

Protect your vehicle from auto theft



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If you have ever had your car stolen or broken into, you know how violated it makes you feel. If you are one of the lucky ones that has avoided auto theft, odds are that you know someone close to you that it's happened to. No matter which category you fall into, you want to do everything in your power to protect your car and it's belongings. The DFW metroplex is crowded with cars which makes the area a prime target for auto theft.

The top ten stolen vehicles in Texas according to the **Texas Department of Motor Vehicles** are:

1. Dodge Ram Pickup
2. Chevrolet Full Size C/K 1500 Pickup
3. Ford 150 Series Pickup
4. Honda Accord
5. Honda Civic
6. Ford F250 Series Pickup

7. Chevrolet Suburban
8. Ford Taurus
9. Ford F350 Series Pickup
10. Chevrolet Tahoe

Whether or not you have one of these vehicles, you need to take the proper steps to help protect it.

The first step you should take when parking your vehicle is to park in a well lit and visible location. Parking in a dark, secluded spot makes your vehicle a much easier target.

When you park your car, hide your valuables or anything that remotely looks like it could be of any value to a passing thief. Do not leave your cell phone, MP3 player, purse or any other items that thieves can smash your window and grab. If you have shopping bags or backpacks they should be placed in the trunk or hidden inside the car. It only takes a few seconds for a thief to smash your window, grab some goodies, and take off. Even if you think the items in your car aren't valuable, it isn't worth having your window broken and having to pay for the repair of the window.

Never leave your keys in your vehicle or leave the car running and unattended. Leaving your keys in your car or truck is just asking to have it stolen. Thieves know that if they look in enough cars they will find one that has the keys in the ignition. This is like a gift to an auto thief. In less than a minute the car is broken into and the car and the owner become an auto theft statistic. Many people leave their car running while they run into the gas station not thinking that while they are in the store, even for just a few seconds, their car will be stolen and likely never to be seen again.

Locking your car will help increase your odds of avoiding auto theft. Anyone looking to break into a car, either to steal the car or the valuables inside, can simply walk through a parking lot and pull on door handles until they find one that is

unlocked. Do yourself a favor and make it a habit to lock your car when you park.

Installing an anti-theft device in your car will help prevent your car from being stolen, but isn't a guarantee. Modern anti-theft devices for cars often include motion sensors and engine disable. These may prevent some novice auto thieves from breaking into your car, but if a professional thief wants your car or the items inside your car, they will find a way. Even if your car is equipped with an anti-theft device you still need to follow the above precautions in order to help keep your vehicle safe.

Another step you can take to help protect your car or truck from being stolen is to have a vehicle tracking device installed. A vehicle tracking device, such as **LoJack**, helps police track your stolen vehicle within a few hours. A small device is installed in your vehicle so that, in the event your car is stolen, you simply report it to the police department and they will work with **LoJack** to help track and recover your vehicle.

According to the **Texas Department of Motor Vehicles**, nearly 100,000 cars and trucks are stolen each year in Texas. Follow the tips above to help protect your vehicle against auto theft and don't make it easy for someone to break into your car. In the unfortunate event that your car or truck is broken into or stolen, immediately call 911.

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