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Beware! Car fitted with security camera

By Jamie Ee Wen Wei

The car's built-in alarm system is no longer good enough to deter break-in thieves and car-scratchers.

Fussy motorists now have cameras fitted too.

Vendors contacted said many motorists have gone to them to install surveillance systems - costing up to \$9,000 each - in their cars.

They said this was to ward off vandals and thieves, and to record evidence in case of accidents.

In the past two months alone, the vendors said inquiries have shot up by at least 20 per cent.

One vendor reported selling close to 100 units within a few months.

When marketing executive Jack Tan, 33, had his six-month-old Honda Fit scratched at a public carpark four months ago, he installed a \$500 closed-circuit television (CCTV) camera on its dashboard.

One vendor, Innotel Solutions, used to sell surveillance systems only to corporate clients, but in the last two months has sold 20 sets to individuals.

For another vendor, the pull factor was a hit-and-run on his car.

Sales manager Jason Ho, 33, went into the car surveillance system business after another motorist hit his car and scooted off.

Sensing that there was a demand in the market, he brought in the devices from Taiwan.

Within a month, he had sold about five sets.

Each cost about \$3,000.

"It's a protective measure and, after all, Singaporeans are quite passionate about their cars," said Mr Ho, who started his company, TK Automotive Security Products, about a month ago.

Most surveillance systems are customised to fit the car owner's needs or to suit the size and shape of the car.

But a basic set-up usually comes with a camera and a digital video recorder.

Footage is stored in memory cards and computer hard drives.

Most cars require one or two cameras but larger vehicles like vans may need up to six cameras.

Prices are between \$300 and \$9,000, while car alarms cost between \$200 and \$300.

Mr Kenneth Low, 24, sales and marketing manager of ZMC Securities, one of the vendors, said: "This is still a luxury for most drivers."

The more inventive users have come up with unusual ways to use their cameras.

Mr Low said some drivers use the cameras to record their speed thrills in Malaysia.

Ms Serene Sim, business director of Innotel Solutions, said she has seen YouTube video clips of drivers cutting into the lanes of those with cameras on board.

For Mr Tan, versatility was foremost in his decision to fit a detachable camera in his car.

"You can even take it home to monitor your maid or your neighbours."