



## Auto Theft Crime Prevention Tips:

*Below you will find tips on auto theft crime prevention. The information listed below is provided as a public service by the Charlestown Police Department, Charlestown, Indiana from its website located at [www.CtownPD.com](http://www.CtownPD.com). The information is provided as suggestions to consider for purposes of crime prevention and safety, no guarantees are implied.*

### Auto Theft Prevention Tips

1. Lock your car doors and close your windows.
2. Don't leave valuables in your car. If you do, make sure they are kept out of plain sight -- hide them under a blanket, or better yet, lock them in your trunk.
3. When transporting valuables, place them in the trunk before you get to the location where you intend to park. Don't transfer them at the parking place in open view of other people.
4. If you have a garage, use it.
5. 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.
6. Always park in a well-lighted area.
7. Use slide or portable mounts on add-on radios, citizens' band radios (CBs), tape decks and telephones. When you leave your car, put them in the trunk or take them with you.
8. Mark radios, CBs, tape decks, telephones, batteries, wheel covers and tires with an Operation Identification number. If the stolen item is found later, the number can be traced back to you.
9. Remember: briefcases, sunglasses, clothing, keys, gym bags and small change are all tempting to a thief.
10. Leave only the ignition key with the parking attendant in a commercial parking lot.
11. Keep your driver's license and vehicle registration with you. Left with the car, the documents can be used by a thief to impersonate you when transferring the car's ownership.
12. 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.
13. There are locks made for various marketable parts of cars. Battery locks, wheel locks and special tape deck lock mounts can save these items plus any damage that may occur in the process of stealing them.
14. Install a locking gas tank cap to help prevent gasoline theft and limit a thief's driving range to one tank.
15. Park the front wheel turned sharply to the right or left, making it difficult for the professional thief to tow your car away backwards.
16. With front wheel drive cars: When you park, pull on the emergency brake and place your vehicle in Park. If you have a stick shift, pull on the emergency brake and shift into forward or reverse gear. All four wheels will be locked, making it difficult for a thief to tow your car.
17. Call 911 as soon as theft occurs.

### Convenience Device

**Credit Card Key:** This is a special plastic card that holds two keys (also plastic) which you can have cut to fit your door and ignition system. Carry it with you in case you lose your regular set of keys. Available at any lock and key shop.

## Spotting Stolen Vehicles

Most stolen cars are driven through the streets regularly and thieves may be using them to commit other crimes. You can spot many of these cars and report them immediately to the police.

Look for the following signs:

- Vehicles being operated without ignition keys.
- Broken plastic or holes in the side of the steering column.
- Broken window glass.
- Dirty tags on shiny cars or new bolts on old license plates.
- Persons offering to sell cars or accessories at less than their regular value.

## Personal Safety in your Car

1. When driving your car, keep your doors locked and windows rolled up.
2. If you stop in traffic or at a light, keep your car in drive and stay alert.
3. Never pick up hitchhikers.
4. Travel on well-lighted, busy streets. Avoid unsafe areas.
5. Check your daily routes -- look for safe places to stop, such as police or fire stations, all-night convenience stores or gas stations.
6. If you are being followed, go up to a public place that is safe and call 911. Don't bring the problem home with you.

## Helping Police Recover your Stolen Vehicle

1. Don't keep your title, identification or credit cards in your car.
2. Know your license plate number and keep your Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) with your business records.
3. Hide your business cards or address stickers with your name on them in places such as under the hood of your car, the floor mats or the seats. Also drop them in window channels inside the doors. Another option is etching your VIN on one or more windows.
4. Be sure to call 911 and report your car stolen as soon as possible. Be willing to assist in prosecution.

## **Anti-Theft Devices**

### **Engine Disabler or Kill Switch:**

This well hidden switch is installed so when turned on, it cuts power to your starter.

### **Armor Collar:**

A metal shield that locks around your steering column, which prevents tampering with the ignition switch or starting mechanism. This prevents "hot-wiring" a car because the area is inaccessible.

### **Hood Lock:**

A hood lock prevents a thief from stealing parts under the hood or disconnecting anti-theft devices.

### **Fuel Switch:**

When turned on, this mechanism stops the flow of fuel from the fuel pump so the car will only go a short distance & then quit.

### **Time Delay Switch:**

This is a power cut-off device which, unless a switch is turned off, will disable your car shortly after it's started.

### **Time Delay Ignition:**

This device will activate your ignition only after a preset time has passed. There is no way to activate the ignition before the preset time has elapsed.

### **Clutch and Brake Lock:**

This mechanism, used only on manual transmission vehicles, locks the brake pedal and the clutch pedal together so one can't be operated without the other.

### **Brake Lock on Hydraulic System:**

This is a mechanism which, when activated, locks on all four brakes and makes it difficult to move or tow the car, even if the engine is started.

### **Bar Locks**

Bar locks attach to the steering wheel and block the ability to steer the vehicle. They can also stop the theft of the air bag. This tool can be enhanced with the use of a shield that makes it more difficult to cut the steering wheel and remove the bar lock.

## **Wheel Locks**

Wheel locks are an inexpensive way to prevent the theft of your vehicle's wheels and tires.

## **Locking Gas Cap**

A locking gas cap prevents thieves from stealing the gas or refilling the gas tank if they steal the vehicle. For added convenience, many of the locking gas caps with combination access also provide a locked place to hide the vehicle's extra set of keys.

## **Window Film**

Window film can increase the strength of your side and rear windows.

## **VIN Etching**

Etching the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) into your window glass is a way of keeping the vehicle from being stolen for the glass parts.

## **Alarm Systems:**

These can have many features including:

- Keyless entry that enables you to open and lock the vehicle while arming or disarming the system. It could also allow you to open the trunk remotely.
- Electric scan prevention stops the use of scanning tools to duplicate your remote's signal.
- Passive arming -- if you forget to arm your alarm, it will arm itself automatically.
- Built-in kill switch that disables the ignition.
- Built-in fuel cut-off switch.
- A loud horn or siren that can be activated from the remote. This acts as a panic alarm.
- An impact sensor that sets off the alarm before the glass breaks.
- A proximity sensor that warns people when they get too close to the vehicle.
- A hood sensor that sounds the alarm if someone is tampering with the hood.
- A remote notification device that tells the owner if the alarm is going off.
- An LED warning light that notifies a car thief that your alarm is activated.
- Remote starting devices that will allow you to warm up your vehicle in the cold without the threat of someone stealing it.

More expensive alarm systems can include:

- Remote control of the vehicle: If the driver does not enter a code before starting, the alarm company is alerted and tracks the vehicle. With this system, the police can shut off the vehicle so the thieves can't escape. It also allows the owner to call the alarm company and shut off the car in case of a carjacking.
- This technology allows the owner to call and have the door opened or the vehicle started anywhere in the world.
- It will tell you where you are within 10 feet of your exact location and give you directions on how to get to your destination.

**Before you buy an alarm system, contact your insurance company. With the right features, you may qualify for a discount.**