

Stop Punks from Taking Your Vehicle

Don't let this picture be a thief driving away in your car.



In the United States, a vehicle is stolen every 21 seconds. Stolen cars, vans, trucks, and motorcycles cost victims time and money—and increase everyone's insurance premiums. Car thefts also cause personal pain and suffering due to the violation. Stolen vehicles also often used to commit other crimes. So don't become a victim of this serious crime. Protecting yourself is easy.

Car thefts seem to occur with greater frequency where large groups of cars are parked for extended periods of time in places such as shopping centers, colleges, sporting events, movie complexes, and large apartment complexes. Car thefts can occur anytime -- at random on different days of the week and times of the day, depending on the locations. Having the Police stop a theft in progress is really remote. So protect your vehicles by getting everyone in your family to implement these easy tips!

Stop Vehicle Thefts

Never leave your car running or keys in your car.

Always set the car/truck alarm after you lock your vehicle.

Never leave an extra set of keys in your car, thieves will find them.

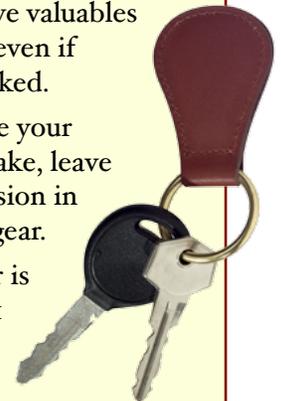
Always roll up your windows, lock your car, even at home.

Carry the VIN #, registration and insurance documents with you, not in the car.

Never leave valuables in plain view, even if your car is locked.

Always use your emergency brake, leave your transmission in PARK, or in gear.

If your car is stolen, call 911 immediately.



GOOD IDEAS TO PROTECT YOURSELF EASILY

- In Pima County there are about 70-100 vehicle thefts each month. Only about a third of these are recovered. Your best defense against vehicle theft is to not get your vehicle stolen in the first place.
- If your car's stolen, report it to the police/911 immediately. be able to summarize what happened, when. Have your registration and vehicle ID ready.
- Also, report abandoned cars to the local agency that handles removal.
- When buying a used car from an individual or a dealer, make sure you have the proper titles, that the VIN number is intact, and the "federal sticker" is on the inside of the driver's door. That sticker should match the VIN. It is helpful to run a Carfax or similar report to identify surprises with the vehicle.
- Suggest that any dealer, rental car agency, or auto repair shop you use offer auto theft prevention information in the waiting rooms.



YOUR BASIC PREVENTION POLICY

- Age of your car doesn't matter, thieves steal older cars to sell the parts, so don't think your older car or truck is not worth stealing, it is.
- **Never** leave your car running or the keys in the ignition when you're away from it, even for "just a minute.", especially when parked at your

home. Make sure your young adult drivers do the same.

- **Always** set the car/truck alarm after you lock your car.
- **Never** leave an extra set of keys in a glove compartment or in the car anywhere. Thieves know where to find them, it will then be easy to steal your car.
- **Always** roll up the windows and lock your car, even if it's in front of your home or in a garage.
- **Never** leave valuables in plain view, even if your car is locked. Put them in the trunk or at least out of sight. Buy aftermarket CD players that can be removed and locked in the trunk or out of sight.
- **Always** use your emergency brake and leave your transmission in PARK or in gear if a manual transmission. Turn

- your front wheels to the curb, this makes it harder to tow your car away vs driving it away.
- Carry registration, VIN # and insurance cards with you. **Don't** leave these personal or credit cards in your vehicle. They can be used for identity theft as well as making it easier to transfer your title to someone else. Thieves quickly check for this information.
- Some shopping centers have higher theft rates, go to lower theft shopping malls if you can. Go to your local police or county police web sites to see if they have online summaries of crime statistics and locations.
- If you have a garage, use it. **Always** keep the doors down and locked, whether your cars are in the garage or not.

- Park in busy, well-lighted areas. Park under a street light or parking lot light when possible.
- When you pay to park in a lot or garage, leave just the ignition key with the attendant. Make sure no personal information is attached. Do the same when you take your car for repairs or if you loan your car to anyone.
- If your car or truck is stolen, **call 911 immediately**. Be able to describe your location, the vehicle, year, color, plate number, vin number, any noticeable stickers or accessories. Get a case number and the badge number of the police officer. Then call your insurance company to report the theft, note the time and location.

YOU CAN ADD EXTRA PROTECTION

■ If you have a factory built in security system, always lock the car and set the alarm. These electronic locks make it very difficult to steal your car/truck.

■ Install a mechanical locking device— commonly called clubs, or collars—that lock to the steering wheel, column, or brake to prevent the wheel from being turned more than a few degrees. Use it! It will deter the casual thief.

■ If your car doesn't have a security system, investigate security systems if you live in a high-theft area or drive an automobile that's an attractive target for thieves. You may get a discount on your auto insurance.

■ Contact the Pima County Sheriff's department((520) 351-4900) for information on police for information into CAT (Combat Auto Theft) and HEAT (Help Eliminate Auto Theft) partnership programs. where individuals voluntarily register their cars with the police, and allow the police

to stop the car during certain hours when they normally would not be driving (such as midnight to 5 a.m.). All participants display decals in a designated area on their vehicles.

■ In high theft areas the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) should be etched on windows, doors, fenders and trunk lid. This makes it difficult for a thief to sell your stolen car parts.

WHAT ABOUT CARJACKING?

Carjacking—stealing a car by force—has captured headlines in the last few years. Yet, don't panic because statistically, your chances of being a carjacking victim are very slim, and preventive actions reduce the risk.

■ Approach your car with key in hand. Look around and inside before getting in.

■ When driving, keep your car doors locked and windows rolled up at all times.

■ Be especially alert at intersections, gas stations, ATMs, shopping malls,

convenience and grocery stores—all are windows of opportunity for carjackers.

■ Park in well-lighted areas with good visibility, close to walkways, stores, and people.

■ If the carjacker has a weapon, give up the car with no questions asked. Your life is worth more than a car.

BE AWARE OF THE "BUMP N RUN"

It works like this. A car, usually with a driver and at least one passenger, rear-ends or "bumps" you in traffic. You get out to check the damage. The driver or one of the passengers jumps in your car and drives off. If you're bumped by another car, look around before you get out. Make sure there are other cars around, then check out the car that's rear-ended you and who's in it. If the situation makes you uneasy, stay in the car, insist on moving to a police station or busy, well-lighted area to exchange information. This can happen close to airports, as rental cars are often a target.