



TORII LEGAL ASSISTANCE

OFFICE OF THE STAFF JUDGE ADVOCATE



Beware of Thefts

One of the great advantages of living on Okinawa is safety. Many of us feel safe and feel that our personal property is safe. Although Okinawa is safe, theft still occurs and we must be vigilant in protecting our personal property, not only from typhoons, but from crimes of opportunity.

A little over a year ago there were reports of thieves making forced and unforced entry into vehicles parked at off-post residences in Yomitan and other areas on Okinawa. Our office sent out a reminder to safeguard your property and we noticed that the number of theft reports went down. Once again, we want to help the Army on Okinawa in preventing thefts. What can you do to help cut down on theft crimes? Please take the following precautions to prevent theft of your property:

- Lock your vehicle at all times
- Do not leave windows rolled down, not even a crack
- Park in well-lit areas.
- Mark stereo and other electronic equipment with personal identification markings.
- Don't leave money, cameras, electronic items, purses, packages, government issued equipment or other valuables in your vehicle.
- Invest in a car alarm
- Take notice of any suspicious persons loitering in parking areas and immediately report them to the police. For attempted or actual thefts contact the Army PMO by calling **098-911-1911** from your cell or call the local Japanese police and emergency dispatch center at **110**.

Soldiers and DA civilians who are victims of thefts or attempted thefts from their vehicles located at their off-post authorized quarters or from their vehicles located on a military installation can file a claim for lost or damaged property. In order for the claim to be paid, it must be determined that there was a theft or attempted theft and that all reasonable steps were taken to safeguard the property. Vehicles should be locked when not occupied. Except for maps, child car seats, a reasonable number of audio tapes, digital video disks, or compact disks and similar items kept in the passenger compartment for immediate use, claimants are expected to remove their property when exiting the vehicle, lock items in the trunk or, for longer periods, such as overnight, remove the property from the vehicle altogether. This is especially true of valuable, easily pilfered items such as cameras and cellular telephones. Failure to report a suspected theft promptly to the police could result in claim denial due to lack of proof of theft or failure to take reasonable steps to recover the stolen property.

For information on filing a claim, visit the Claims Office in Room 222 on the second floor of Building 218 (across the street from the post office) on Torii Station. You can also contact claims personnel by calling: 644-4742.

Please visit the USAG-Okinawa web page for more information about claims:
<http://www.usagj.jp.pac.army.mil/organization/usago/installation/legal.aspx>.