

AUTO THEFTS

According to the FBI, more than 1.2 million vehicles are stolen each year.

Facts about auto theft

In the United States, an auto theft occurs every 26.4 seconds.¹ According to the FBI, the average stolen car is worth \$6,505. In 2010, there was nearly \$4.5 billion lost due to motor vehicle theft.²

Who is most vulnerable to auto theft?

According to Insurance Advisors of St. Louis, the most stolen cars in Missouri are⁵:

- 2000 Dodge Caravan
- 2003 Dodge Ram
- 1995 Chevrolet Pickup
- Ford F150

For the first time since 2002, auto thieves prefer domestic makes over foreign cars.³ There are certain behaviors that can make you a target for thieves. One-third of Americans have left their car while it is running and 40% leave their valuables within sight in their car.⁴

Spotting a stolen automobile

Stolen cars are driven through the streets regularly, and thieves could be using them to commit other crimes. Signs that a vehicle is stolen include vehicles being operated without an ignition key, broken plastic or holes in the steering column, broken window glass, and vehicles without license plates or temporary tags. If you notice a suspicious vehicle, call the police.

How can you prevent auto theft?

There are many precautions you can take to prevent your car from being a target. Always lock your car and take the keys with you. During winter months, do not leave your car unlocked or running unattended. If you park in an urban area park on a well-lit, populated street. Do not leave a garage door opener visible in your vehicle, especially if you leave your car outside your home.

Install an audible or visible car alarm and always activate it when you leave your vehicle. You can purchase an immobilizing device such as a "kill" switch or fuel-cut off. Car clubs can also be used to protect your vehicle. Immobilizing devices help to keep thieves from getting away with your car.

When parking your car, turn your front wheels sharply to the right or left. This makes it difficult for professional thieves to tow your car.

SOURCES

1. 2006 Theft Statistics: Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)'s Uniform Crime Reports
2. <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s./2010/crime-in-the-u.s.-2010/property-crime/mvtheftmain>
3. NICB Names 10 Most Stolen Vehicles for 2010
4. National Insurance Crime Bureau, 2007 Survey
5. <http://www.iastl.com/2011/10/28/10-most-stolen-cars-in-missouri-2011/>

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