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Vancouver police expand 'bait car' program for Olympics

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CBC News



Police in Metro Vancouver are expanding their successful bait car program for the Olympic Games. (CBC)

Police in Metro Vancouver say they are gearing up to make sure local thieves don't turn auto theft into an Olympic event during the 2010 Winter Games.

Among the new security measures announced by B.C.'s Solicitor General Kash Heed on Tuesday are plans to bait would-be thieves with special cars equipped with cameras and immobilizers. The vehicles, known as "bait cars," will be parked at 22 park-and-ride locations and five Olympic bus departure points throughout the greater Vancouver area.

About a quarter of a million people per day are expected to use the city's public transit system and the Olympic bus network during the Winter Games in

February. Police are promising to keep each parking lot under constant surveillance.

Heed also announced a new strategy to catch thieves who break into cars to steal valuable items.

The so-called micro-dot DNA technology will enable police to tag cameras and laptops and other theft-worthy items with a serial number not visible to the human eye that will allow them to identify stolen items so they can be used as evidence in court.

Undercover police vehicles will also be equipped with automatic licence plate recognition technology that can scan up to 600 licence plates an hour to identify stolen vehicles.

Police will also do daily analysis of criminal activity to search for hot spots and problem areas while police dogs and two helicopters will be on standby to track down criminals trying to get away.

Since 2003, police have credited bait cars with cutting auto theft in Metro Vancouver by more than 50 per cent.

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