

Automotive Answers



Keeping Your Car Out Of The Hands Of Thieves

(NAPSA)—Car thefts are up, according to a recent study, but there are simple ways you can protect yourself.

The FBI's Uniform Crime Reports have shown an annual increase in motor vehicle thefts of about five percent in recent years. The average stolen car is worth about \$6500; approximately 62 percent of the \$8.2 billion worth of motor vehicles stolen per year is recovered.

Here are some ways you can protect your car:

- Lock your car and take your keys. Never hide a second set of keys in your car.

- Never leave your car running unattended. Vehicles are commonly stolen at ATMs, convenience stores and similar places.

- Completely close all car windows when parked.

- Park in well-lit areas or attended lots. Only leave the ignition and door keys with attendants.

- Replace "T-shaped" door locks with straight locks.

- Stolen cars are more easily traced when Vehicle Identification Numbers (VIN) have been etched on car windows. You should also engrave expensive accessories and major parts with your VIN or personal identification number and drop business cards, address labels or other identification inside vehicle doors.

- Ignition kill switches prevent the engine from starting and fuel



Straight door locks make your car a harder target for thieves expecting T-shaped locks.

kill switches halt the fuel supply. Either or both can make it harder for a thief to make off with your car.

- Similarly, use floorboard locks to disable the gas or brake pedal and prevent the use of these pedals, or gearshift locks to disable shifting of the transmission. Tire or wheel locks can be used to prevent the vehicle from moving.

- A brightly-colored steering wheel lock such as The Club, which prevents the steering wheel from being turned, can be a deterrent that encourages thieves to move on to more vulnerable vehicles, and may qualify you for an insurance discount.

For more information and tips, go to www.theclub.com.