

Common Sense is Your Best Defense

1. Lock your vehicle, close all windows and sun roof, and take your keys.
2. Never hide a second set of keys in or on your vehicle. Thieves know all the hiding places.
3. Don't leave valuables in plain view. Items left in the open attract thieves.
4. Don't leave important documents such as bank statements, credit card bills/statements or other personal information in your vehicle. Thieves can use this information to steal your identity and access your bank and credit card accounts.
5. Never leave the registration or title in your car. If stolen, this makes it easier for the thief to dispose of your vehicle. Keep it with your drivers license or on your person.
6. Park in well lit areas with plenty of pedestrian traffic, or when possible, in attendant lots. If you have to leave your key with an attendant, leave only the ignition and door key.
7. Never leave your vehicle running unattended. Vehicles are commonly stolen at ATMs, convenience stores, etc.
8. Always use your emergency brake and leave your transmission in park (standard transmissions should be left in gear) when parked. Also, turn the wheels toward the curb. This makes towing your vehicle more difficult. Thieves use tow trucks to steal vehicles.
9. If your vehicle is rear-wheel drive, back into your driveway. Conversely, if your vehicle is front-wheel drive, pull forward into your driveway. Always use your emergency brake. This makes towing difficult.
10. If you have a garage, use it. When parked in a garage, lock the garage as well as your vehicle and close the windows.
11. Remove the electronic ignition fuse, coil wire, rotor, distributor, or otherwise disable your vehicle if you are leaving it unattended for an extended period.

12. Don't become complacent because you drive an older vehicle. Parts from older vehicles are in great demand. In older vehicles, replace "T-shaped" door locks with straight locks.
13. Engrave expensive accessories and major parts with your VIN or personal identification number. This aids police in tracing stolen items.
14. If your vehicle has an alarm or other anti-theft device, use it.
15. Drop your business card, address label or other information inside your vehicle doors. This will identify you and where your vehicle was titled and registered.

Investing in Vehicle Protection

16. In high theft areas, do not rely on just one anti-theft device.
17. Stolen vehicles are more easily traced when Vehicle Identification Numbers (VIN) have been etched on each of the windows. It also makes your vehicle less attractive to a professional car thief.
18. Ignition kill switches* halt the fuel supply.
19. Visible steering wheel locks prevent the steering wheel from being turned.
20. Floorboard locks disable the gas or brake pedals, thus preventing the use of these pedals.
21. Gearshift locks disable shifting of the transmission.
22. Tire or wheel locks prevent the vehicle from moving.
23. Hood locks prevent thieves from gaining access to your security system and battery.
24. Armored collars around the steering column deter thieves from breaking into the steering column to get to the ignition wires.

Electric Security Systems

25. Audio alarms* emit loud warning sounds when the doors, hood or trunk are opened.
26. Vehicle tracking systems*, which are installed in your vehicle, are activated when your vehicle is stolen. These systems alert the police to the location of your vehicle for quick recovery.

*See your local garage or accessory store about installation.

Beware of "HOT" Used Car Deals

27. Be suspicious of any deal that seems "too good to be true".
28. When buying from a private individual, make sure the title and registration match the name and address of the person selling the vehicle.
29. Be cautious of a seller with no fixed address, place of employment, phone number or who only has a mobile phone or pager number.
30. Beware of a loose dashboard. It may indicate the VIN plate was replaced.
31. Thieves may remove the VIN plate and replace it with one from a similar wrecked vehicle. Be sure the VIN plate on the vehicle's dash is present, secure and has no loose rivets. If the VIN plate is scratched or bent, tampering may have occurred. All 1970 and newer autos produced in North America have stainless steel "rosette" rivets with six petals and a hole in the middle. They are difficult to scratch with a knife. If in doubt about plate authenticity, check with a law enforcement agency.
32. The VIN on the dash must match the VIN on the registration, title and federal safety inspection sticker on the driver's door.
33. Make sure the federal safety inspection sticker located on the door or door jam is securely in place and none of the numbers appear to have been tampered with.
34. Check the engine identification number with the VIN and the federal safety inspection number on the driver door to ensure a match.
35. An excessively loose ignition switch may indicate tampering. Check the switch for chisel or pull marks.
36. Be wary of fresh paint on a newer vehicle. This may indicate an attempt to change the vehicle's identity.

37. Check the inspection and license plate stickers to be sure they are current and issued by the same state.
38. Titles, especially from other states, and many registrations cards can be altered or counterfeited. Therefore, demand the title and registration card before paying and look them over carefully for apparent alterations. Also, make sure the title matches the registration. Pennsylvania titles are difficult to counterfeit. From the early 1990s on, they have a security thread running down the title, right of center and a watermark on the right. These can be seen when you hold the title up to the light.
39. Question the seller if the registration was recently issued on an older vehicle. This may indicate the car was stolen in another state and fraudulently titled in Pennsylvania.

Carjacking – a crime where a vehicle is taken from a person either by force or threat of force. It is a violent vehicle theft and should be immediately reported to the police.

40. As you approach your vehicle be alert, have a plan of action and have your keys in your hands. Check around, under and in your vehicle for suspicious individuals. Immediately leave the scene if you have any suspicions.
41. If confronted, avoid verbal/physical confrontation – do exactly as you are told. If at all possible, never leave in the car with the carjacker.
42. Remember, you are more important than your vehicle, purse, wallet or any other valuables. Give them up and get out of harm's way.
43. Once the thief leaves, immediately contact law enforcement. Be ready to provide a complete description of your vehicle, license plate and the suspects.
44. Once in your vehicle, lock your doors and keep the windows up while driving.
45. Leave room to maneuver around other vehicles when coming to a stop and be wary of people asking for directions or handing out fliers.

46. If bumped from behind and it seems suspicious, call the police from your car or move at a slow speed to a well lit, well populated area and immediately call the police.

To prevent motorcycle theft, follow many of the suggestions above. Also consider the following:

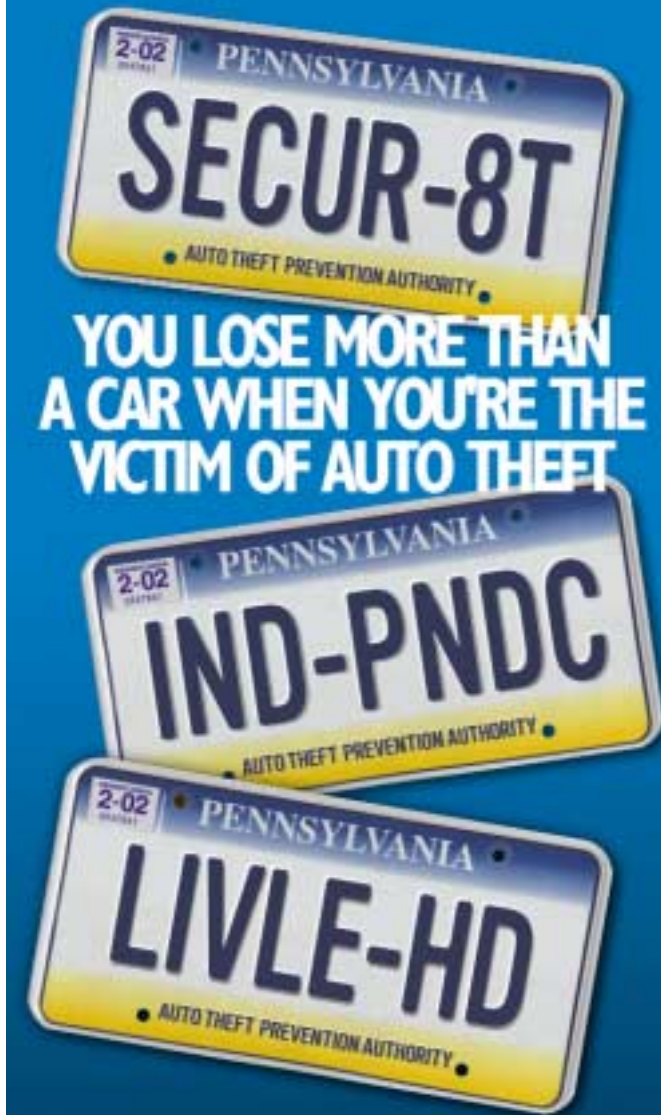
47. Park in a well lit area or park with a group of other motorcycles.
48. Lock motorcycles together using a quality lock and chain or secure bikes to an immovable object when possible. Use a dual-lock system – a fork lock and a wheel lock.
49. Keep your vehicle registration and insurance information on your person. Secure your valuables. Don't leave jackets, helmets or any other valuables on your motorcycle.
50. Check on your motorcycle periodically.

theAUTHORITY
 Pennsylvania Auto Theft Prevention Authority

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50 ways to help stop auto theft