Organizations and Programs That Can Help

NCPC Resources

■ Visit NCPC's website at www.ncpc.org to learn more about how to keep yourself, your belongings, and your neighborhood safe from theft.

U.S Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance

 For crime prevention information and tools for law enforcement, visit www.bja.gov.

NMVTIS

- The National Motor Vehicle Title Information System (NMVTIS) is a U.S. Department of Justice program designed to protect consumers from fraud and unsafe vehicles and to keep stolen vehicles from being resold. NMVTIS is also a tool that assists states and law enforcement in deterring and preventing title fraud and other crimes.
- Consumers can research vehicle history and obtain information on title data, brand history, odometer reading, total loss history, and salvage history.
- To find out more information and to use this service, visit www.vehiclehistory.gov.

National Insurance Crime Bureau

- Review the National Insurance Crime Bureau's brochure on vehicle cloning at www.nicb.org.
- NICB offers a toll-free hotline for individuals who suspect insurance fraud or theft. Call 1-800-TEL-NICB (1-800-835-6422).

Federal Bureau of Investigation

For more information and tips, visit www.fbi.gov.



Crime Prevention Tips From

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Auto Theft 101

Motor vehicle theft, theft of items from autos, and VIN Cloning are just a few examples of rising crimes of opportunity. Owners must be vigilant and follow common-sense prevention tips to ensure their property is not stolen.

Continue reading to learn more about each crime, obtain prevention tips, and find organizations and partners that can help you protect your property.

Motor Vehicle Theft

OVERVIEW

- Motor vehicle theft is usually a crime of opportunity.
- Auto theft can happen fast. An unoccupied car, with its engine left running by the owner, can be stolen in a matter of seconds.
- No geographic area or make or model of car is immune to theft.
- More than two-thirds of all auto theft occurs at night.
- In 2010
 - An estimated 737,142 motor vehicle thefts occurred.
 - Motor vehicle theft cost Americans \$4.5 billion.
 - ◆ The average loss per stolen vehicle was \$6.152.

IMPLICATIONS

- Parts of cars are often worth more than the whole car. Thieves may deliver stolen cars to chop shops, which illegally sell untraceable parts.
- Law enforcement investigations have shown that criminals involved in domestic auto theft enterprises often perpetrate violent crimes, such as homicide, drug trafficking, human trafficking, and terrorism.
- Car theft drives up insurance premiums, especially in high-theft areas.

PREVENTION TIPS

- Never leave your vehicle unattended with the keys in the ignition.
- Always lock your doors and close your windows when you leave your car.
- Park in busy and well-lighted areas.
- Report auto theft immediately to police and include the make, model, Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), and plate number.
- Use alarms and anti-theft devices.
- Use advanced anti-theft precautions, such as etching the vehicle's VIN into the windows, making the vehicle easier to identify if stolen.
- Install a vehicle tracking system (such as a GPS recovery system). It can help police monitor and recover stolen vehicles.

Theft from Autos

OVERVIEW

- Theft from autos is also a crime of opportunity, often when owners are not vigilant.
- Electronics and portable devices such as iPods, GPS devices, laptops, and cell phones are among items most often targeted. Even small change left visible may be enough to entice a criminal to break a car window.
- Each year, approximately \$1.2 billion in personal items are stolen from autos nationwide.
- About 1.85 million thefts happen each year, with countless more attempted break-ins.

PREVENTION TIPS

- Park in busy and well-lighted areas, keeping your car in plain sight.
- Since approximately one-fourth of thefts from vehicles are from unsecured autos, close all of your windows and lock all of your doors.
- Deter would-be thieves by using alarms and anti-theft devices.

- Keep valuable items, including their accessories, out of sight.
- Consider leaving expensive items at home unless they are truly needed, or take them with you when you leave your car.
- Report any suspicious activity that you see in parking lots or your neighborhood.

VIN Cloning

OVERVIEW

- Stolen vehicles that assume the identity of legally owned vehicles (e.g., VIN cloning) is a growing trend.
- With a stolen, legitimate VIN plate and counterfeit stickers, titles, and paperwork, the stolen vehicle is registered in another state and then sold to unsuspecting consumers.
- The consequences of VIN cloning include the vehicle being confiscated and the unsuspecting owner being responsible for any outstanding loans, fees, or crimes related to the vehicle.
- The reported incidents of VIN cloning have risen steadily in the United States since 2001, accounting for more than \$36 million in fraudulent vehicle transactions.
- The Better Business Bureau warns that as many as 225,000 stolen vehicles each year may be subject to VIN cloning.

PREVENTION TIPS

- Purchase used vehicles from reputable dealers.
- Check the blue book value, and be wary of vehicles sold for less than comparable makes and models, especially late-model, higher-end vehicles.
- Inspect the VIN plate on the dashboard for evidence of tampering, and make sure this number and the number on the engine match the vehicle's paperwork.
- Look for incorrect spellings and inaccuracies in registration, title documents, and related paperwork.
- Obtain and investigate the car's vehicle history report, including maintenance reports and odometer readings.
- Ask your insurance agent to inspect the vehicle prior to purchase.