

Shreveport Police Dept.



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Helpful Tips on Keeping your vehicle out of the hands of thieves

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), a vehicle is stolen every 44 seconds in the United States. While 50 percent are recovered, that somewhat encouraging figure doesn't tell the whole story. If you don't want a criminal sitting behind the wheel of your car, you need to educate yourself on how to prevent car theft.

1. Keep track of your keys.

If your vehicle is missing, one of the first questions you will be asked is "do you have all the keys?" Many people make the mistake of hiding a spare key under the wheel-well or some other place under their car. The problem is, just like hiding a key under your front door step, criminals have caught on to this trick. Getting locked out of your car is inconvenient, but can't touch the hassle you'll go through if your car is stolen. Also, if you have given a spare car key to someone who no longer needs it, ask for it back immediately.

2. Secure your vehicle.

Whenever you park your car, even in your own driveway, close and lock the windows/doors to help prevent car theft. This seems like a basic security tactic, but we all know how easy it is to become complacent. Although it makes the first moments you enter your car a tad uncomfortable, resist the temptation to leave windows cracked during the summer. If there's a teenage driver in your household, pass this valuable car theft prevention tip along.

3. Park intelligently.

Parking in a well-lit area will help deter criminals, but parking close to building entrances and near parking lot security cameras adds extra layers of protection. Parking garages are often considered safe places for parking your car so it won't get damaged, but parking in an isolated garage could compromise your personal safety. If you do use a parking garage, try to park as close to the attendant or a security camera as possible.

4. Valuables don't belong in your vehicle.

Something like an iPad sitting on the passenger's seat of your car is eye-candy to a criminal. Sadly, even loose change is enough for some people to break in. Once he's smashed a window to snatch your iPad, he might just decide to go all the way and take your car. If you absolutely must leave a valuable item in your car, put it in the trunk. But beware, the bad guy may be watching you do so. Help prevent car theft by thinking ahead and leaving valuables at home.

5. Use a physical anti-theft device.

A large percent of insurance companies offer a premium discount for vehicles that have an anti-theft device. That's because these devices go a long way toward car theft prevention. Thieves are looking for an easy target, one they can conquer quickly without drawing attention to themselves. Physical anti-theft devices include vehicle immobilizer systems that prevent thieves from hotwiring your car.

6. Don't leave your car running.

You need to know that nearly half of all auto thefts could have been easily avoided if the vehicle owner took reasonable precautions, such as turning the car off when not in use. We've all started our car on a wintry morning, then headed back inside our home to top off our coffee. But did you know that more than a third of all vehicle thefts occur near the car owner's residence? Leaving your car running not only invites theft, it's also illegal in many states.

If you're not behind the wheel, help prevent car theft by turning your vehicle off.

7. Take advantage of a tech-based auto recovery tool.

If despite your efforts the worst happens, employing an auto-theft recovery tool could help you get your car back before it's ruined. Systems like OnStar use GPS technology to pinpoint your vehicle and transmit that information to law enforcement. OnStar can also remotely block your car's ignition and can work in tandem with police to send a signal to your vehicle that makes it slow down safely.

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