

Don't Let Car Thieves Get Your Car When Driving On Your Holidays

In these stressful financial times most folks need vacations more than ever. And they also would like to save a lot of money if possible. An economical solution is to take the family car and drive to and from your holiday destination instead of flying.

If you are planning to drive, it may also make sense to take a few steps to protect yourself and family from auto thieves. Having a car thief steal your car, your luggage, other items of value in your trunk could really wreck what was supposed to be a fun filled and relaxing trip.

Even though you take all the numerous precautions to prevent auto theft when you travel, very determined professional car thieves can still take any vehicle if they want it badly enough. Do you remember the action movie *Gone In 60 Seconds* that starred Nicolas Cage? However, you still can really reduce the chances of becoming a victim of auto theft to near zero.

Many of these auto theft preventative measures are common sense and cost nothing to do. So it might make sense to implement them not only when you travel by car on your holidays, but also in your every day driving.

Firstly, you should never take it for granted that you are immune from car thieves when traveling, or that your vehicle is not really worth stealing.

Keep in mind that sometimes these thieves are after more than your vehicle, luggage, or any valuables that might be in your car. They may only want an older car to take a joy ride in or steal it for its parts.

They might also be after your vehicle documents for identity theft, or they could be contemplating robbing your residence while you are away on holidays. Where would they find this important information? From the auto registration and car insurance papers which are usually located conveniently in the vehicles glove compartment.

The best way to eliminate this problem is to keep these documents on your person at all times when traveling on your vacation.

The second best way to reduce this problem is to hide the documents really well in the trunk. Some police forces in cities that have a high incidence of auto thefts recommend doing this. Just remember to tell everyone who is traveling with you where these documents are squirreled away inside the trunk.

Here are some more ways you can lessen the chance of having your holidays ruined by car thieves. If you can manage to implement a number of these suggestions, you can dramatically lessen the odds of becoming another victim of auto theft when you travel.

Make sure you always close your vehicles windows tightly and lock your car each time you leave it parked, even if its only for just short period of time.

A real invitation to lose your vehicle is to leave it idling and unattended. You should never, never do it. Not even for even a minute.

Similarly, do not leave your vehicles keys in the ignition or hidden anywhere in car, including a second set of keys. Car thieves can easily find the keys hidden in the usual places very quickly. Keep another set of keys with you.

Do not leave any valuables in your vehicle, even if they cant be seen from the outside of your car. If possible, you should take them with you.

However, if you have no choice but to leave valuables in your vehicle, at least make sure that they are locked inside your trunk. When you do this, check first and look around to make sure that nobody is watching, or better still, stop, pull over, and put them in your trunk before you arrive at your intended destination. Prying eyes can be anywhere.

When parking in public areas, turn you vehicles front wheels either to the left or right before you turn your ignition off. This engages the steering wheel lock in the steering wheel column and can make your vehicle a little more difficult to take.

You should always engage the emergency brake after you have parked and turned the motor off. This may also make your vehicle harder to tow away.

For front wheel and rear wheel drive vehicles you should park them a bit differently when in underground parking. Front wheel drive cars should be parked nose in and rear wheel drive ones, nose out. Then turn your tires to the right or left. Again, this may make your auto harder to tow away.

Its always best to park in an attendant controlled parking lot rather than an unattended one. If it is a place where there is valet parking, only give the attendant your door and ignition key. They dont need any of the other keys on your key chain.

In public places at dusk and at night, always park in a well lighted area that has a lot of pedestrian traffic. Keep in mind that most auto thieves prefer to work under the cover of darkness.

If possible, avoid parking next or near to any obstruction, such as a large truck, fence, hedge, or anything that blocks an unobstructed view of your vehicle to vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

When youre staying in a place that has secured, gated parking, be certain that the gate has completely closed after entering or leaving so that a thief does not sneak in to the parking area where you are staying.

If you observe any suspicious activity like a person or group of people milling around or near your vehicle you should call the police.

Here are some of the anti-theft devices that you can install for maximum protection. You may have some of these products already installed in your vehicle.

You can use an easily visible after-market steering wheel lock bar. Most car thieves will likely move on to easier prey/greener pastures. Other less visible after-market products are gas pedal locks, brake pedal locks, or armored collars that fit around the steering column which protects the ignition. For the manual shift vehicles you can also use after-market shifter locks. These items are effective but not as highly visible to prying eyes.

Another thing that you can easily do is to have your mechanic install a hood lock that will prevent easy access to your vehicles battery and security system.

A loud vehicle alarm system and a highly visible alarm sticker on your windshield can be worth its weight in gold when combined with the addition of a number of other anti-theft security options.

The best vehicle protection is a passive electronic immobilizer that disables the motor when the ignition is turned off. Its not an inexpensive device to get installed but is well worth it for your peace of mind. There are more benefits you may receive by installing an electronic immobilizer in your car. A number of auto insurance companies will offer a discount on your policy if you can produce documentation that you have had one installed. You may also get more money for your vehicle if you sell it down the road.

Last, but not least, you should make sure you have enough insurance coverage on your vehicle including theft and damage before you travel on vacation.

About the Author

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