

25 TIPS TO AVOID BECOMING A VICTIM OF AUTO CRIME.



Watch Your Car
TEXAS AUTO BURGLARY & THEFT PREVENTION AUTHORITY

Provided by:

**Sheriff's Combined Auto Theft Task Force
and the Travis County Sheriff's Office**

www.LockItorLoselt.org

www.facebook.com/SCATTF

1. Hide your valuables from plain sight to avoid attracting thieves.

2. Lock your vehicle and take your keys. Approximately 50% of vehicles stolen were left unlocked.

3. Never hide a second set of keys in or on your vehicle. Extra keys can easily be found by thieves.

4. Park in well-lighted areas or attended lots. More than half of all vehicle thefts occur at night. Auto thieves tend to target unattended parking lots.

5. Never leave your vehicle running, even if you will only be away for a minute. Vehicles are commonly stolen at convenience stores, gas stations, ATMs, etc. Many vehicles are also stolen on cold mornings when the owner leaves the vehicle running to warm up. Leaving your key in an unattended motor vehicle is a crime in Texas.

6. Don't leave documents with important personal details such as the title or insurance card in your vehicle. A thief can use these to sell your stolen vehicle. File the title and registration receipt at your home or office, and carry your insurance card in your purse or wallet.

7. Park with your wheels turned toward the curb and use your emergency brake, making your vehicle less easy to tow away. Wheels should also be turned to the side in driveways and parking lots.

8. Your vehicle may be more vulnerable when you park outside. If you have a garage, use it. Lock your garage as well as your vehicle's doors.

9. Disable your vehicle when leaving it unattended for an extended period. Remove the electronic ignition fuse, coil wire, or distributor rotor, or otherwise disable your vehicle any time thieves may have extended access to it.

10. Engrave your Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) or personal I.D. number on expensive accessories and parts. Stolen vehicles/parts are more easily traced when VINs have been etched on vehicle windows, major parts, and expensive accessories.

11. Have an ignition or fuel kill switch installed by someone who is qualified. Ignition kill switches can be used to stop the vehicle from starting. A fuel kill switch cuts off the flow of fuel when the switch is off.

12. Get locking devices for inside your vehicle. Visible steering wheel locks prevent the steering wheel from being turned properly. Gas or brake pedal locks disable the fuel and braking functions. Gearshift locks disable shifting of the transmission by locking it in place. Tire/wheel locks wrap around the wheel and prevent the vehicle from moving. Hood locks prevent the thief from gaining access to your security system and battery. An armored collar around the steering column protects the column and ignition.

For more information about preventing motor vehicle theft and/or burglary, visit <http://txwatchyourcar.com>.

If you would like to order additional copies of this brochure or related educational material, call 1-800-CAR-WATCH.



Texas Department of Motor Vehicles

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13. Get alarm systems for your vehicle. Alarms emit a loud warning sound when the door, hood or trunk are opened. Optional sensors include glass breakage, motion tampering, and towing. Panic buttons, back-up batteries, flashing parking lights or headlights, and automatic engine disable features are also recommended.

14. Get a vehicle tracker, which is usually a silent device that can be hidden in a vehicle to transmit a signal that allows the vehicle's location to be tracked.

BUYING A USED VEHICLE

15. Be suspicious of any deal that seems "too good to be true." Do your homework using a reliable resource to research the vehicle.

16. Use online resources to check the vehicle's history by using the VIN. Information and links to these websites are provided on the TxDMV.gov website. You may also check NICB.org (National Insurance Crime Bureau) to ensure the vehicle has not been stolen, flooded, or deemed unrepairable. The information you find may affect the value of the vehicle, and may even tell you whether it has been found unsafe for use on roadways. Remember that uninsured vehicles or vehicles stolen in other countries will not appear in these databases so you still need to use caution.

17. Seller's Credibility. Ask the seller for references about past financing and insurance on the vehicle. Verify the information with the bank, finance company, or agent. Be cautious about a seller with no fixed address, place of employment or phone number. Request to see the seller's driver's license or a legal identification card.

18. When buying from a private individual, ask to see the title to match the seller's identity (name and address) with the information on the title.

19. Question the seller if the registration was recently issued on an older vehicle. Be cautious of new license plates on an old vehicle, or new plate bolts on an older plate.

20. The VIN plate on the automobile's dash should be present, secure, and have no loose rivets. The VIN plate should have original stainless steel "rosette" rivets with a hole in the middle. The VIN on the dash must match the VIN on the registration, title, and federal safety inspection sticker on the driver's door. If the VIN plate is scratched, bent or missing rivets, tampering may have occurred.

21. Make sure the federal safety sticker, located on the driver's door or door jamb, is securely in place and none of the numbers appear to be tampered with.

22. Beware of a loose dashboard or an excessively loose ignition switch, either of which may indicate tampering. Check the switch for chisel or pull marks.

23. Be wary of a fresh paint job on a newer vehicle. This may indicate an attempt to obscure the vehicle's history.

24. Check the inspection documentation and registration sticker to be sure they are current and issued by the same state.

25. If the seller provides you with only remade keys for a newer model vehicle rather than originals, be suspicious.