

Don't Be A Victim— Avoid Vehicle Smash-and-Grabs

Each year, over \$1.25 billion in personal items and accessories are stolen from cars. Here are a few tips for preventing car break-ins:

Keep your car visible

Park in well-lit areas near people. Avoid having your car concealed by larger vehicles, fences, or foliage; thieves like to work in private.

Don't make it easy

Turn off your car— especially at convenience stores, dry cleaners, day care centers and other places you will “only be a minute.” Keep windows and sunroofs closed and doors locked. About one quarter of thefts from vehicles are from unlocked cars.

Activate your vehicle's alarm

Don't have one? Factory-installed anti-theft systems are best, but a professionally-installed alarm can discourage a car break-in thief who likes to work in silence.

Hide your valuables

Many smash-and-grab thieves act on impulse, so keep your stuff out of sight – either with you or in a locked trunk. Don't count on the glove box; thieves know to look there, and they're easy to break into. If you have a wagon or SUV that leaves your cargo area open, get a retractable fitted cover or a simple blanket the color of your interior to keep shopping bags or other belongings hidden.

Don't hand a thief your keys

Take your keys with you. And if you think you have a great hiding place for a spare key, car break-in thieves know to look above the visor, in the center console, under the floor mat, in the trunk well, etc.

Stow your stuff before arrival

Experienced thieves often stake out parking lots to watch for people putting items in their trunk. Help prevent car break-ins by putting valuables like laptops, messenger bags, and electronic devices into your trunk before you get to the parking lot.

Stash the evidence

After you've put your stuff in the trunk, don't forget such telltale evidence as power plugs, MP3 adapters, and navigation system windshield suction-cup mounts. Many thieves know what they're looking for, so hide the electronic accessories, cigarettes, and loose change too.

Trust your instincts

If you see suspicious activity, find another spot to park. If you're concerned, alert Eagle/ Trident Security (317/ 573-6799) or report your suspicions to police. You may be helping keep another person from being a victim of a car break-in or worse.

