



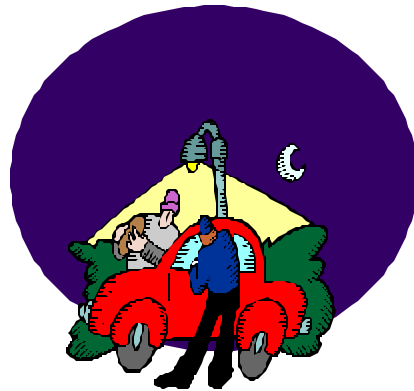
Auto theft is a crime of opportunity. The greater the opportunity to steal a car without getting caught, the more likely a thief will attempt to steal it. Your help in reducing the opportunity-factor lowers the risk of theft.

To report a crime please call 703-558-2222  
Contact the Auto Theft Unit with any other information

### **DON'T BE A VICTIM OF AUTO THEFT**

Arlington County Police Department  
Criminal Investigations Division  
Auto Theft Unit  
Phone: 703-228-4139  
[www.co.arlington.va.us/police](http://www.co.arlington.va.us/police)

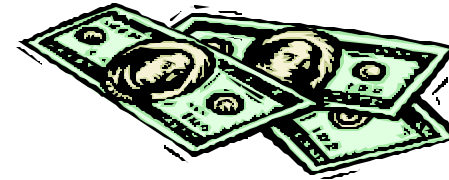
# **DON'T BE A VICTIM OF AUTO THEFT**



## **A guide to preventing auto theft**

Arlington County Police Department  
1425 North Courthouse Road  
Arlington, VA 22201  
703-558-2222  
[www.co.arlington.va.us/police](http://www.co.arlington.va.us/police)

## **VEHICLE THEFT COSTS US ALL MILLIONS OF DOLLARS**



Every year, millions of dollars' worth of cars, trucks, motorcycles, other vehicles, and their parts are stolen nationwide.

- \$ An estimated 1.2 million vehicle thefts were reported in 2001
- \$ The nation's vehicle theft rate per 100,000 people was up 4.5 percent in 2001
- \$ The average value of motor vehicles stolen in 2001 was \$6,646
- \$ The estimated total value of stolen motor vehicles was \$8.2 billion
- \$ Motor vehicle thefts in 2001 were up 5.7% over 2000
- \$ More than 30% of all stolen vehicles are never recovered

The cost is enormous. The thefts themselves and the fraudulent claims associated with them drive up insurance premiums. The vehicles stolen are often used to transport drugs, or they're sold to feed drug habits. The money that comes from stripping stolen vehicles and selling their parts can finance organized crime. And carjackings cost people their lives.

Source: National Insurance Crime Bureau and Virginia State Police

## **TOP 10 MOST STOLEN CARS IN THE METRO DC AREA**

1. TOYOTA CAMRY
2. HONDA ACCORD
3. DODGE CARAVAN/GRAND CARAVAN
4. HONDA CIVIC
5. CHEVROLET CAPRICE
6. JEEP CHEROKEE/GRAND CHEROKEE
7. PLYMOUTH VOYAGER/GRAND VOYAGER
8. TOYOTA COROLLA
9. FORD TAURUS
10. DODGE NEON

Vehicle thieves follow market trends and target the most popular vehicles because they provide the best market for stolen vehicle parts and illegal export to other countries.

Motorists driving theft-prone vehicles need to take additional steps to safeguard their vehicle, such as installing a visible deterrent like a steering wheel lock, an alarm, a starter or fuel disabler, and a tracking device. The more layers of protection on your vehicle, the more difficult it is to steal.

**DON'T BE A VICTIM OF AUTO THEFT!  
FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES INSIDE TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR CAR**

Remember what your mother always told you, “If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.”

## COMMON SENSE TIPS

- ▣ **Lock your car**— half of all vehicles stolen are left unlocked
- ▣ **Take your keys**— nearly 20% of all vehicles stolen have the keys in them
- ▣ **Park in well-lighted areas**— car thefts occur at night more than half the time
- ▣ **Park in attended lots**— car thieves don’t like witnesses
- ▣ **Don’t leave your car running, even for a minute**— convenience stores, gas stations, and ATMs are common hunting grounds for thieves, and cars left running to warm up on cold mornings are easy prey
- ▣ **Completely close your car windows**
- ▣ **Don’t leave valuables in plain view**
- ▣ **Don’t hide a spare set of keys in the car**— the pros know where to look
- ▣ **Be careful of on-line auctions**
- ▣ **Keep your registration card and title with you**— not in the glove compartment

- ▣ **Park with your wheels turned toward the curb**
- ▣ **Always use your emergency brake when parking**
- ▣ **If you have a garage, use it**— and when you do, lock both the vehicle and the garage door
- ▣ **If your vehicle has rear-wheel drive, back into your driveway**— rear wheels lock on rear-wheel drive vehicles, making them tough to tow — front-wheel drive vehicles should be parked front end first
- ▣ **If your vehicle is going to be unattended for a long period of time, disable it**— for example, remove the ignition fuse, coil wire or distributor rotor
- ▣ **Know the person you are loaning your car to and how to contact them**—do not loan your car to strangers
- ▣ **Call the police immediately if your car is stolen**

## TRACKING SYSTEMS

A vehicle tracking system is a high-tech device designed to be hidden in your automobile in order to emit a signal that the police can monitor if you report a theft. These systems are very effective in helping authorities recover stolen vehicles.

## VISIBLE AND AUDIBLE DETERRENTS

- ▣ **Audible alarms**
- ▣ **Steering wheel locks**
- ▣ **Steering column collars**
- ▣ **Theft deterrent decals**
- ▣ **Tire locks**
- ▣ **Window etching**— etch vehicle identification number (VIN) on vehicle windows

## VEHICLE IMMOBILIZERS

- ▣ **Smart keys**
- ▣ **Fuse cut-offs**
- ▣ **Kill switches**
- ▣ **Starter, ignition and fuel disablers**

## SAFEGUARD YOUR CAR BY USING THESE PRECAUTIONS

- ▣ Before getting into your car, pay attention to your surroundings and be alert to nearby activity
- ▣ Always approach your car with your keys in hand
- ▣ Always check the back seat before opening your car
- ▣ Make sure doors you left locked are still locked when you return
- ▣ If someone is loitering near your car, don’t approach it
- ▣ Once you’re in your car, keep your doors and windows locked

- ▣ Carry a cellular phone and know your emergency numbers—#77 for Virginia State Police and 911 for local police
- ▣ Avoid high-crime areas, especially after dark
- ▣ Be wary of people who approach your vehicle to ask for directions or change, or to hand out flyers
- ▣ When stopped in traffic, leave enough distance from the car in front of you to pull away quickly if necessary—if another car bumps you, or if a tire goes flat, keep your doors and windows closed and locked, wait for the police to arrive, or drive to the nearest police station, service station or convenience store
- ▣ Stop only at ATMs that are well-lighted and visible from the street—pull as close as possible, then check your mirrors and look outside before opening your window
- ▣ If an armed carjacker confronts you, don’t resist—get out of the car quickly; it’s better to lose your car than your life
- ▣ Never leave your car unattended and running
- ▣ Put all valuables in the trunk prior to reaching your destination—thieves are often watching when you park your vehicle

**ALWAYS CONTACT THE POLICE IF YOU HAVE ANY DOUBTS OR QUESTIONS**