

How to... Protect your vehicle

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
POLICE
Fighting Crime. Protecting People.



Whilst vehicle crime is falling nationally, it is essential not to let your security measures slip. As most vehicle crime is preventable, please take time to heed our advice and protect your vehicle.

- Before you get out of your vehicle, check nothing's left out on seats, the dash, centre console, door pockets or in footwells. Even clothing or loose change can be enough for a thief to risk breaking in. If you can't remove everything, lock it in the boot or within a vehicle safe
- Close all windows and sunroofs, and wipe away suction marks left by sat nav or phone holders as these may tempt thieves to break in to see if the device is still in the car. Put phone charging leads away for the same reason
- If your car has remote locking, always physically check the doors have locked before you leave it. Criminals nearby can use a jamming device to block the remote signal, leaving the car unlocked so they can get in once you have left
- Never leave your engine running when you leave your vehicle, even if you'll only be gone a minute. Cars are commonly stolen at supermarkets, petrol stations, fast food outlets, or when left running on driveways to warm up on cold mornings
- Don't leave important documents such as bank statements, credit card bills, statements or other personal information in your vehicle. Thieves can use this information to steal your identity and access your bank and credit card accounts
- Don't leave your driving licence or vehicle registration documents in your vehicle as these documents could help a thief sell or dispose of it

Key security

- Never leave your keys in the vehicle or hide a second set of keys in your car. Extra keys can easily be found by an experienced thief
- At home, keep all keys out of sight and reach of letterboxes, pet flaps and downstairs doors and windows, so thieves can't use a wire or hook to fish them out and steal your vehicle
- If you have a vehicle with keyless entry, store your keys in a faraday pouch or foil-lined tin so thieves with scanners can't access the signal from within your home to start your car

Parking safety

- Where you park matters - most car crime occurs on the street. If you park in daylight and will be leaving your car until evening or overnight, consider how the area may look in the dark - aim to park somewhere which will be well-lit and busy
- When out and about, avoid parking in unattended areas or car parks with a history of thefts or break-ins. Try to use car parks with Park Mark status, which means they meet police-approved security standards - www.parkmark.co.uk
- Parking with your wheels turned towards the kerb makes your car tough to tow away - if you're parked in a narrow street just make sure the outside wheel edge isn't sticking out so not to restrict access. Wheels should also be turned to the side in car parks and driveways
- If your vehicle is rear-wheel drive, back onto your driveway. Front-wheel drive vehicles should be parked front-end first. On four-wheel drive vehicles, the rear wheels sometimes lock, making your car difficult to tow away
- Always use your handbrake when parking. Leave automatic transmissions in park, and manual transmissions in gear. As well as ensuring safety, it makes your car much harder to tow away
- If you have a garage, use it. Nearly 50% of all car crime occurs right outside the house. By locking the garage and the car doors, the chances of deterring a theft greatly improve
- If your vehicle doesn't already have one, fit an alarm and immobiliser. This is an effective way of deterring criminals. A Thatcham-compliant immobiliser or steering lock can help secure older vehicles

Number plate security

Thousands of number plates are stolen across the country each year, allowing criminals to avoid speeding fines, parking fines and congestion charges, as well as steal fuel and disguise stolen vehicles.

The following advice will help protect your number plates:

- Use theft resistant number plates which are designed to break apart if they are forcibly removed
- Fit tamper-proof security screws available from car accessory stores. These simple anti-theft devices can be easily fitted in place of existing screws but cannot be removed using standard tools
- If possible, park to prevent easy access to either front or rear number plate
- If you notice a car with different number plates on the front and the back, or with the number plate missing, call police on the non-emergency number **101**

Contact our crime prevention team at
crimeprevention@northants.police.uk

www.northants.police.uk

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