

Here are 10 things you can do to help protect your car from theft:

Don't leave your car unlocked

Never leave your car running, especially while it is unattended or unlocked

Do not leave a spare key near your vehicle

Many people keep a spare key under the car, just in case they get locked out and thieves know exactly where to check for an extra key. While getting locked out of your car is a pain, think about the potential hassle of your car getting stolen.

Never leave your windows open

Even during the summer when it is scorching hot, don't leave your windows open or slightly cracked when you are not in the vehicle.

Park in well-lit, public areas

Avoid parking in areas that are poorly lit or places that are not immediately seen by the public. This will not only keep you safe when you exit the car, it will also help keep your car safe because thieves tend to avoid areas that are highly visible.

Install an audible alarm system and a visible anti-theft device

Car thieves tend to avoid cars with alarms or anti-theft devices because they attract attention when they go off. These devices are well worth the investment.

Install a vehicle immobilizer system

Thieves can bypass your ignition by "hotwiring" your car. You can prevent this by using a vehicle immobilizer system such as fuel cut-offs and smart keys

Consider installing a GPS tracking system

When your car is stolen, this tracking system will emit a signal to the police of your vehicle's location. This may help the police recover your vehicle faster and may minimize the damage to your car. This may be a good investment if you live in an area with high auto theft rates.

Don't leave valuable personal property in your car

The best way to attract a thief is to leave your purse or another high-value item in a highly visible area of your car. If you must put something of value in your car, keep it in the trunk or under the seats, where it is not visible to others.

Use Common Sense

If you are wary of the safety of your car or see someone loitering around the parking lot, it's best to park somewhere else. It's better to walk a few extra steps than to have your car stolen because you ignored your instincts.

If your car is stolen, the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) recommends you give the following information to the police:

The year, make, model and color of the car and the license plate number

Approximate time the car was stolen

Description of anyone you saw loitering around your car before it was stolen

Names of witnesses