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Vehicle crime

Most vehicle crime is preventable. It can take as little as 10 seconds for a thief to steal something from your car. The best way to protect your belongings is to lock your car whenever you leave it. Other things you can do include:

- Removing everything from the car; don't even leave a jacket where it can be seen
- Closing the sunroof along with the windows when you leave
- Not storing things in the boot; take them with you
- Storing car ownership information in your home, not your car
- Having a routine to ensure you always take the keys out of the ignition
- Taking removable stereos and sat nav equipment with you
- In addition, using secure (theft resistant) number plates can make your plates less attractive to thieves

Where you park can make a big difference to the safety of your car and your belongings. Look out for car parks approved by the police [Safer Parking](#) scheme. You can find them by looking for their distinctive 'Park Mark' signs.

How to keep your car safe at home

Thieves sometimes break into houses looking for car keys. They can also use wires and hooks 'to try and drag' your keys through the letterbox.

Keep your keys away from doors and windows, and tucked away out of sight.

Have your vehicle's windows etched with its registration number or the last seven digits of the vehicle identification number (VIN). This can put criminals off, as it makes your car more difficult to sell. It also makes it easier for police to get your car back to you if it is stolen.

Get help when buying a used car

If you're thinking of buying a car it's a good idea to do a little research before you buy. Some vehicles are more secure than others.

The insurance research company Thatcham allows you to compare the security of new cars, motorcycles and trucks. It gives each vehicle a point score. That score can show you how the car you're thinking of buying compares to others on the market.

If you're buying a used car, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) can also tell you what it knows about the vehicle. That information can include the make and model, the year it was built, and whether tax is owed on the vehicle.

Motorbikes

There are plenty of ways you can help to keep your motorbike safe:

- Always lock your bike and set its alarm if it has one
- Try to use a designated motorcycle parking place with a stand and security loop
- When leaving your bike for some time, try to lock it to something secure. At home, you can fit special attachments to lock your bike to
- Use a motorbike cover
- Have the motorbike marked with its vehicle identification number (VIN)
- Don't leave items such as helmets or other possessions with your bike
- Think about where you park - try to park where there are lots of people passing, good lighting and CCTV

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