

# How to keep your vehicle safe from car thieves

## How serious is the problem?

Professional car thieves can break into a car and drive away in less than two minutes. This occurs every 44 seconds somewhere in the United States. Auto theft costs Americans more than \$4.3 billion annually; and approximately 229 per 100,000 registered motorists will be a victim of auto theft in the course of a year.

Preventing vehicle theft is everyone's responsibility. Police, government officials, insurers, consumer groups, vehicle manufacturers and other citizens are working together in a cooperative effort to prevent auto theft and fraud.

## How can I protect my car?

- Never leave your car running while unattended. Always turn off the engine and roll up the windows. Lock your car, even for a short period of time.
- Never leave your keys in the car. Nearly 20 percent of cars stolen since 1990 have had keys left in the ignition.
- Lock your car and garage. T-shirts, tools and other valuables may be in your car. Thieves may be more likely to break in if they see valuables in your car.

- Cover your garage windows. Thieves do not know what kind of cars are inside and will not be able to detect your travel patterns. This also will help protect the safety of snowblowers, lawnmowers and other valuables stored in the garage.
- Park in busy, well-lit areas. Thieves are less likely to steal a car parked in a busy area.
- Leave only your ignition key in the car. Leaving your vehicle with a garage keyring lot of attention to your home. See from the garage by keyring lot other valuables.

Make your car easy to identify. Etch your VIN, which is stamped on the hood and the door, on the dashboard and the driver's side. It also can be found on the manufacturer's identification sticker on the driver's side front door.

- Keep valuables hidden. Place all valuables in the trunk.
- Protect your audio system. Removable or hidden radios, stereos, tape decks and CD players are good ideas, as is discrete placement of audio-system speakers.

- Never leave your VIN on the dashboard. Be sure to store it out of sight when you leave the vehicle.
  - Keep your vehicle documents safe. Never leave your vehicle title or registration in your glove compartment. Thieves can use these documents to sell your car or to impersonate you if they are stopped by the police.
  - Keep a copy of your vehicle's VIN, license plate number, your insurance identification card number and your vehicle registration number with you at all times. If your vehicle is stolen, you will need this information to complete police and insurance company reports.
  - Use alarm systems and install anti-theft devices, such as ignition cut-off switches, fuel cut-off devices, steering wheel locks and hood locks. Anything that slows a thief down will decrease the chances your car will be a target.
- Many insurers offer a discount, usually ranging from 5 to 30 percent, on comprehensive coverage to policyholders whose cars are equipped with these devices.
- Certain cars are stolen more frequently than others. Check with us to find out whether or not the new car you're thinking about buying falls into the high-risk category.



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