

JULY 2022 CCDC SAFETY MESSAGE

July is National Vehicle Theft Prevention Month

In 2020, more than three-quarters of a million vehicles were stolen in the United States—and about half of those thefts were due to driver error. Vehicle theft is a multi-billion-dollar crime, costing vehicle owners more than \$7 billion in 2020 alone. Passenger cars made up more than 74% of all stolen motor vehicles. A motor vehicle was stolen every 39 seconds in the United States in 2020. **There were 804,400 motor vehicles stolen. Only 56.4% of all stolen motor vehicles were recovered.** Summers prove to be the worst season for vehicle theft. Pennsylvania was in the top ten states with the most vehicles stolen.

The National Highway Safety Transportation Board offers the following information.

Use common sense when parking and exiting your vehicle:

- Take your vehicle's key; do not leave it in or on your vehicle.
- Close and lock all windows and doors when you park.
- Park in well-lit areas if possible.
- Never leave valuables in your vehicle, especially if they can be seen from outside the vehicle. Keep your registration and insurance information in a secure location in the vehicle away from windows.

Thieves want vehicle parts and valuable items, too.

Radios and wheel covers aren't the only popular stolen vehicle parts thieves take. They want whatever sells, from the mandated labeled parts to those that aren't. Some of the most popular vehicle parts or valuable items stolen from vehicles include doors, engines, transmissions, air bags, radios, GPS units, cell phones, iPads, laptops, and purses.

Protect Your Vehicle

There are numerous antitheft systems and devices designed to make vehicles more difficult to steal or easier to trace and recover.

- **Audible and Visible Devices:** These devices, such as a horn alarm, deter theft by bringing attention to an unauthorized attempt to steal or enter a vehicle. Visible devices create a visual threat/warning/deterrence, such as the use of steering-wheel locks, as well as theft-deterrent decals, flashing lights, and window etching.
- **Immobilizing-Type Devices:** These prevent thieves from bypassing a vehicle's ignition system and hot-wiring the vehicle. Some incorporate computer chips in ignition keys or disable the flow of electricity or fuel to the engine.
- **Vehicle Recovery Systems:** These devices use electronic transmission technology that help law enforcement reveal the location of stolen vehicles—and possibly catch the thief in the act.

Track Your Vehicle

If you are a victim of vehicle theft, follow these steps:

- Contact police immediately to file a stolen-vehicle report. You will need a copy of the police report and/or a case number to provide to your insurance company. You may also be asked to provide the following information:
 - License plate number.
 - Make, model, and color of your vehicle; and
 - Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) and any identifying characteristics.
- Contact your insurance company to file a claim within 24 hours of your vehicle being stolen.
- If you find your vehicle before authorities do, contact the police and your insurance company immediately.

THINK SMART, BE AWARE, BE FLEXIBLE, BE EDUICATED (SAFE)