



NorthEast Citizens Patrol
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HOW TO PREVENT LARCENY FROM AUTOS

This crime involves thieves entering cars and removing items from the car's passenger compartment. A car's passenger compartment is encased in glass. This allows the driver to see out of the vehicle so that it can be properly operated. It also allows thieves to see anything of value in the car, and all they need to do is break the glass and remove it. The passenger compartment of a car is not a safe place to store any item of value. Criminals particularly will steal GPS devices, cell phones, lap tops, "handicapped placards" that are hung from interior review mirror attached to the car's windshield, and cash, particularly change, from cars. It is best to secure these items in your home or office when not in use, or at least place them out of view, in the trunk of your car. **This crime is largely preventable. Frequently all we need to do to stop it is to secure our valuable items outside the passenger compartment of our cars.**

It is not unusual for perpetrators of this crime to walk or drive up and down streets pulling on car door handles. If they find an unlocked car, they enter it and ransack the contents looking for valuables. **So, most importantly, ALWAYS LOCK YOUR CAR AND CLOSE YOUR WINDOWS COMPLETELY.**

Thieves will also look for signs that a cell phone or a lap top is in a car. If they see a cell phone or lap top power cord in the car's power port in the dash, they may break into the car in an attempt to locate the cell phone or lap top. Please do not leave your cell phones or lap top's power cord plugged into the car's power port. Secure it out of sight when not in use.

Thieves will look for signs a GPS device is in a vehicle. If there is noticeable suction cup mark on the windshield, they may break into a car hoping to find a GPS device. If you use a GPS device, you might consider utilizing glass cleaning wipes to periodically remove the marks a suction cup will leave on your windshield.

Thieves are increasingly removing catalytic converters from the exhaust systems of cars. The converters contain platinum beads, and when disassembled by a scrap company, the platinum can be sold for a substantial amount of money. Try to park your car in a well-lit area, and if you see people under a vehicle, please call 911.

Park your car in well-lit garages. If using a valet service, leave only the ignition key with the attendant. If residential parking consists of driveway and/or curbside parking, consider installing lighting from dawn to dusk as an inexpensive crime prevention method.



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Victims of this crime have reported leaving their purses in locked cars as they "run in" to pick up children from the various parks, schools, gyms, etc. The victims return to find their windows smashed and their purses gone. After stealing the purses, the thieves used an elaborate check writing scheme to steal money from accounts. Women should consider taking the following precautions: Take your purse with you everywhere, even if it's only for a minute. If you absolutely can't carry it with you, lock it in the trunk. It won't be as obvious to a thief looking through cars.

Signal Jamming

A device transmitting on the same radio frequency as remote key fobs is used to jam the signal that locks the car. The gadget might be in the pocket of a crook in a car park, or left in shrubbery near a driveway being targeted. When owners press the lock button on their key fob, the command is prevented from reaching their vehicle and it remains unlocked. Thieves are left with an open door. Make sure the indicators flash when you press the lock button and listen for the clunk of locks, or manually lock and unlock your car with a key or the lock/unlock button inside the car's door.

Close Range Testing

Some keyless fobs may still be in range of the car when left inside the house near enough to the vehicle. Thieves can discreetly check by trying the door handles, which may unlock the doors, but are unlikely to be able to drive off in the car if they do get inside: keyless systems require a fob to be inside the car before the engine will start.

Even if owners do not fall victim to thieves, they may end up with a flat battery because the proximity of the key keeps electronic systems on standby.

Find a safe place for your keys at home and check to ensure they are out of range, or place the fob in a Faraday bag or a container made of a metal that will conduct electricity.