

**Public
Advisory**

0312

SAFEGUARD YOUR CAR

... and its occupants



Vehicles are stolen for parts, insurance fraud, retagging, exporting and joy riding. To help prevent the theft of your vehicle, the Nassau County Police Department suggests using the “layering” approach:

Layer 1: Use common sense: Parking in well lit areas, removing your car keys... makes it more difficult for the car thief.

Layer 2: Use visible and audible devices. Having audible alarms, steering wheel locks, column locks, brake locks, wheel locks, theft decals or vehicle identification number etched windows, gives your car has a much better chance of not being taken.

Layer 3: Use vehicle immobilizers: Smart keys, kill switches, starter, ignition and fuel disablers make it harder for the thief to drive away with your car.

Layer 4: Put in a tracking system: Systems such as On-Star (a global positioning system) or Lo-Jack (a radio directional finder) can help locate your car if it is stolen.

HERE ARE SPECIFIC TIPS FOR PREVENTING CAR THEFT:

TIP #1:

Do not leave your car unattended.

- According to the law, the owner or authorized driver of a car may not leave it unattended without turning off the ignition and removing the key.
- If you have a “keyless” car, take the transponder with you when you leave the vehicle.
- Close all windows and lock all doors. Plus, never leave your car running unattended even if you are just going in someplace for “a moment” or “letting it warm up”. A running car is an easy opportunity for any thief.

TIP #2:

Do not leave licenses, registration cards or other identifying papers in the car. If keys have punch-out numbers, keep them at home for future reference. Remember to take out valet keys from the glove box and only surrender this key when having your vehicle valet parked.

Remove the factory touch code from trunk, car book or glove box for vehicles with touch pad locking. If these items are left in car,

TIP #2: (continued)

thieves can use them to sell your car if stolen or to impersonate you if they are questioned by the police. In addition, identifiable material may help thieves discover the owner's residence and commit burglary as well.

TIP #3:

Park your car in the garage or behind a locked gate. If you do not have either of these deterrents, pull it in your driveway as far you can. When parking your vehicle, turn the steering wheel all the way to the right or left and apply the parking brake. This will deter a tow vehicle from towing your vehicle out of a parking spot without drawing a lot of attention. Consider adding a motion detector to the outside of the house. Put an alarm inside the car, especially if it is parked in an apartment lot or on the street. All these create other levels of difficulty for the thief who is interested in taking the easiest and quietest route to stealing a vehicle.

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TIP #4:

Get an automobile security-tracking device for your car such as Onstar or Lojack. You might consider labeling the car to deter a thief from taking it. Since certain thieves know how to disable such systems, label the car with the name of a different tracking company since you do not want to advise a thief of the type of security system you have.

TIP #5:***Consider using these other anti-theft devices:***

- *Ignition Cut-Off:* A key-operated or hidden manual switch that interrupts the power supply from the battery to the ignition.
- *Fuel Cut-Off:* Integrated into the fuel line, this device prevents the flow of gasoline once the fuel in the gas line is used. Only a special key deactivates the cut-off.
- *Ignition Column Guard:* This security device can provide protection to the ignition starting system. The device fits around the steering column and over the ignition starting system.

TIP #5: (continued)

- *Hood Lock:* A secondary hood lock should be installed to prevent access to the power source, battery or siren, for an alarm system, via a key-operated bolt, which is accessible from inside the car.
- *Door Locks:* Visible inside door lock buttons should be smooth and tapered.
- *Radio Security:* Slide mount removable radio devices are recommended. The idea is simple: If you do not want it stolen, take it with you.
- *Anti-Theft Steering Wheel Lock:* Locks on and prevents steering wheel from turning. Its high visibility deters theft.
- *Guard Plate:* Install a guard plate over the trunk lock with carriage bolts to protect the trunk cylinder.
- *Trunk Lock:* As an auxiliary or secondary locking device, a heavy-duty chain lock may be installed inside the trunk and is key-operated.
- *Wheel Locks:* This device replaces one lug nut on each tire and is key-operated. (Special locking devices are available for certain hubcaps such as the spoked hub, etc.)

TIP #6:

Keep the following items in your vehicle for emergencies:

Screwdriver; Pliers; Flares; Flashlight; Jack/spare tire; Battery jumper cables and procedure for boosting; Lubricant for locks; Lock de-icer; Lug wrench; Auto insurance card; First aid kit and blanket; Phone numbers of 24-hour tow and repair service; Sign: "Please Call Police" in light-reflecting letters approximately 12" high; Emergency tire repair kit and air compressor; Disposable camera or cell phone to be used as a camera.

TIP #7:

Protect yourself and your family when leaving, entering or driving your car:

- Maintain your vehicle to prevent breakdowns thereby avoiding vulnerable situations. Check the tire pressure and wear; oil and brake fluid levels; battery fluid; and radiator water level.
- Know the make and model number of the car you drive.
- Carry a cell phone or other communication device (do not leave in your car).
- Park in a well lit area.

TIP #7: *(continued)*

- If you park in a commercial lot or garage, leave only the ignition key with the attendant.
- Remain alert to your surroundings.
- Have your car door key ready in your hand and look for potential danger.
- Keep your car keys on a separate key ring from your house keys.
- Lock your doors and windows as soon as you enter the car.
- Try not to travel alone.
- Do not get locked between autos. Leave room between your car and the one in front of you. If you can see the tires of the auto in front, you will be able to drive around it.

If you think you are involved in a staged auto accident, turn on your 4-way flashes, and drive to an open gas station or police station. Call 9-1-1 on route.

TIP #8:

- *Protect your children and pets:* Do not leave them unattended in the car.
- *Protect your valuables:* Put packages and valuables out of sight: expensive items in full view invite theft.

TIP #9:

Mark your vehicle. Ownership is often difficult to prove because experienced thieves can remove manufacturers' identification numbers completely. Inscribe the car with the Vehicle Identification Number by etching it in several hard-to-find spots, using an engraving tool on each component part. Write your name in crayon under the hood or trunk. The latest type of marking system is called, "Data-Dot", that applies microscopic numbers that appear with a special magnifier showing an assigned number specifically designated to your vehicle. This system assists police in identifying vehicle parts and components. Visit www.Data-dot.com.

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TIP #10:

If your car alarm goes off, do NOT take action. Call 911 and then:

- Observe behavior around your car
- Take description, license plate numbers, etc.

TIP #11:

If your car is stolen:

- Report theft to police. Police need to know specific information about your car.
- Notify your insurance company.
- False reporting of vehicle theft is a Class A Misdemeanor pursuant to section 210.45 of the Penal Law of the State of New York and can be punishable by a fine or imprisonment. Insurance Fraud of a vehicle worth in excess of \$1,000.00 is a Class E Felony.

TIP #12:

Register in Nassau County Police Anti-Theft Programs:

"The Watch Your Car Program" is a pro-active and aggressive police response to auto theft, which authorizes investigative stops of participating vehicles that have special stickers on them.

See Local Precinct Contact Information on page 6.



**This Citizen Advisory is a publication of the
Nassau County Police Department.**

For Further And More Specific Information On This Topic,
Contact The Nassau County Crimes Against Property Squad's
Vehicle Theft Section at 516.573.5275.

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