

In partnership with law enforcement agencies throughout Missouri.

HEAT

Help Eliminate Auto Thefts

1 (800) TEL-NICB

IMPORTANT: The toll-free number is for reporting tips only. It is not a substitute for communications with your local law enforcement officials. If you see a vehicle theft or carjacking in progress, call the emergency response number in your area.



You Hold The Key



Lock Out Auto Theft

A Guide To
Putting An End
To Auto Theft



Every year, millions of dollars worth of cars, trucks, motorcycles, other vehicles, and their parts are stolen in Missouri. The cost is enormous. The thefts themselves and the fraudulent claims associated with them drive up your insurance premiums. The vehicles that are stolen are often used to transport drugs, or they're sold to feed drug habits. The money that comes from stripping stolen vehicles and selling their parts can finance organized crime. And carjackings cost people their lives. But there's a way to even the score—a way that's safe, anonymous, and very profitable.

Call 1 (800) TEL - NICB

to report auto theft tips that could lead to the arrest of persons involved in:

- auto theft,
- the theft of auto parts,
- chop-shop activity,
- carjacking.

When you call, no one will ask your name, and everything you say will be held in the strictest confidence. If your tip leads to an arrest for an auto theft related crime, you could receive a reward of as much as \$1,000.



How To Spot The Bad Guys:

CHOP SHOPS

Chop shops are where car thieves strip stolen vehicles to their parts—a process that can double or even triple a car's value. To spot a chop shop, look for:

- salvage yards that disassemble new, undamaged cars;
- shops or salvage yards selling parts at below market prices;
- shops that “just happen” to have hard-to-find parts, at unbelievable prices and in the right body color.

Deals “Too Good To Be True”

When a car looks like a steal, it probably is. Watch out for:

- Cars listed through the classified ads — that's where most stolen cars are sold, along with salvage yards and some used car lots.
- Late model cars with fresh paint jobs.
- New license plates on an old car, or new bolts on an older plate.
- Sellers without manufacturer-made keys.
- Sellers with no fixed address, place of employment, or phone number.
- A seller whose name doesn't match the title and registration.
- Vehicle identification number (VIN) plates that have been repainted or appeared to have been altered.
- A vehicle identification number (VIN) that doesn't match the title and registration.
- Asking prices way below similar models.

Make Your Car Tough To Steal

The more time a thief has to spend stealing a car, the greater the chance of detection. That's why car thieves take the easy route—it's faster. To make your vehicle a tough target, the National Insurance Crime Bureau recommends a “layered approach”. The more layers of protection on your vehicle, the tougher it is to steal.

Layer 1: Common Sense Tips

The common sense approach is the simplest and most cost-effective way to thwart thieves. Some of these suggestions are obvious; some might not have occurred to you. But they can all help protect your car.

- Lock your car—half of all vehicles stolen are left unlocked.
- Take your keys—nearly 20 percent of all vehicles stolen have the keys in them.
- Park in well-lighted areas—car thefts occur at night more than half the time.
- Park in attended lots—car thieves don't like witnesses.
- Don't leave your car running, even for a minute—convenience stores, gas stations, and ATMs are common hunting grounds for thieves, and cars left running to warm up on cold mornings are easy prey.
- Completely close your car windows.
- Don't leave valuables in plain view.
- Don't hide a spare set of keys in the car—the pros know where to look.
- Keep your registration card with you—not in the glove compartment.
- Park with your wheels turned toward the curb.
- If your vehicle has rear-wheel drive, back into your driveway—rear wheels lock on rear wheel drive vehicles, making them tough to tow—front-wheel drive vehicles should be parked front end first.

- Always use your emergency brake when parking.
- If you have a garage, use it—and when you do, lock both the vehicle and the garage door.
- If your vehicle is going to be unattended for a long period of time, disable it—for example, remove the ignition fuse, coil wire, or distributor rotor.

Layer 2: Visible and Audible Deterrents

There are many devices designed to alert thieves that your car is protected. Popular examples include:

- audible alarms,
- steering wheel locks,
- steering column collars,
- theft deterrent decals,
- tire locks
- window etching—etch vehicle identification number [vin] on vehicle windows

Layer 3: Vehicle Immobilizers

These devices prevent thieves from bypassing your ignition and hot-wiring your vehicle. Some use computer chips in ignition keys, while others inhibit the flow of electricity or fuel until you hit a hidden switch. Here are a few examples:

- smart keys;
- fuse cut-offs;
- kill switches;
- starter, ignition, and fuel disablers.

Layer 4: Tracking Systems

A vehicle tracking system is a high-tech device designed to be hidden in your automobile in order to emit a signal that the police can monitor if you report a theft. These systems are very effective in helping authorities recover stolen vehicles. They operate in any area that has cellular telephone service.

Protect Your Car From Carjackers—And Maybe Save Your Life

Carjackers threaten armed violence—or worse. But you can help protect yourself and your car by taking some simple precautions.

- Before getting into your car, pay attention to your surroundings and be alert to nearby activity.
- Always approach your car with your keys in hand.
- Always check the back seat before opening your car.
- Make sure doors you left locked are still locked when you return.
- If someone is loitering near your car, don't approach it.
- Once you're in your car, keep your doors and windows locked.
- Carry a cellular phone and know your emergency numbers—*55 for Missouri State Highway Patrol and 9-1-1 for local police.
- Avoid high-crime areas, especially after dark.
- Be wary of people who approach your vehicle to ask for directions or change, or to hand out flyers.
- When stopped in traffic, leave enough distance from the car in front of you to pull away quickly if necessary—if another car bumps you, or a tire goes flat, keep your doors and windows closed and locked, wait for the police to arrive, or drive to the nearest police station, service station, or convenience store.
- Stop only at ATMs that are well-lighted and visible from the street—pull as close as possible then check your mirrors and look outside before opening your window.
- If an armed carjacker confronts you, don't resist—get out of the car quickly; it's better to lose your car than your life.