

YOU CAN HELP PREVENT CAR THEFT!

Though professional car thieves have entered the field in increasing numbers, most cars are still taken by amateurs who can be stopped fairly easily. You can greatly increase your protection against this type of crime by taking the following sensible precautions.

LOCK UP

- An unlocked car is an open invitation to a car thief. *Lock up whenever you leave your car, and take the keys with you.*
- Lock the trunk and/or tailgate.
- Close all windows -- professional thieves have tools that help unlock cars through a minimum of open space.
- When you park the car, remove the face plate of the radio and other possessions from the car. Do not leave gift-wrapped packages or cameras lying on the seat of your car. Lock all valuables in your trunk or take them with you. If possible, also remove the CB antenna/GPS system & stow it in the trunk.

PARK CAREFULLY

- Avoid leaving an auto unattended in public parking lots for an extended period of time. A car is five times more likely to be stolen from an unattended lot than from the street or an attended lot.
- If possible, park your car in a lot where you don't have to leave your keys.
- Never attach a tag with your name and address to your key ring. If the keys are lost or stolen, the tag will lead the thief directly to your car -- and your home. If you have to leave your keys with a parking attendant, only leave the ignition key.
- At night, park in well-lighted areas with pedestrian traffic.

- Whenever possible, turn wheels sharply toward the curb when parking, making it extra difficult for thieves to tow your car.
- Be sure vent or wind-wing windows are shut tight. These are a favorite means of entry for car thieves.
- Have keys ready to open car door quickly.
- Ask security officers to escort you to your vehicle; especially at night.

OPERATION I.D.

- With an electric engraver, etch your Virginia Driver's License number preceded by the letters "VA" on CB radios/GPS system and other removable items.
- Record your vehicle identification number (located on a small metal plate on the dashboard of newer cars) and store it in a safe place.

USE "ANTI-THEFT" DEVICES

- When buying a car, check the manufacturer's list of anti-theft options, such as interior hood and trunk releases, locking steering columns and others.
- Consider the purchase and installation of security devices, such as:
 - Interior hood lock and release.
 - A second ignition switch or "kill switch" which prevents electrical current from reaching coil distributor.
 - A fuel switch which prevents fuel from reaching the carburetor.
 - A locking gas cap.
 - Locking devices for batteries, wheels, decks, etc.
 - An alarm device which will activate a siren, horn or lights -- or all three -- to frighten the thief away before he is able to steal your car. *Avoid a security system with an override feature.*

COMBAT AUTO THEFT

The **Combat Auto Theft program** asks participants to register their vehicles with a law enforcement official, which will enter it into a special database developed and maintained by the Alexandria Police Department.

Registered participants will then display the "Combat Auto Theft" decal affixed in the lower left rear interior window of their vehicle. By displaying the decal, vehicle owners convey to law enforcement officials that their vehicle is not usually in use between the hours of 1 am and 5 am, when the majority of auto thefts occur.

If a police officer sees the vehicle in operation between these hours, they have the right to pull it over and question the operator. With access to the database, the officer will be able to determine if the vehicle has been stolen or not. This also allows law enforcement officials to notify the vehicle's owner immediately upon determination that it is being illegally operated.

To register a vehicle with the Combat Auto Theft program, the owner must present a valid driver's license, vehicle registration, proof of ownership, and proof of vehicle insurance. For registration information call: the Community Relations Unit at **(703) 838-4520**.

DON'T UNWITTINGLY BUY A STOLEN CAR!

1. Deal with only a reputable, established licensed used car dealer.
2. If you buy from an individual, be sure he is who he says he is.
3. Be sure you can locate the seller after the sale.
4. Ask the seller about financing on the car and verify it.
5. Check the VIN to see if it has been tampered with.
6. See if the VIN matches the number on the seller's title.
7. Be suspicious of new paint on a late model car.
8. Be sure any inspection stickers and license tags are current and issued by the same state.
9. Ask for the manufacturer's keys, not a replacement set.
10. Be suspicious if the seller give you replacement keys for a late model car.
11. Complete all paperwork at the time of the sale.
12. Don't buy a used car without being present when the title is notarized.

GET INVOLVED:

Report a theft in progress if you see one. Cooperate with law enforcement officials once a crime has been committed. Be willing to testify in court if your car is stolen or if you have evidence of fraud.

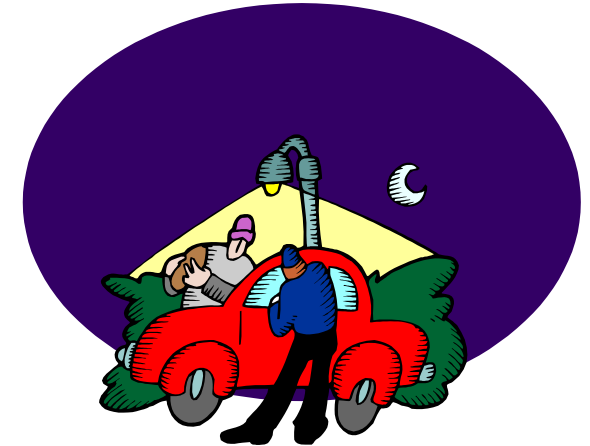
IF YOUR CAR IS STOLEN:

Promptly report it to law enforcement and your insurance company. Have this information ready:

YEAR _____	COLOR _____
MAKE _____	
MODEL _____	
LICENSE PLATE _____	
VIN _____	
INSURANCE CO. _____	
POLICY # _____	

(Keep this information in a safe place)

VEHICLE SECURITY



Alexandria Police Department
Community Relations Unit
703-838-4520



City of
Alexandria

www.alexandriava.gov/police

"Working In Partnership With Our Community"

