



Working together for a safer London



Is your vehicle attracting thieves?

Don't let thieves get an easy ride. Follow these seven simple rules to protect your car.

1. Love it? Then lock it

Locking your vehicle, even when filling up or parked on your drive, greatly reduces the possibility of it being targeted by an opportunist thief. Even if you have locked your vehicle, check you haven't left any windows or the sunroof open.

2. Leave thieves keyless and clueless

Vehicles today are by and large more difficult to steal than ever, unless the thief can access your key or fob to clone them. Best to keep your keys safe, out of view when at home, and away from your front door. It's not uncommon for car keys to be stolen from inside your home by thieves fishing for them with a stick and hook through the letterbox.

When not in use, keep your electronic car key in a security pouch to prevent it being scanned by thieves to open and steal your car nearby.

3. Be aware of carjackers

The fact that you're in the car isn't always a deterrent to someone trying to steal it. In traffic, drive with the doors locked and when queuing leave enough space in front of your vehicle to enable you to get out of a tight spot. If your vehicle is bumped from behind, wait to pull over – somewhere safe and preferably where there are people. After all, you don't know the person who has collided with you; they could well be hijackers. If you're at all suspicious, consider calling the police.

If someone threatens you, it's better to hand over the keys to the vehicle than become a victim of assault. Then dial 999 as soon as possible, and ask for the police.

If your car is stolen, some modern vehicle alarm and tracker systems have the facility to isolate or shut down fuel systems, bringing the vehicle to a halt and leaving the thief high and dry.

4. Park responsibly

It's always advisable to avoid parking in dark and secluded areas. It's worth an extra five or 10-minute walk if it means your vehicle is left in a well-lit and busier street. And if possible, always try to park in illuminated and staffed car parks or those with a Park Mark safer parking award. To find one, simply check out Park Mark.

5. Steer clear of thieves

Bear in mind that built-in steering locks aren't necessarily thief-proof. Many can be forced and broken. Fitting a Sold Secure steering wheel, gear lever or clutch pedal security device can give your vehicle added protection.

6. Fob them off

Electronic devices can be used to jam the electronic signal from your key fob to lock your vehicle. Always manually check your vehicle has locked before walking away. If unsure, lock it manually, then scan the immediate area for anyone hanging around. If a potential thief who's watching feels they've been spotted, they'll probably move off.

7. Secure your port

Many modern vehicles are fitted with engine management diagnostic ports, which can be accessed without the thief needing to open the vehicle doors, boot or bonnet, but which can unlock and start your vehicle. If your vehicle has this type of port, consider fitting a lockable cover.

Catalytic Converter Thefts

The precious metal in catalytic converters has led to an increase in their theft. To keep yours safe, ask your car dealer if they can give you any advice on locks or guards that are approved by the vehicle manufacturer.

Toyota vehicles appear to be targeted the most, and there are tips on their website on how to best protect their vehicles <https://blog.toyota.co.uk/catalytic-converter-theft-how-to-protect-your-car>.

Alternatively, try to make sure your vehicle is parked in a garage overnight, or if you have a commercial vehicle park it in a secure compound. If this isn't possible, park in an area that's well-lit and overlooked and try to park so that the convertor can't be easily reached by potential thieves. Vehicles that sit high above the road are particularly vulnerable.

These websites provide details of products that could help protect your vehicle:

Approved by the Association of Chief Police Officers'

Secured By Design scheme www.securedbydesign.com

Approved Thatcham alarm installers www.thatcham.org

Catalytic converter marking system www.retainagroup.com

Products to enhance vehicle security www.soldsecure.com

Catalytic converter guards www.garrisonlocks.co.uk

Catatak - theft prevention kit www.catalyticconvertertheft.com

CatSecure theft prevention device for Mercedes Sprinter vans
www.maplefleetservices.co.uk

CatClamp catalytic converter lock www.catsafe.org.uk

For more theft from motor vehicle prevention advice, please click on this link:
www.met.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/theft-from-a-vehicle/.

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