

Auto Theft



There's nothing more aggravating than walking outside in the morning or coming out of a store, only to find that your car isn't where you left it. More than 2,000 cars were stolen in Snohomish County in 2009. Auto theft not only costs the victim time and money; it costs society, because it drives up insurance premiums.

The Snohomish County Auto Theft Task Force (SNOCAT) is a multi-jurisdictional law enforcement task force that is attacking the problem. SNOCAT is working to reduce auto theft, increase recovery of stolen vehicles, increase the arrest and prosecution of auto theft suspects, and increase public awareness of auto theft prevention techniques. SNOCAT can be reached at 425-388-6074.

**For emergencies,
call 9-1-1**

What You Can Do to Reduce Your Chances of Becoming an Auto Theft Victim

- Take your keys. One out of every five vehicles stolen had the keys in it.
- Lock your car. Almost half of all vehicles stolen were left unlocked.
- Don't hide a second set of keys in your car. Extra keys can be easily found if a thief takes the time to look.
- Park in well-lighted areas.
- Park in attended lots. Auto thieves do not like witnesses and prefer unattended parking lots.
- Only give ignition/door key to parking attendants. If your trunk and glove box use the same key as the door, have one of them changed.
- Don't leave your car running unattended. Vehicles are commonly stolen at convenience stores, gas stations, ATMs, etc. Many vehicles are also stolen on cold mornings when the owner leaves the vehicle running to warm up.
- Completely close car windows when parking. Don't make it any easier for the thief to enter your vehicle.
- Don't leave valuables in plain view. Don't make your car a more desirable target and attract thieves by leaving valuables in plain sight.
- Park with your wheels turned toward the curb. Make your car tough to tow away. Wheels should also be turned to the side in driveways and parking lots.

The Layered Approach to Protection

To protect their investment, vehicle owners are urged to follow the National Insurance Crime Bureau's "Layered Approach" to auto theft prevention by employing simple, low-cost, suggestions to make their vehicles less attractive to thieves. NICB's four layers of protection are:

- **Common Sense:** The cheapest form of defense is to simply employ the anti-theft devices that are standard on all vehicles: locks. Lock your car and take your keys.
- **Warning Device:** Having and using a visible or audible warning device is another item that can ensure that your car remains where you left it.
- **Immobility Device:** "Kill" switches, fuel cut-offs, and smart keys are among devices which are high and low tech, but extremely effective. Generally speaking, if your car won't start, it won't get stolen.
- **Tracking Device:** If your vehicle is stolen, these systems help law enforcement track and recover it quickly. Some systems will even inform you if your vehicle has been moved without your knowledge.

Remember this . . .

- Lock your doors and windows



Snohomish County Sheriff's Office | Neighborhood Watch/Crime Prevention
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