

Like Kelowna and Castlegar, Penticton a big trouble spot

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Penticton, like other Okanagan communities, is being hit hard by auto theft.

Latest police figures show 185 vehicles stolen in Penticton in the first half of this year, compared to 131 for the same period in 2004.

Cpl. Rick Dellebuur, of the Penticton RCMP, says that, like in Castlegar, the police know who's doing the bulk of the crime. The problem is getting enough evidence to bust them.

"A lot of times we'll find [vehicles] abandoned and if we fingerprint them the suspect can just say they saw the vehicle parked and opened the door. It's not up to the individual to prove they were in possession. The onus is on the Crown but they will just say their buddy lent it to them. It makes it hard on us."

Owners of F-350s are being hit especially hard. Among the cases: In July a thief broke into Penticton Towing and attempted to steal a 2005 Ford F-350 that had been stolen previously.