

Car Security Tips

We invest a lot of time and money in our cars as well as in their maintenance. And the more expensive the vehicles are, the more chances there are that they will end up getting stolen from some parking lot or even someone's driveway. What is more, the fact that car theft is on the rise is not the only thing vehicle owners should worry about. An even bigger problem is that nowadays, car thieves use hi-tech and non-invasive techniques that make it very easy to slip under the radar and escape unnoticed. It is therefore important to take extra security measures to properly protect your vehicle against criminals. Every time you park the car, your number one priority should thus be its safety, especially during the night. To avoid unnecessary stress, take a look at our top security tips that will help you properly protect your car and minimize your chances of ever becoming an undeserving victim of car theft.

1. Secure your car keys

Always remember to keep car keys out of sight, even the spare ones. This may sound obvious but is commonly dismissed, especially when people have to make a quick stop in front of a shop or a gas station. Leaving your car keys in a visible place will enable thieves' easy access to the vehicle, which can therefore easily and quickly get stolen. Getting the original car key is actually the simplest way to steal almost any vehicle as its use will result in triggering neither a factory nor an aftermarket alarm.

As important as it is to always keep an eye on your car keys during your daily errands, it is also vital to keep them by your side at night. Always avoid leaving them close to the front door or in an easily accessible house or apartment. The reason for this lies in the fact that it is not uncommon for thieves to break into houses only with the sole intention of getting the keys and being able to steal the car on the driveway. Seasoned criminals may even hook the car key ring through the letterbox using a special gadget in the shape of a fishing rod or even a coat hanger. It is also recommended to store car keys in a metal key cabinet when home, especially if you have a vehicle with a keyless entry system. As the key cabinet works as a Faraday cage, the key signal will not be transmitted outside the

cabinet and the thieves will not be able to perform the so-called relay attack car theft, which has recently become very common.

In addition to the above measures, it is also advisable to reprogram any spare keys you got from previous car owners. If you have a habit of buying used vehicles, this will ensure maximum car security as it will disable any potential break-ins, maybe even by people who were already eyeing your new ride when it was still in the previous owner's possession. In this way, you may disable any potential break-in into your car and thus ensure maximum car security. Lastly, consider purchasing the car key pouch, especially if you are using a keyless key fob. Just like the metal key cabinet, the pouch also behaves like a Faraday cage and prevents the key fob signal from being transmitted outside of it, thus preventing people interfering with the equipment to unlock your vehicle.

2. Hide your valuables

Leaving your cell phone, sunglasses, laptop, wallet, handbag or even expensive tools and equipment on a passenger seat or car's dashboard is not only a magnet for experienced car thieves but is also bound to attract occasional small-time criminals who happen to pass by and see valuable items on display. Such cars may even have a higher chance of being stolen. While there are thieves looking specifically for any valuables inside the vehicle, others will naturally also consider taking the whole vehicle. Whenever you park the car, it is, therefore, crucial to take anything of value with you. If you are away from home and unable to take everything with you, make sure to at least lock valuable items in the trunk or keep them in a place that is not that easy to spot when passing by the car, such as underneath the car seats or in some hidden compartments and drawers. Another extremely valuable car security tip relates to important documents such as your driver's license or proof of registration. This should always be kept out of sight while the vehicle is parked as well. If thieves can easily locate them, this can increase their chances of a successful car theft attempt.

3. Lock your car

This may seem obvious, but numerous car thefts happen as a result of unlocked car doors. Therefore, it is crucial to lock your car even if you need to make a short stop in front of a grocery store. What is even more worrying, however, is the fact that many car owners even leave the car keys in the ignition once they park their car, which makes the process of stealing the car a child's play. The vehicle should remain locked even if it is parked in a seemingly friendly, low-crime neighborhood

as there might as well be thieves taking advantage of your trust, waiting for the best opportunity to steal your pride and joy. It is also highly recommendable to manually check the car door handles every time you lock the car, even if you hear the “lock sound”. This helps recognize and prevent a possible jamming attack, which can actually be performed on any car with a wireless key fob, and works by disrupting communication between the car key fob and the receiver inside the car.

As important as it is to lock your car’s door, it is equally important to keep the sunroof as well as windows fully closed. While keeping your windows slightly open might be a good idea to air your car when it is parked, this can greatly increase the chance of your vehicle being stolen.

4. Install a car alarm

Car alarms serve as a theft-deterrent system and are designed to alert individuals if any unauthorized person tries to tamper with a vehicle. Car alarm systems are generally considered a great car security measure as they stay active at all times and go off very quickly if someone tries to gain entry to the vehicle. Some of the more advanced car alarms are even equipped with additional features, such as a mobile notification system, and provide notifications every time unusual activities are detected.

Many modern vehicles come with a factory alarm system already installed but many older cars do not have such security features and thus stay unprotected. As many classic car models are more and more susceptible to car theft as they age, it is crucial to consider equipping such vehicles with good aftermarket alarm systems to keep them secured at all times.

However, over the years, many people have become numb to car alarm noises, especially in big cities, where a number of false alarms on a daily basis are considered part of the daily buzz that almost nobody pays attention to. When deciding on an appropriate car alarm system, it is therefore of paramount importance to choose a high-quality model that will not be easily triggered, for instance by passing trucks, stronger winds or cats walking on the hood. This way, you will equip your vehicle with a car security system whose loud siren noise will have more chances of alerting bystanders that something suspicious is going on and act as a huge deterrent for car thieves, even if an alarm itself will never be able to completely protect a vehicle from being stolen.

5. Fit a car immobilizer, especially if you have an older car

A car immobilizer is an electronic anti-theft device that prevents the vehicle from being started without using the proper key fob. It works by disabling the systems that are crucial to start the vehicle, which are usually the fuel system and ignition. Immobilizers are installed as standard equipment in the majority of vehicles manufactured after 1998. However, a number of companies provide after-market immobilizers that can be also installed in older vehicles. If you have a classic car, you should definitely consider getting a good immobilizer. Many opportunistic car thieves actually intentionally target older vehicles as these probably do not have any proper anti-theft systems installed.

An immobilizer will not prevent a thief from breaking into the vehicle, but it can successfully stop them from driving away with it. Even if a thief succeeds in starting an immobilized vehicle, it would take them a lot of time to get it moving, so they will probably think twice before stealing the car.

6. Park in a secured area

The best way to keep your vehicle secured is by parking it in a garage, especially during the night when the streets are dark and empty, which gives thieves the opportunity to perform break-ins without being detected. As a convenient bonus, indoor parking will even keep your car safe from any potential weather-related damage, such as hail or falling branches. In case you do not have any other option but to leave your car on the street, make sure to park it in a well-lit, high-traffic area, preferably close to some public place. This is a great car security strategy as people passing by will easily identify any theft attempt and it is more likely that someone among them will also report it to the police. If you leave your vehicle far away from your home and in a dark, isolated area, thieves might take advantage of this and specifically target your car in their next theft attempt. They will be able to tamper with the locks uninterrupted and drive the vehicle away unnoticed.

7. VIN etching

VIN etching is a cost-effective car security method and can easily be performed if your car did not come etched or marked by default. The process involves engraving a unique vehicle ID (VIN) on several parts of the car such as windows, mirrors or frames to make them instantly recognizable and therefore much harder to sell. If thieves notice that a vehicle is etched, they will therefore probably move on to another car. In addition, this strategy will also prevent thieves from changing your car's ID.

While there is no guarantee that etching will stop thieves from stealing a car, this technique can effectively help the police recover a vehicle in the event of a theft. As soon as the vehicle is stolen, the car owner should actually contact the police and provide the vehicle's unique ID besides other important information.

Car window etching is also a service commonly provided by car dealers that usually include it in their extra offers. Besides etching, some companies also provide non-removable stickers with unique numbers that can be placed on certain parts of a vehicle. Etching equipment is also available for online purchase, which enables anyone to do it quickly and easily.

The Houston Police Department will also do this free of charge.

carlock.co/blog/en/2019/07/12/top-10-car-security-tips/