



Brown County Sheriff's Office

Safety Tip: Vehicle Safety & Personal Safety

During the time it takes you to read this, a thief could break into your vehicle, hot-wire it and drive away. If you think it won't happen to you, consider these following facts that were given by the insurance companies.

- Every 19 seconds, a car is stolen in America.
- The number of cars stolen this year would be enough to fill the parking lots of 170 major shopping centers.
- The cost of car theft and looting is estimated to be more than \$7 billion.

Theft is a crime of opportunity. Most thefts occur when valuables are left unattended. The thief normally seeks privacy to commit his/her act. Virtually any article left in plain view is apt to be stolen. Most property that is stolen is left unattended or unlocked.

Remove Visible Items from your Vehicle

Remember: briefcases, sunglasses, clothing, keys, gym bags, are all tempting to a thief.

If you leave items visible in your car, you are a target. Be aware that someone may be watching as you put a wallet, purse, or cell phone under your seat, especially at a gym. Take them with you. If you do have to leave them in the vehicle, make sure they are kept out of plain sight – hide them under a blanket, or better yet lock them in your trunk.

Lock Up & Take your Keys

Lock your vehicle and take your keys, even for quick errands.

Lock the trunk, hatchback or tailgate to block access into the vehicle.

Close all windows, including vent or wing windows and sunroofs.

Leave only the ignition key with the parking attendant in a commercial parking lot.

Car keys left at home (or at your business) should always be hidden. This will help prevent the theft of your vehicle if you are burglarized.

There are locks made for various marketable parts of cars. Battery locks, wheel locks, and special tape deck/CD lock mounts can save these items plus any damage that may occur in the process of stealing them.

Install locking gas tank caps to help prevent gasoline theft and limit a thief's driving range to one tank.

Vehicle Alarms

Buy an alarm and use it! Many people believe that alarms no longer make a difference; however, they do remain an effective deterrent to a burglar. Remember criminals are looking for the easy target. More information below on alarms.

Vehicle Registration

Keep your driver's license and vehicle registration with you. Left in the car, the documents can be used by a thief to impersonate you when transferring the car's ownership.

Black out the address on your registration and photocopy it. Keep the copy, not the original, in your car. Never leave your original title in the car.

Do Not Attach Personal Information to your Keys

If your keys are stolen, having your personal information or vehicle license number attached only compounds the problem. A criminal now may have access to your home, automobile or office.

Mail

Do not leave outgoing or incoming mail in your car, especially where visible. This has your name and address on it.

Garage Door Opener

Don't leave your garage door opener on the dashboard or front seat. Put it in your glove box, hide it, or take it with you.

Auto Insurance & Alarms

When you buy a new car and want to check out the insurance companies to receive the best car insurance quote or car insurance policy you must make sure to inform them of any accessories that you have in your car, for example: a stereo system or GPS as these type of accessories are great temptation for any car thieves, if you can purchase these items as portable (taking out of the vehicle when leaving it) then this is highly recommended.

If you are purchasing a used car it is advisable to ask the Car Sale Dealer if the car is already equipped with the security devices below In order to receive the cheapest insurance possible and for the best car protection. In order highly recommended to have at least one or more of the following security devices below.

In order to receive the cheapest insurance possible and for the best car protection. It is highly recommended to have at least one or more of the following security devices:

Auto safety devices; Wheel Locks and hood locks; Door and window locks (by remote control); Latch that stops the fuel stream to the engine; Pressure sensors; Motion detectors (inside the car); Tracking device; Disconnection of the electrical system of the vehicle; Sound sensors that react at the sound of broken windows etc.

Most of the above devices can be fitted easily to the steering wheel, pedal or gear of the car.

Use one every time you leave your vehicle unattended. Steering wheel locks are inexpensive and are recommended by some experts to be the most cost effective theft deterrent on the market today; or

Install an alarm system that will sound when someone attempts to break in, move, tilt, or start your vehicle. Always activate the system when leaving the vehicle. Check the vehicle if you hear the alarm sound. But do not try to stop a person attempting to break in. Get a good description of the person and call the police.

Park Safely

At home, park in your garage if you have one. Lock your car and all garage doors. Don't leave your vehicle on the street, in an alley, or on your driveway. If you have to park on the street, avoid dark or isolated areas.

Park in open, well-lighted, and populated areas near your destination. Avoid parking near trucks, vans, dumpsters, and other objects that obstruct visibility and provide hiding places. Avoid parking near strangers loitering or sitting in vehicles.

Park the front wheel turned sharply to the right or left, making it difficult for the professional theft to tow your car away backwards.

With front wheel drive cars: When you park pull the emergency brake and place the vehicle in park. If you have a stick shift, pull on the emergency brake and shift into forward or reverse. All four wheels will be locked, making it difficult for a thief to tow your car.

Check to see that your vehicle is visible from pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Personal Safety in your Car

When driving your car, keep your doors locked and windows rolled up.

If you stop in traffic or at a light, keep your car in drive and stay alert.

Never pick up hitchhikers.

Travel on well-lighted, busy streets. Avoid unsafe areas.

Check your daily routes – look for safe places to stop, such as police and fire stations, all-night convenience stores, or gas stations.

If you are being followed, go to a public place that is safe and call 911. Don't bring the problem home with you.

Car Safety Tips for Women

Simple Steps to Minimize dangerous situations:

Maybe you stayed out late for dinner with a friend, or perhaps you had to finish that last bit of paperwork at your office and now you're rushing to get home. It's dark and quiet and all you really want to do is get inside your house - but wait, what's that guy doing hanging around your car? Or the parking lot is empty and your car is parked right at the very edge of the lot away from the streetlights.

Personal safety is a concern for everyone these days with the increasing number of physical assaults and carjackings. But a few safety tips can help you avoid these situations and get you home safe and sound!

The first and most obvious tip is to be aware of your surroundings. It may sound simplistic, but many women are caught unaware while standing at their car fumbling for a set of keys inside their purse or ignoring that group of men who have been loitering around the front door of your building much longer than they should. If at all possible park your car as close to the front door as you can and under a street light or some other form of illumination.

Look around you at all times while making your way to headphones while navigating to the safety of your automobile. Be aware of where you are and who's around you at all times. Even if you've walked up this street to your car a hundred times, keep a sharp eye out for anyone suspicious or anything out of place. Your life may depend on how you react to a situation and being aware of it beforehand can help you either avoid it or resolve it in your favor. Too often a thief will take advantage of your single-mindedness, keeping to the shadows while you trudge on with little concern as to what's happening around you.

Keep your keys in your hand while approaching your front door of either your house or your car; the edges of the keys sticking out between your fingers. This way you can get into your car without spending unnecessary time searching for the right key in your purse and if need be turn them into a weapon. If you are attacked, jab the edges of the keys into your assailant wherever you can hit and then run as fast as you can, yelling and screaming as loudly as you can. Mace and/or pepper spray can be a help and a hinderance here, as your attacker can just as easily turn the weapon back on you and force you into your own car as you choke on the spray. Car keys, while usually nonlethal, can provide the surprise that you need to escape the situation. And if you do want to carry mace or pepper spray, be sure to check the law for your area.

If you are attacked and don't have any way of fighting back, kick and bite and pinch any piece of your attacker that you can reach. It may not seem pretty, but often the "dirty" tactics we were disciplined for in our youth may often provide that opening for escape.