

Preventing car burglaries

- Keep your car visible. Park in well-lit areas, near people. Avoid having your car concealed by larger vehicles, fences or foliage; thieves like to work in private.
- Keep windows and sunroofs closed and doors locked. Almost one-fourth of thefts from vehicles are from unlocked cars.
- Hide your valuables. Many smash-and-grab thieves act on impulse. So keep your stuff out of sight – either with you or in a locked trunk. Don't count on the glove box; thieves know to look there, and they're easy to break into. If you have a wagon or SUV that leaves your cargo area open, get a retractable fitted cover to keep shopping bags or other belongings hidden.
- Don't hand a thief your keys, take your keys with you. And if you think you have a great hiding place for a spare key, car break-in thieves know to look above the visor, in the center console, under the floor mat, in the trunk well, etc.
- Stow your stuff before arrival. Experienced thieves often stake-out parking lots to watch for people putting items in their trunk. Help prevent car break-ins by putting valuables, like laptops, messenger bags and electronic devices, into your trunk before you get to the parking lot. Stash the evidence, too, after you've put your stuff in the trunk; don't forget such telltale evidence as power plugs, MP3 adapters and navigation system windshield suction-cup mounts. Thieves know what they're looking for, so hide the electronic accessories, too.
- Trust your instincts. If you see suspicious activity, find another spot to park. If you're concerned, tell the attendant or report your suspicions to police. You may be helping keep another person from being a victim of a car break-in – or worse.
- Take it one more step. Many vehicles are broken into with the intent of stealing the vehicle itself. Visible anti-theft devices, like steering wheel locks, steering column collars or brake pedal locks, may discourage the would-be thief from breaking in and trying.