

# KEEP YOUR CAR SAFE

Always lock YOUR CAR and pocket the keys

## Basics

- Never leave a car door unlocked or a window or sun-roof open – even when just popping into a shop, the office, or a friend for a moment or two, and never leave the keys in the ignition – you will invalidate your insurance cover for a start!
- **Don't leave any belongings in your car.** A thief won't know that a bag or coat doesn't contain something valuable and might break a window to get at it. If you can't take them with you, never leave things on display - lock them in the boot.
- Security mark your stereo and if it's removable, take the face plate with you. Make a note of the serial number and keep it in a safe place. Ditto your Sat/Nav gear, lock it in the trunk AND its holder!
- Don't leave credit cards or check books in the glove compartment. 1 in 5 stolen check and credit cards are taken from cars.
- Never leave your vehicle documents in the car - they could help a thief to sell it.
- Remove the ignition key and engage the steering lock - even when parking in your own driveway or garage - and don't forget to lock the garage door.
- Always try to park in a well-lit, open location. Remember, the same location may look completely different in the dark. In long stay and park and ride car parks try and park near the security hut, or ask them to watch you whilst you retrieve your car.
- Double-check that all car doors, windows, sunroof and trunk are locked before leaving it. And put your aerial down to stop it being vandalised.
- Etch the car's registration number on all glass surfaces - windows, headlights sunroof. Thieves don't want the expense of replacement.
- Fit lockable wheel nuts and fuel cap.
- Fit an anti-theft device - and use it every time you park. There are many types of car security device on the market - from steering wheel and clutch pedal locks to sophisticated electronic protection.

Finally, make sure your vehicle keys are kept out of sight in your residence or office. Many burglaries end with the vehicle being taken; some burglaries are actually committed to get the keys of high value makes, as today's sophisticated security devices make car theft without keys very difficult.

## Safety tips while driving your car

**Keep the windows up and the doors locked when in your car.** Always.

**Invest in a cellular phone.** Think of it like a spare tire you may not need it, but it's there if you do. This is not a costly thing to do and whatever it costs it's worth it. It can save your life!

**Time your lights.** Do not race to the next red light. If you do, you will spend more time stopped waiting for the light to change. Instead, take your time. You are more vulnerable when your vehicle is stopped than when it is moving. Keep it moving!

**Pay attention** to people and actions happening around you - especially when you are stopped at a red light. This is when most people tend to relax and ignore their surroundings.

**Park your car in a well lit area** as close to your destination as possible. Check your surroundings before getting out of your car. If you feel uncomfortable, drive away. When you do get out, keep your keys and pepper gas, or alarm, in your hand. If there is trouble, you can respond, or get back into your car quickly.

Whether your car has been parked for an hour or a week - **if you sense trouble, get help.** Ask to be escorted to your car by an employee, or security guard when you leave a mall, supermarket, or airport, especially if you are overloaded with bags.

**Have your pepper gas, or alarm, and your keys in hand when you approach your car.** Look under, around and in your vehicle before you unlock the door and get in. Start looking when you are still 25 feet from your car.

**When you need gas,** at night, or if you are in an unfamiliar area, go to the full service pump and keep the doors locked and the windows up. If you go to a self serve pump, turn off the engine and lock the doors when you go into the station to pay for gas, especially if children are in the car. If you leave the keys in the car, your kids could be in for the ride of their lives.

**Avoid marginal areas,** places where you would not feel comfortable standing on the corner. Select routes to your destinations with this in mind. Even if you're running late for work, do not take shortcuts through unfamiliar territory.

**Use your cellular phone** to call for help if your car breaks down particularly in a deserted or unfamiliar area. If you don't have one, put a 'HELP CALL POLICE!' sign in the window. Do not leave the car! I don't want you accepting a ride with a stranger, or walking down that highway alone.

**Drive in the left lane.** If you have to make a maneuver; you have the whole other side of the street to work with. Leave at least half to three quarters of a car length between your car and the one in front of you. If there's trouble, you can make your move without having to back up first.

**Beware of the 'bump!'** If you are involved in an accident or your car is bumped by another car; turn on your flashers and drive to a place where you feel safe. If you can't move, and the driver approaches your car; roll down the window a crack to speak and place your drivers license against the glass. Do not get out of the car and do not give him your license. If you have a cellular phone, call the emergency number [\*911 in many areas].

**Prevent the smash and grab.** Keep your valuables out of sight, your purse tucked under your knees, briefcase up under the dash. If the goof can't see it, he won't try for it.

**If you are being threatened** and need to violate traffic regulations to ensure your safety and the safety of your passengers, here's what you do: sound the horn first, then drive around the car or persons in front of you. Make the 'U' turn; go through the stop sign; do whatever it takes to keep from being 'pinned in' and unable to move. But whatever driving maneuver you make, do it safely! It is no gain if you make a turn and get hit by a bus! Safety is paramount.

**If your car is unlocked** and some goof with a weapon pulls your door open and tells you to get out you do it immediately! Get out the other side of the car if you can. No auto is worth risking your life for. None!

**Grab your child first.** If you have a child strapped into the rear seat, you've got to barter for the extra time it takes to get the child out of the car! My suggestion is to throw the keys out of the car on the driver's side, say "take the car; I'm just taking my child." Grab the child over the seat and get out the other side. Do not get out first and then try to open the rear door to get the child the goof may get the keys and pull away before you can get the child out.