

CAR CORNER

Protecting Vehicles From Theft

(NAPSA)—What does DNA have in common with vehicle etching? More than you might think. Both have a unique code and both can be used to fight crime.

Vehicle etching and DNA labels refer to a system that applies a car owner's specific and unique code to a vehicle in a number of apparent or concealed places (the corners of windows, on doors, etc.). Once a car is etched, a highly visible label is applied, letting potential thieves know it has been etched and the car's code is registered with a security company. Doing so makes it easier to track the car down if it is stolen—but it also makes the car less likely to be stolen in the first place. Here's how it works:

• **Owners apply an etching stencil** to the outside, lower corners of windows and add an etch cream. After five minutes, owners peel the etching stickers off and the car is protected.

• **DNA labels are placed on car parts** such as doorjamb, hoods and trunks, in places that are easy for you to find, but that do not affect the appearance of your vehicle. If a thief peels off a label, a hidden mark remains in its place. The mark can only be seen under a UV light.

The idea is that when a vehicle is etched, its parts are less valuable to a car thief because they can't be sold off as easily as nonetched cars.

A do-it-yourself kit, The Club DNA Vehicle Etching System, has been developed by Winner International. People using the system

Locking Out Auto Thieves

- Park in well-lit, residential areas.
- Always lock doors and close all windows.
- Use discreet etchings and labels to make your car easier to recover and therefore less attractive to thieves.
- Use highly visible theft deterrents, such as steering wheel locks.
- If you are going on vacation, ask a neighbor to check on your car periodically.



are assigned a code known only to them and then, should they choose to do so, they can store their codes in Winner's secure database. The codes can then be used to help identify a vehicle if it is stolen.

The company recommends people use the etching system in conjunction with a steering wheel lock such as The Club. "When it comes to preventing car theft, a layered approach is always best. A steering wheel lock for visibility and deterrence, plus etching to decrease the attractiveness for chop shops, makes a vehicle more secure," says Karen Winner Hale of Winner International. "What's most important is that vehicle owners take the first steps in fighting auto theft by taking responsibility to deter the theft of their own vehicles."

For more information or to find an etching kit, visit the Web site www.winner-intl.com or call 1-800-527-3345.