

ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT CRIME PREVENTION UNIT



Auto Theft and Burglary Awareness

Auto theft is a problem for all Americans, but the citizens of New Mexico face a particular issue that affects our auto theft rate. Due to the fact that we are adjacent to an International Border, we are always ranked high on the list for theft rates. Typically, vehicles are stolen for one of four reasons. They are used to joy ride, sell for parts, commit a crime or driven across the border for resale. Auto burglary continues to be an issue as well. Many times auto burglary prevention can be as simple as removing targets from view and reducing opportunities by rolling up windows and locking doors. Observe the following tips to reduce the chance of auto theft and burglary.

- Always roll up windows, lock the doors and take the keys even if you will be away for a short time. Remove ALL items from your vehicle whenever possible, but at the very least remove from view even items that might have the perception of value. Don't give a car thief a reason to break-in
- If vehicles are parked outside, always keep windows up and doors locked at any, especially over-night. Some criminals walk up and down streets checking for open opportunities
- Some auto burglars break-in to steal your identity consider removing your registration and insurance paperwork from the glove box. Put them in your pocket with your driver's license. The law only requires the paperwork be in the vehicle when it's being operated.
- Never leave an unoccupied vehicle running, including in front of your residence. Warming up your vehicle in the morning during cold weather months is an easy target for auto thieves. Also, don't leave it running with the doors locked; criminals will just break the window.
- Park your vehicle in a garage whenever possible or in an area with adequate lighting and good natural surveillance. You want your vehicle to be easily seen by you and your neighbors
- Consider organizing a Neighborhood Watch on your block. Neighbors watching neighbors looking out for each others property will always be your best defense. If you're interested in starting a Neighborhood Watch, contact the APD Crime Prevention Unit at 924-3600
- Theft Prevention Device: After years of false alarms, people have stopped paying attention to vehicle alarms. Any serious anti-theft device must do more than just make noise. If you want an audio alarm, use it in conjunction with other forms of prevention.
 - o A kill switch is a simple toggle device that shuts off the engine's ignition system.
 - Steering wheel locks are visible from outside the car and prevent the steering wheel from being turned more than a few degrees.
 - o <u>Collars</u> are devices that prevent the steering column from being stripped.
 - o <u>Brake locks</u> prevent the brake from being engaged and therefore the transmission cannot be removed from the park position.
 - Wheel locks prevent the vehicle from being moved in any direction.
 - VIN Etching your windows can be a deterrent if taken to a shop-chop they can't simply remove an
 entire door for re-sale, but must replace the window first. APD conducts VIN Etching Events free of
 charge. Check with 311 for the date and location

CARJCKING: Avoid being a victim of this type of crime by observing the following tips.

- Drive with windows up and doors locked and be aware of your surroundings, especially when stopped at traffic signal, parking lot, ATM, gas station, etc. Take note of people approaching your vehicle for any reason
- When stopped at a traffic signal, leave space between you and the vehicle in front of you and be prepared to take evasive action
- If someone is loitering near your vehicle in a parking lot, keep walking and seek help

The goal in preventing auto theft is to establish multiple layers of protection for your vehicle. Thieves are looking for the path of least resistance. Although no method is foolproof, consider where you park, theft prevention devices and etching. However, spending money on anti-theft devices does not help if drivers don't follow the basic precaution of locking their cars, taking the key and activating those multiple layers of protection.

Call 242-COPS (2677) for suspicious behavior/activity or 911 for crimes in progress. Call the APD Crime Prevention Unit or your local Police Substation for additional Crime Prevention information.