San Francisco Police Department Auto Break-in Enforcement Operations 23-106

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The San Francisco Police Department has launched a new and intensive strategy to combat auto burglaries and to hold accountable the perpetrators who callously prey on the city's residents and visitors, Police Chief Bill Scott announced Thursday.

Effective immediately, the SFPD has increased visible uniformed police patrols in areas of the city where these crimes are most pervasive, including, but not limited to, the Palace of Fine Arts, Alamo Square and Fisherman's Wharf.

Our world-class sites draw visitors from around the world, but unfortunately, organized criminals also converge on these areas to victimize people. With more visible patrols, we will work to deter and arrest these criminals.

The increased uniformed patrols will supplement the work of our plainclothes teams who are consistently making arrests in these cases.

Thanks to budgetary support from Mayor London Breed, the public, and our other elected officials, the SFPD is staffing these new uniformed patrols using overtime funding from our recently approved budget for this fiscal year.

The Police Department is currently short some 600 officers from our recommended staffing levels, and we plan to use more on-duty officers to staff these units as we graduate more academy classes. The SFPD's 279th Academy Class is set to graduate in September, and the 280th Academy Class -- the largest since before the pandemic – is set to graduate in February.

The SFPD is also taking new steps to crack down on the perpetrators of these crimes. Investigators will be using a variety of investigative techniques, including bait cars, to identify and arrest suspects. Our investigators are also building cases against the larger criminal enterprises that often operate from outside the city and involve numerous fencing schemes to sell stolen property.

"Our message to these criminals is clear: If you come to San Francisco to break into cars or commit other crimes, we will arrest you," Chief Scott said. "I'm disturbed every time I see these crimes on social media or the local news. Auto break ins are devastating to residents and visitors who should be having a joyous experience in

San Francisco rather than the nightmare of losing their valuable personal belongings."

Auto break ins have been a pervasive problem and remain a significant challenge in San Francisco. As the city continues to rebound from the pandemic and our tourism industry is beginning to return, we've unfortunately seen a rise in the number of these crimes compared to the years of the pandemic. The number of reported crimes is currently lower than the years before the pandemic, which obviously comes as no comfort to anyone who's been victimized.

"As we work to build back our police staffing, we must continue to prevent, detain, and prosecute people who are committing auto break-ins in this City. This includes the investigative work necessary to break up organized rings that target specifics areas of San Francisco where they are preying on our residents and visitors," said Mayor London Breed. "People should not fear having their cars broken into, whether they are running down the street for errands or visiting our incredible City for the first time. San Francisco can and should be a safe and welcoming place for all."

District Attorney Brooke Jenkins joined Chief Scott at a press conference at the Palace of Fine Arts announcing the new strategy on Thursday.

"I am hopeful that the San Francisco Police Department's new strategies to address auto burglaries and vehicle break-ins will deter many from coming to San Francisco to commit these crimes that deeply impact residents, workers and visitors across the city," Jenkins said. "In addition to deterring these kinds of crimes, the Police Department's new operations will provide invaluable evidence to prosecutors so that we are able to ensure there is accountability and consequences when crimes are committed, and arrests are made."

District 2 Supervisor Catherine Stefani welcomed the SFPD's efforts during the press conference in her district.

"I'm grateful to the San Francisco Police Department for answering our call for more resources with increased foot patrols and sustained coverage for the area," Stefani said. "I will continue to work with SFPD, District Attorney Jenkins, and Mayor Breed to make certain that this iconic destination and neighborhood in District 2 has the resources necessary to ensure that all feel safe and secure".

Below are the preliminary year-to-date statistics on vehicle break-ins.

2023: 13,331 (-1%)

2022: 13,493

2021: 11,853

2020: 9,856

2019: 15,408

2018: 16,911

2017: 19,825

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