

AUTO

Be Car Smart To Prevent Theft

NewsUSA

(NU) - Vehicle theft is the crime that makes you keep paying and paying. In addition to the actual loss, victims may face the costs of higher insurance premiums, replacing valuables, time spent dealing with police, car rental fees, missed work time and even possible identity theft.

LoJack Corporation, the company that invented the stolen vehicle recovery market two decades ago, has teamed up with insurance fraud and vehicle theft protection expert, the National Insurance Crime Bureau, to launch an education initiative designed to inform the public about the risks of vehicle theft and how to prevent it. If you think vehicle theft can't happen to you, think again. In the United States, a car, SUV or light truck is stolen every 25.5 seconds.

A joint survey commissioned by LoJack and the National Insurance Crime Bureau shows that bad habits make people easy targets for today's professional thieves. The survey revealed that:

- 33 percent of people have left their car running to warm it up or to run a quick errand
- 47 percent of people don't always park in well-lit areas
- 40 percent of people don't hide valuables
- 48 percent of people have left mail, and 26 percent have left a wallet or purse in their vehicle, putting them at risk of identity theft.

What can motorists do to prevent themselves from becoming victims? Common-sense thinking can go a long way. Never leave a



A vehicle is stolen every 25.5 seconds in America. Learn to protect your vehicle from this costly problem.

spare key in the vehicle. Close and lock all windows and doors. Park in a well-lit area. Don't leave valuables in your vehicle, and never leave the area when your car is running.

Use of a theft-deterrent device adds a layer of protection. Consider a car alarm or a visible device such as a steering wheel lock or window etching.

As an added layer of protection, use a vehicle immobilizer. Install a smart key or fuel cut-off device to make it more difficult for a thief to get your vehicle.

The final layer is to use a stolen vehicle recovery system. Since professional thieves can outsmart most deterrents, these systems help authorities track down and recover your vehicle if it is stolen.

For a free booklet that details the steps that owners can take to protect their vehicle from theft, visit the LoJack Knowledge Center at www.lojack.com/theftfacts, or the National Insurance Crime Bureau's Web site at www.nicb.org and click on "Theft and Fraud Awareness."