



**NorthEast Citizens Patrol**  
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## **HOW TO PREVENT STOLEN AUTOS**

- **Always lock your car**
- **Do not leave your keys in your car**
- **Do not leave your car running and unattended**
  - **Leaving your car running and unattended is actually illegal and you can potentially receive a traffic ticket for doing it**
  - **If you report your car as stolen to the Baltimore City Police and you left it unattended and running, you will more than likely receive a moving citation.**
- **Signal relaying**
  - **Keyless systems use a simple process. Vehicles emit a short-range “friendly” radio signal that carries only a few yards. When the correct key fob is close by, the fob recognizes the signal and transmits its own code, instructing the vehicle to unlock the doors. The same process is used for the ignition on cars with start buttons.**
  - **Thieves have begun using wireless transmitters held close to a target vehicle to capture its radio transmission. This is relayed to another device held by an accomplice close to the key fob, which might be in the pocket of the owner at a motorway services, or by a window at home. It fools the fob into thinking that it is next to the car, prompting the release of the unlock code. Once the thief is inside the car, the process can be repeated to start the engine.**
  - **Keep keys out of sight at home. When out, carry them in a shielded wallet, faraday bag or an aluminum container.**
- **Key Programming**
  - **Whether thieves break a window or use the jamming technique above, once they’re inside the car, those vehicles with a start button rather than an ignition key can be simple to steal.**
  - **Every car sold in the past 10 years has been required to have a standard diagnostic port fitted. This is typically located in the front foot well. Computer hackers have developed devices that plug into the port, boot up a vehicle’s software and then program a blank key fob. In keyless cars this can be used to start the engine as well as unlock**



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the doors. The time needed for the programming process is as short as 14 seconds. The cost of programming gadgets on foreign websites is as low as \$15.

- To prevent this fit a lock to your diagnostic port
- Use a steering wheel locking device such as the “Club”
  - Both Signal Relaying and Key Programming can be prevented by the use of a steering wheel locking device
- Consider having a “kill switch” installed
  - This is a switch that is placed somewhere in the interior of the car that when in the off position does not permit your car to be started by turning of the key or the forcing of the ignition switch
  - This too can prevent Signal Relaying and Key Programming
- Information from a reformed car thief
  - Car thieves may intentionally activate your car alarm several times.
    - They will hide under your car hoping you will deactivate the alarm
    - They will then steal your car
  - Car thieves prefer stealing cars with darkly tinted windows
    - As they make it difficult for you to see them as they drive off in a stolen vehicle.
    - Also, during a carjacking, no one can see the victim indicating for help
- **WATCH YOUR CAR**
  - **WATCH YOUR CAR** is a national vehicle theft prevention program funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance Office of Justice Programs, United States Department of Justice. It is a voluntary vehicle registration program designed to deter auto theft and assist in the apprehension of auto thieves. Vehicle owners sign an agreement stating their vehicle is not normally used between the hours of 1:00am and 5:00am. If a police officer observes the vehicle being driven anywhere in the United States during these hours, they may stop the vehicle and verify the vehicle owner is operating it, or a person designated by the owner.
  - The Watch Your Car Program is administered by the Maryland Vehicle Theft Prevention Council and is provided as a public service,



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free of charge, to owners of vehicles registered in the State of Maryland.

- To register your vehicle(s) in WATCH YOUR CAR set your internet browser to:  
<http://mdsp.maryland.gov/Organization/Pages/OfficeoftheSuperintendent/WatchYourCarProgram.aspx> and complete the online application