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## Car Theft: Be Ready For It

Car theft is on the rise in the Unites States. In 2003, 1.4 million cars were stolen, or 4,000 stolen vehicles every day of the year. Who's to say yours won't be next?

### Prevent the Theft

While you can't stop thieves from taking your car, you can make it much harder for them to succeed. Always close all of your car windows, including the sunroof, when you park your car. Lock all doors even if you are just stepping out of your vehicle for less than a minute. And never leave your engine running! Many people have returned to find their car gone without a trace.

Don't leave valuable items in your car. They are temptation for a thief. And never keep a spare key in or on the outside of the car. You're not fooling anyone. Good thieves know where to look.

Park in safer places. If you have a driveway, use it. Your car is safer in the driveway than on the street, and safer in a locked garage than in the driveway.

If you live or frequently park in a high-theft area, you may want to invest in a steering wheel lock such the Club, or a vehicle recovery system such as Lojack. If you have a car alarm, use it!

### Be Prepared, Just in Case

With a bit of preparation you can help locate your car in the event that it is stolen.

You will need to have certain documents and information to properly file your claim. Make copies now so that you have less to worry about in the event that your vehicle is taken. Important documents include vehicle registrations, insurance information, and documentation (receipts and serial numbers) of custom items such as the tires or wheels or the stereo.

### What to Do if Your Car is Stolen

Call the police immediately. Time is crucial in the recovery of stolen vehicles. Usually you'll be able to file a report right away over the phone, and the police dispatcher will notify area officers to be on the lookout. Be sure to have important identifying information on hand such the registration and plate numbers, the VIN, the make/model/year, and any other identifying marks.

If you locate your vehicle after reporting it stolen, don't touch or move the vehicle. The thief may be nearby and you'll need to preserve all of the evidence. Simply place another call to the police and request that an officer be sent immediately.

-- Bailey Stoler

### Related Links:

- [e-Surance -- What To Do when Your Car's Been Stolen or Damaged](#)
- [Prevent Your Car from Getting Stolen](#)

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