

Park Smart

Too often drivers leave their cars parked and give little or not thought to the possibility of their car being stolen. Car thieves travel the highways to target areas you would normally think are free of crime. Thieves sometimes have an order to fill and will steal a specific model of vehicle in order to supply a chop shop operation. The professional car thief wants your car to sell the parts, while the youthful offender may simply want to take a joy ride. In either case you need to make your vehicle safe and not an easy target for the thief. Shopping malls in particular are favorite places for the thief to shop around to find the vehicle of his choice.

Please review the crime prevention methods outlined below and follow them!!!

- Park your vehicle as close to an open business as possible so the thief may be detected and deterred.
- Park in a well lighted area and remember that you may be parking your vehicle during daylight hours, but returning after dark.
- Do not leave **any valuables** in plain view inside the passenger area such as a radar detector or cell phone. Thieves sometimes target just the valuables inside the vehicle and haven't yet gained the experience to steal the car. We all know that cell phone service can be shut off after a theft is detected, but the youthful thief needs to find that out for himself and besides its cool to steal "stuff"!
- Lock all of the windows and doors when leaving the vehicle.
- Activate alarm system; kill switch or other theft prevention device that locks the steering wheel. *An alarm system might even get you a discount on your vehicle insurance premium.*
- Think about a tracking device that is installed by an authorized dealer. Once the theft is reported a signal is emitted from the stolen car that can be monitored by the police, enabling them to zero in on the vehicle's location.
- Have the information available for the police in the event your car is stolen. The police need the vehicle identification number and state license number.
- If parking your vehicle with a valet service make sure the valet employee, convincing you to leave your vehicle with him, is in fact an employee of the valet service. It won't be the first time an unsuspecting motorist left their vehicle with someone they assumed was the valet guy, until they returned for the vehicle.
- In the winter months when the temperature dips into single digits, motorists are quick to leave their car unattended for "just a minute" to get a cup of coffee at a local convenient store or run in and pay for gasoline at a quick service gas station. Not a good idea, as this practice has just given anyone the opportunity to drive away with your car, no experience necessary. This has been a good source of vehicle thefts for the thief that needs a one way ride.