

Having your car broken into and losing your things to thieves can be very distressing. Here are a few simple steps you can take to keep your vehicle, and what's in it, safe.

Always lock it

Fuelling up or popping back into your house to get something are perfect examples of how easy it is to turn your back for a moment and forget your vehicle is unsecured. So get into the habit of locking your vehicle even if you're only going to be away from it for a moment.

If your vehicle has wing mirrors that fold in automatically when locked, make sure you lock it properly. Criminal gangs are looking for vehicles like these where the wing mirrors are still out because it is clear to them that the vehicle has been left unlocked.

Fit locking, anti-tamper wheel nuts to secure alloy wheels

Stolen wheels are valuable, either as parts or for their scrap value. Using locking wheel nuts reduces the risk of your vehicle's wheels being stolen. Steering locks are a deterrent.

Don't have keys viable in the house or near door. If they are keyless vehicles faraday bags or boxes can help reduce car thefts.

Secure anything that's on the outside of your vehicle

Anything left on roof-racks, tailgate racks, holiday top boxes or in tool chests are easily stolen when the vehicle is parked. The use of cable locks, padlocks and self-locking tools chests, which are secured to the vehicle, makes them more secure, but still, don't leave things in them if you can avoid it.

Take it with you or hide it

Your mobile phone, coins for the car park, sunglasses, packs of medication or other items that can earn quick cash are irresistible to the opportunist thief. Remember, the cost of replacing a window is often much more than that of what's stolen. And it should go without saying that wallets, handbags, purses and credit cards should never be left in an unattended vehicle.

Hide electrical items and leave no clues

Leaving sat nav mounts, suction cup marks on windows or cables on view gives it away that you have left a Sat Nav, smartphone or other device in your car. Even if they can't see the Sat Nav or iPad they might still break in to see if it's stored in the car, out of sight.

Park in well-lit and busier areas

It can take less than 30 seconds to break into a vehicle. Parking in well-lit areas and busy streets increases the chances of a thief being seen, so they'll probably steer

clear. If possible, always try to park in well-lit and staffed car parks or those with a Park Mark safer parking award.

Take your documents with you

Having a vehicle's registration and insurance documents could let a thief pretend to be the owner. Which means they could sell it on quite easily. So, never leave any documents in the vehicle