

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# ATPA Warns Drivers Against Puffing

Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania (December 1, 2017) – The Pennsylvania Auto Theft Prevention Authority (ATPA) and its statewide law enforcement partners are asking drivers to resist puffing and protect their cars during this winter's cold temperatures. Leaving your car running, unlocked, and unattended (ie. "puffing") makes it vulnerable to theft.

"Auto theft investigators across the state continue to track down thieves and do great work to keep the commonwealth's auto theft rates low, we're just asking that drivers help us out and prevent these quick and easy thefts this time of year," explained Steven Wheeler, executive director of ATPA. "We want to save you the hassle and expense of losing your car. If you think it's inconvenient to get into a cold car, imagine how inconvenient your life becomes when your car is gone."

Puffer theft is a simple crime of opportunity that can be easily prevented. "Most of these thieves didn't intend to steal a car that day," explained Wheeler. "It can be too tempting for someone to pass by a running car at a convenience store, on the street or even in your driveway. Most of the time it's taken just because it's available."

More than 12,000 cars were stolen in Pennsylvania last year. Approximately 50% of them were left unlocked, many with the keys or FOBs inside. Auto theft prevention is common sense, but not common practice. Follow these simple tips at home, work, or while on vacation to protect your vehicle and spare you the hassle and expense of having your car stolen:

- **Lock the car, take the keys, every time.** For most drivers, it's a habit to either leave the keys in the car or to take them with you. Develop good habits — consciously make the decision to double check that you have your keys as you walk away from the vehicle. No place is safe from theft, even your own driveway.
- **No puffing: Do not leave your car unlocked, running and unattended.** Whether you're just running out to grab a cup of coffee or warming the car up before leaving for work, it only takes a thief seconds to steal your car and ruin your week. It is illegal to leave a car running and unattended on a public road in Pennsylvania. Some municipalities also have laws against puffing on private property.
- **Don't leave valuables in your car.** Leaving cell phones, mail, garage door openers, wallets, computers, or other valuables in the car attracts thieves. Leaving mail and sensitive information in your car also leaves you vulnerable to identity theft. Leaving keys and garage door openers can also invite burglary to your home.

ATPA is using social media Facebook and Twitter to spread its prevention message across the state. Find more information and view the video and surveillance footage of puffer thefts at [www.nopuffers.com](http://www.nopuffers.com) (<http://www.nopuffers.com>).

Created in 1994 by the state General Assembly, the Pennsylvania Auto Theft Prevention Authority combats auto theft by providing grants to law enforcement agencies, conducting public education initiatives, and providing specialized training. During the past decade, the rate of auto theft in Pennsylvania has declined 52% (and at a faster rate of decline than the national average).

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