Watch Your Car

How to Help Lock Out Auto Theft

Arizona Automobile Theft Authority
1400 W. Washington Street, Suite 270
Phoenix, AZ 85007
Tel: (602) 364-2886
Fax: (602) 364-2897
Toll Free 1-888-668-4433
Website: www.azwatchyourcar.com

The mission of the AATA is to reduce vehicle theft through a statewide cooperative effort by supporting law enforcement investigation, prosecution, and public awareness programs.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

The law enforcement and investigation component of the AATA is the Arizona Vehicle Theft Task Force (AVTTF). The AATA funds approximately $2 million dollars annually to the Task Force, which is administered by the Arizona Department of Public Safety. The Arizona Vehicle Theft Task Force is a statewide, multi-agency task force that investigates, prosecutes and deters vehicle theft and insurance fraud on a coordinated and cooperative basis.

PROSECUTION

The AATA provides annual funding to County Attorney Offices throughout Arizona for Vertical Prosecution programs. The purpose of this grant program is so that auto theft cases brought for prosecution by the Task Force will take priority and will be subject to vertical prosecution.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

The third component of the AATA's mission statement is the public awareness and education area. The Authority increases public awareness by educating Arizona citizens about automobile theft protection through use of media campaigns and community events. In addition, the AATA issues grant funds to law enforcement agencies throughout the State to conduct vehicle theft prevention activities in their communities.

The Arizona Automobile Theft Authority

Safe Practices for Purchasing a Vehicle:

- Use common sense. If it looks too good to be true, it probably is!
- Don't go alone, or be sure someone who isn't going with you knows where you are going and who you are meeting. Let the seller know that you will not be bringing cash, but will pay by personal or cashier's check if you decide to buy the vehicle.

  If the ownership documents are recently issued or duplicate, the vehicle may have changed hands recently or the title lost. Inquire why!
- Check the ownership documents for an indication that the vehicle is a salvage and be very cautious if it is. Many salvage vehicles are rebuilt with stolen parts or are unsafe. Also be alert to these issues if any vehicle appears to have been extensively damaged or rebuilt.
- Be sure all numbers match. Look at the numbers on both the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) plate and the license plate. They should be the same as on the registration and title.
- Do not buy a vehicle with a VIN Plate that appears to have been tampered with.
- Note differences in interior features. Are all items the correct color?
- Before you pay, be sure the documentation is adequate to obtain registration and legal title. Check with the Motor Vehicle Division (MVD) first if there is any doubt.

Make Your Car Tough To Steal.

To make your vehicle a tough target, the Arizona Automobile Theft Authority and National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) recommend a "Layered Approach" to Protection. The more layers of protection on your vehicle, the tougher it is to steal.

Layer 1: Common Sense Tips

- Lock your car – half of all vehicles stolen are left unlocked
- Take your keys – nearly 20% of all vehicles stolen have the keys in them
- Park in well-lighted areas – car thefts occur at night more than half the time
- Park in attended lots – car thieves do not like witnesses
- Don't leave your car running, even for a minute – convenience stores, gas stations, and ATMs are common hunting grounds for thieves.
- Completely close your car windows
- Do not leave valuables in plain view
- Do not hide a spare set of keys in the car – the pros know where to look
- Park with your wheels turned toward the curb
- Always use your emergency brake when parking
- If you have a garage, use it – and when you do, lock both the vehicle and the garage door

Layer 2: Visible and Audible Deterrents alert thieves that your car is protected:

- Audible alarms
- Steering wheel locks
- Steering column collars
- Tire locks
- Window etching – etch vehicle identification number (VIN) on vehicle windows
- Theft deterrent decals – such as the AATA's Watch Your Car Program

Layer 3: Vehicle Immobilizers prevent thieves from bypassing your ignition and hot-wiring your vehicle:

- Smart keys
- Fuse cut-offs
- Kill switches
- Starter, ignition and fuel disablers
- High security locks and keys

Layer 4: Tracking Systems

A vehicle tracking system is a high-tech device designed to be hidden in your vehicle in order to emit a signal that the police can monitor if you report a theft.

For additional information on vehicle theft prevention, contact the Arizona Automobile Theft Authority at 1-888-668-4433 or visit our website at www.azwatchyourcar.com.

To Report Auto Theft activities to the **R.A.T.T.L.E.R.** Task Force statewide call 1-888-622-0088

Regional Auto Theft Team Law Enforcement Response

Safe Practices for Selling a Vehicle:

- Use common sense. If you don't feel comfortable, don't go forward.
- Do not invite a buyer you don't know to your home.
- Don't give out unnecessary personal information.
- Don't consider a test drive until you're confident the buyer is legitimate. Leave the information about the buyer with someone who is not going on the test drive with you.
- Limit the test drive to areas that are familiar to you.
- Do not surrender the ownership documents until you have verified that the funds are valid. Confirm that the payment is valid. Also, if you accept any significant sum of cash, do so in a location where you can immediately deposit it, rather than carry it and become a robbery target.
- Complete a bill of sale with an odometer reading and all pertinent information about the vehicle and the buyer, as well as, the date and time of sale. Have it signed by both parties and keep a copy.
- Immediately notify the Motor Vehicle Division of the sale. You remain financially liable for accidents and certain other matters until proper paperwork is filed with the Motor Vehicle Division.

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