

DID YOU KNOW?.....A vehicle is stolen approximately every 26 seconds in the United States, according to the National Insurance Crime Bureau; that adds up to 1.2 million vehicles a year! Vehicle thefts are the nation's number one property crime, costing an estimated \$8.2 billion dollars a year. Whether or not *your* vehicle is stolen, **everyone pays the price through higher insurance rates.**

In the City of St. Louis, a vehicle is stolen approximately every 41 minutes. We are pleased that these numbers are better than the national average, but we are not satisfied, and want to do better.

There was a time when you only needed to park your car in a well-lighted area or have a car alarm installed. Unfortunately, times have changed, and car thieves have become more determined than ever to steal your vehicle. A significant number of vehicles are stolen during the early morning hours, when the owner is asleep and unaware of the theft. The auto could be used to commit additional crimes or driven at high speeds, putting innocent lives in jeopardy.

WHAT CAN I DO?.....The St. Louis Police Department endorses and strongly recommends the “layered”

approach to protecting your vehicle from thieves.

Layer #1

(Common Sense, and costs nothing)

LOCK ALL YOUR CAR DOORS

Every time you're out of the vehicle, regardless of where you are or how short of a time you will be gone, make sure your car doors are locked.

CLOSE ALL WINDOWS

Thieves have tools and other means to gain entry through even the smallest of openings.

BE SMART WHEN YOU PARK

Park your vehicle in the garage when you are at home. Our records indicate that of all the reported vehicle thefts, none were stolen from a closed, home garage. The vehicles stolen were either parked on the street, in a driveway, or on a parking lot.

If you have to park in a driveway, and have a rear-wheel drive vehicle, back it into the driveway. If your vehicle has front-wheel drive, pull it in front end first. Parking like this makes it more difficult for thieves to tow it away. When parking on the street, turn your wheels sharply toward the curb – this also makes it more difficult for the thieves to tow your vehicle away.

When away from home, park in a highly visible area that is well-lighted and busy with vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Do not park on unattended lots for extended periods of time, as your vehicle is five times more likely to be stolen than if parked on an attended lot or a street.

Layer #2 (Visible/Audible Devices)

Visible and audible devices are the least expensive and probably the most important to have.

Thieves want to avoid being noticed, and don't want to spend much time stealing your vehicle. They are more apt to avoid a vehicle they see is protected. Here are some ways to let the thief know that his efforts will be difficult and he will draw attention to himself:

Decals

H.E.A.T. (Help Eliminate Auto Theft) is a program sponsored by Mayor Francis Slay and Police Chief Joseph Mowka to focus the attention of police officers onto vehicles not routinely driven during the early morning hours. It is a pro-active approach to investigate possible auto thefts, even before they are reported. Here is how it works: Participating residents will register their vehicles with the police department. They will be given two H.E.A.T. decals – one to

display on the windshield, and the other on the rear window. These displayed decals tell the officer that your vehicle is not normally driven between 1:00am and 5:00am., and that you are giving the officer permission to stop the vehicle and verify ownership. When you are stopped, merely show the officer your driver's license. He will verify ownership, and you will be on your way.

You can register your vehicle anytime at any of the Department's patrol stations: North Patrol Division, 4014 Union (at Margareta); Central Patrol Division, 919 N. Jefferson) at Dr. M.L. King); and South Patrol Division, 3157 Sublette (at Arsenal).

Bar Locks

This device is commonly referred to as the "Club". It is attached to the steering wheel, making it impossible to steer the car. There is also a model that connects the brake pedal to the steering wheel, making it impossible to use the brakes. Both items are brightly painted, highly visible, and avoided by most car thieves.

Auto Alarms

They are loud and attract attention - something the thief doesn't want. When the alarm is set, a visible light blinks, which tells the thief that an anti-theft device is installed on the vehicle.

Layer #3 (Immobilizing Devices)

Engine Disabler or Kill Switch

This device is hidden within the vehicle, and, when turned "on", cuts power to the starter.

Fuel Switch

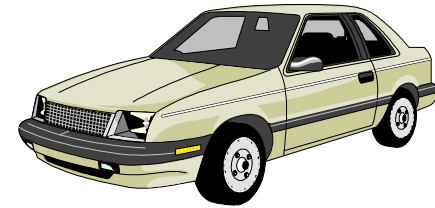
When turned "on", this mechanism stops the flow of fuel from the fuel tank to the engine. The vehicle "runs out of gas" within a very short distance.

Layer #4 (GPS Tracking Device)

This device, installed on some car make and models, is activated after your vehicle is stolen, and helps locate it. The device sends a signal to a satellite that gives you real-time tracking, via the Internet. Simply log onto your Internet account, click to "update location", and view a map with your vehicle precisely located. A satellite photo of the neighborhood is even available in some areas. In some cases, you can even disable the ignition and lock the doors.



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PUT THE

H.E.A.T.

Help Eliminate Auto Theft

ON YOUR CAR

AND



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TAKING IT

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