

Updated technology helps police recover stolen vehicles



Updated technology to Police Scotland's helicopter and road policing units now ensures that motorists will have a greater chance of having their stolen vehicles recovered.

The high-tech equipment, supplied by 'Tracker', detects signals given out by stolen vehicles fitted with the company's device, typically placed in a hidden location. So far this year, five stolen vehicles have been recovered by officers using the equipment in the helicopter alone, and there is now an increased chance of stolen vehicles being detected and recovered with the enhanced equipment also fitted to road vehicles.

Inspector Darren Faulds said, "Once someone discovers their vehicle is missing and informs the company, the device is switched on and begins emitting a signal. The advantage of the helicopter is that being at height, it can see this signal over a much wider area than units fitted in cars where the range can be restricted due to nearby buildings if it is in an urban environment. If the helicopter picks up the signal it can follow the stolen vehicle without the thieves being aware, and also direct other units such as motorcycles or dog units to the exact location, so ground-based officers can stop the

vehicle, apprehend the driver and any passengers, and recover it back to the owner. We have been using this type of equipment for many years and this upgrade means it remains a powerful tool in the fight against vehicle crime.”

Chief Superintendent Stewart Carle, Head of Road Policing, said, “We have a long track record of successful co-operation with Tracker, and by providing us with their equipment we have proved that the technology works, resulting in many vehicles, principally high-value cars but also vans, lorries, industrial and agricultural equipment, being recovered and people brought to justice. We support the use of such technology and are pleased to note that the Arnold Clark Group has now also partnered with the company to make it easier and cheaper to have the system installed.

“We also work with other companies, particularly specialist suppliers to the agricultural and outside leisure sectors to protect farming equipment ranging from combine harvesters to All Terrain Vehicles, which use a range of tools and techniques to deter and detect theft.”

Andy Barrs, Head of Police Liaison at Tracker said, “We have been installing our unique VHF tracking technology in all UK police forces for the past 25 years and we are tremendously proud of our partnership with Police Scotland. With car thieves now using increasingly more sophisticated electronic methods such as ‘relay attack’ to steal vehicles, it is important that owners use tracking technology to increase the chances of recovery of their vehicle, if it is stolen.

“We know that Edinburgh and Glasgow usually record the most stolen and recovered vehicles, however our figures show that thieves don’t just target cities and they don’t always go for the expensive brands. Northern cities, such as Aberdeen and Inverness, experience a high number of vehicle thefts and rural crime hot spots often spike along the Scottish Borders and Perth & Kinross. A very high number of thefts are also

seen in Lanarkshire.”