments from a debrief after the event.</li><li>• Reports should be retained with the Minutes of the LGA or local NHW group meetings.</li></ul>
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### 3. Specific Training

<b>Training</b>	<p>All volunteers should have an understanding of NHW objectives and activities in order to answer basic questions from the public. This can be achieved either by distribution of a brief Training Document or a discussion session with experienced NHW volunteers (and Police, if possible).</p> <p>In addition, ensure that an experienced volunteer is available during activities to answer more detailed questions.</p> <p>It is considered that specific training is only required for volunteers at a Safe Plate Day prior to their first experience of the event. It is advisable to hold a training session to familiarise volunteers with the Safe Plate program and its objectives to enable them to answer any queries from the public. Information about the types of screws and different vehicles needs to be explained. A practice session fitting screws to the vehicles of volunteers and friends is recommended.</p>
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