



## Auto Theft Prevention

---

The number of reported auto thefts in Chicago has declined thanks in large part to greater awareness by drivers and increased enforcement by police. Here are some common-sense measures you can take to help prevent your auto from being stolen:

- Always try to park in well-lit, heavily traveled areas, as close to your destination as possible.
- When you park, always roll the windows up tight, lock all doors, and take the keys, key fob with you.
- Never leave your car with the motor running, even if only for a minute to run into a store or your home.
- Never hide spare keys in a secret place or in a magnetic key box under the hood. Car thieves routinely check the visors and ash trays, and look under floor mats for separate locations.
- Some thieves use tow trucks to take cars. To avoid being towed by a thief, turn your wheels toward the curb and apply your emergency brake.
- Leave your car in gear or park. When parking a front-wheel-drive car, place your vehicle in park and apply the emergency brake. If you have a stick shift, put the gear into forward or reverse and apply the emergency brake.
- If you have a garage, use it. Lock both your car and the garage.
- Avoid leaving your automatic garage door opener in your car. Don't make it easy for a thief who enters your garage through a side door and breaks into your car to get the vehicle out.
- Keep your vehicle's title at home, not in the glove compartment of your car. This will prevent a thief from using the title to "prove" he owns the car.
- Check periodically to ensure that your vehicle identification number (VIN) is intact. This is a small metal plate, usually by the driver's side, where the dashboard and windshield meet.

- Consider etching your VIN into all car windows, T-tops, and other expensive removable parts. This will help the police identify stolen auto parts.
- Drop your business card or other identifier down the window slot in the door panel. This may assist police in identifying a stolen vehicle or stolen parts.
- Carry a card listing your license plate number, VIN, engine type, and body style. Relay this information to the police quickly if your car is stolen.
- Install locks that deter thefts. Tapered door locks, for example, keep thieves from using coat hangers to open car doors.
- Install and activate anti-theft devices. These include fuel cutoff or ignition kill switches that make the vehicle inoperable; sensors and motion detectors; computerized tracking transmitters; steering column locks; etc. Your insurance company may offer discounts on your comprehensive coverage for installing certain devices.
- If you see someone tampering with your vehicle, use discretion about approaching the person. He or she may be armed. Instead, call 9-1-1 and inform the call taker that you are reporting an auto theft "in progress".
- When selling vehicle, don't let a stranger take it for a test drive alone. If a prospective buyer wants to take the car to a mechanic for an appraisal, volunteer to deliver and pick up the car.
- When buying a used car, be certain that the seller's name and address are verified, and be sure that VIN on the registration card is the same as the one on the car.

---

1998 Chicago Police Department. All rights reserved. 01 JAN 98

Community Policing Office

312-742-4588

Email: [CAPS.017District@chicagopolice.org](mailto:CAPS.017District@chicagopolice.org)

Facebook: "Like Us on Facebook" [www.facebook.com/CAPS.017](http://www.facebook.com/CAPS.017)

Follow us on Twitter @ [017thDistrictCAPS](http://017thDistrictCAPS)

Community Concerns: <http://chicagopolice.org>