

In The Driver's Seat

Cool Ways To Protect "Hot" Cars

by Bobby Hamilton

(NAPSA)—It can be simpler than you think to find effective ways to protect your car from thieves. Common sense is the key.



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Car owners can find it frustrating to invest their time and money in a car, only to find their car's on the list of "hot" cars that are most frequently stolen or that they live in one of the

"hot" areas where most car theft occurs.

According to the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB), in 2005 the three metropolitan areas with the highest vehicle theft rates were:

- 1- Modesto, Calif.
- 2- Las Vegas/Paradise, Nev.
- 3- Stockton, Calif.

The NICB also names the "hottest cars" in the U.S. In its most recent study, the top three most stolen cars were:

- 1-1995 Honda Civic
- 2-1989 Toyota Camry
- 3-1991 Honda Accord

Fortunately, regardless of the make and model of the car, there are precautions you can take to avoid being a victim of auto theft. You can spend as little or as much money on car safety as you want, but remember—when it comes to protecting your investment, you can never be too cautious.

Here are a few suggestions:

- **Practice common sense.**

Don't leave your keys in the car and always lock your doors. Park in well-lit areas and avoid leaving your windows down. And never leave your pink slip of ownership, in the car.

- **Make it noticeable.** Engaging a visible or audible warning device on your car is likely to



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hinder a potential thief from disturbing your car. Some examples you might consider using include: audible alarms, steering column collars, steering wheel/brake pedal lock and identification markers in or on your vehicle.

- **Install a "kill switch,"** using smart keys or other immobilizing devices that prevent your car from being hot-wired will keep your car safe when you're not around.

- **Have a tracking device** installed in your car that is triggered to contact the police or another monitoring station if your car is stolen. This can be an effective tool.

Bobby Hamilton, a spokesman for AutoVantage, is the 2004 NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series Champion after achieving four career NASCAR Winston Cup Series victories. He founded Bobby Hamilton Racing, which owns and operates three trucks in the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series circuit.

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