

Car Care Corner

A Baltimore Story

(NAPSA)—In the mid 1990s, the Baltimore Regional Auto Theft Team took several looks at the stolen cars recovered and taken to the Baltimore City Towing Yard. They discovered some interesting patterns.

One thing they found was that a quarter to a half of the cars had been stolen with the keys still in the ignition. It's common to leave the keys in the car and the engine running when you step out to use an ATM or grab a cup of coffee, but those few seconds can be all an experienced thief needs. That's why you should always turn off and lock your vehicle and take your keys with you whenever you get out of your car.

Another thing the police officers noticed is that almost none of the stolen cars had any anti-theft devices. No more than five percent of the recovered vehicles had ignition kill switches, which prevent the engine from starting; fuel kill switches, which halt the fuel supply; floorboard locks, to disable the gas or brake pedal and prevent the use of these pedals; gearshift locks, which disable shifting of the transmission; tire or wheel locks, which can be used to prevent the vehicle from moving; or even a much-derided car alarm.

The police specifically looked for thefts in which steering wheel locks had been defeated. They



A study in Baltimore found that steering wheel locks help keep your car out of thieves' hands.

found none—in the five cars equipped with such devices, they were still intact.

In a subsequent study, the Baltimore police distributed Club steering wheel locks to owners of 400 high-theft-risk cars in areas with high rates of auto theft. Only four of those owners reported their vehicles stolen in the first six months of the study, and not one of the steering wheel locks was found to have been defeated.

Recommended by the Fraternal Order of Police, The Club offers cro-moly steel construction that resists sawing, prying, hammering and freon attacks. It's guaranteed up to \$500 against your comprehensive insurance deductible. To learn more, go to www.theclub.com.