

# Vehicle Crime FACTSHEET



## Vehicle crime is a serious problem

Did you know that vehicle crime accounts for one fifth of all crimes recorded by the police?

The cost of vehicle crime affects all owners because the more claims the insurance companies deal with – the more the premiums go up for everyone.

But you can stop your vehicle being the next on the criminal's list by taking some very simple measures that are free or cost only a few pounds.

## How to stop property being stolen from your vehicle

Remember that your vehicle is like a shop window for thieves. If you can see any of your property left in the vehicle you are inviting the opportunist criminal to steal them:

- Briefcases
- CDs and tapes
- cheque books
- coats (old and new)
- credit cards
- handbags
- loose change
- mobile phones
- shopping bags
- sports bags and equipment
- wallets
- cameras

Remember, even if you don't know that the item left on display in your car is worthless the opportunist thief doesn't. If you have to leave items in your car, put them out of sight at the start of your journey.

Make sure that all your property is etched with your postcode and house or flat number. This will help the police return it to you in the event of it being lost or stolen. It will also provide evidence that the property is stolen and help the police to get a conviction.

Lock all doors, close all windows and shut the sunroof every time you leave your car – no matter how briefly. Many cars are broken into in the few seconds it is out of the driver's sight. When driving, it makes sense to keep valuables out of sight, all the doors locked and windows closed.

Buy a tamper proof tax disc holder (available from National Neighbourhood Watch Association at £1.50 each). Hundreds of thousands of tax discs are stolen every year, and a tamper proof disc can deter a thief from breaking into your car – saving you repairing a broken window or door lock and replacing the tax disc.

**THIS FACTSHEET  
INCLUDES  
INFORMATION ON:**

- **How to stop property being stolen from your vehicle**
- **How to stop your vehicle from being stolen**
- **How Neighbourhood Watch can reduce vehicle crime**

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Other factsheets available in this series include Bogus Callers, Home Security, Personal Safety and Good Neighbourhood. Contact the NNWA for copies or check [www.neighbourhoodwatch.net](http://www.neighbourhoodwatch.net) to download factsheets.

## “If a thief can steal your car keys then they can steal your car”

### How to stop your vehicle from being stolen

Have all glass surfaces etched, including windows and headlights with the registration number of your vehicle. You can also use the last seven digits of the Vehicle Identification Number.

If you have a garage, use it! Many vehicles are left in the road because the garage is full. Have a garage clear out and make room for your car. If you have to park it in the road try and leave it near a street light. Thieves don't like working in the light!

Fit a steering wheel lock, a vehicle immobiliser or an alarm system. There are a number of these products on the market to suit everyone's pocket. These devices will make it more difficult for thieves to drive your car away.

Electronic immobilisers are effective against thieves but must be professionally fitted and approved by a recognised organisation such as Thatcham (0870 550 2006) or Sold Secure (01327 264687). You can give information about vehicle immobilisers and other security products by calling the Vehicle Security National Helpline on (0870 550 2006).

Many thieves target wheels. To protect your wheels and tyres, fit locking wheel nuts, which are easy to fit.

When you go shopping try and leave your car in a car park that has been awarded the Secured Car Park Award. The Secured Award means that a lot of crime prevention measures will have been put in place. These will include CCTV cameras, car park attendants always on duty and good lighting. Try and leave your car near a light and remember don't leave any shopping on display, put it in the boot. For a list of Secured Car Parks in your area, contact the crime prevention officer at your local police station who will be happy to help.

## “Take the time to stop a crime. Put your property out of sight.”

### How Neighbourhood Watch can reduce vehicle crime

One of the ways to make your community safer is to join a Neighbourhood Watch scheme. Neighbourhood Watch is the largest voluntary organisation within the UK, covering an estimated 27% of the population.

Neighbourhood Watch is about people working together to make their communities safer and more pleasant places to live and work. The aim of Neighbourhood Watch is to help people protect themselves and their properties, reduce fear of crime and improve their local environment. To find out where you can find your nearest Neighbourhood Watch scheme, contact your local police station.

#### There are a number of things that Neighbourhood Watch members can do about vehicle crime.

- Look out for their neighbour's cars
- Encourage everyone to postcode property
- Encourage good security on garage doors
- Make sure all vehicle crime is reported to police
- Organise window etching free of charge
- Organise a garage clear-out and sell items to raise funds
- Have a talk from Trading Standards on buying a second hand car
- Bulk purchase of vehicle security equipment

### Useful contacts

- For information about Neighbourhood Watch and community safety contact **National Neighbourhood Watch Association on 020 7963 0160, or by email to [info@neighbourhoodwatch.net](mailto:info@neighbourhoodwatch.net)**
- To anonymously report information criminal activities contact **Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111**
- For crime prevention advice or information on Neighbourhood Watch locally contact the **Crime Prevention Officer** at your local police station