

# SECURING YOUR VEHICLE



## Advice from Nottinghamshire Police's Pre Crime Unit



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## Introduction

Crimes against vehicles, including the theft of and theft of items from them, is reducing locally and nationally. But it is important your vehicle is not an easy target for criminals.

Most vehicle crime can be prevented. Follow these recommendations and you can be confident you have done all you can to protect your vehicle.

### Parking your vehicle

Think before you park, particularly when it is dark or if you are leaving your vehicle for a long time. If possible, park in a busy well-lit area.

Avoid parking in secluded spots which could put both you and your car at risk. This includes parking near your home. Use a lockable garage if you have access to one.

If you are parking in a public car park, use one that has achieved the Park Mark Safer Parking Award. This is an initiative aimed at reducing crime and the fear of crime in parking facilities.

The award is granted to parking areas that have achieved the requirements of a risk assessment as conducted by the police. These requirements mean the parking operator has put in place measures that help to deter criminal activity and antisocial behaviour, thereby doing everything they can to prevent crime and reduce the fear of crime in their parking area.

Look out for this sign when using public car parks.



Visit [www.parkmark.co.uk](http://www.parkmark.co.uk) for more information.

### Security tips when parking

- Always lock all doors.
- Close the windows and sunroof.
- Activate any security devices, such as alarms and immobilisers, when leaving your car unattended.
- Never leave your keys in your vehicle, even for a second. Treat them as you would your cash and credit cards.
- Never leave the vehicle with the engine running or the keys in the ignition. If your car is stolen in this situation you may not be covered by your insurance.
- Don't leave anything on display – even an old jacket or loose change can be an appealing target for a thief.
- Do you really need all those things in the glove box? Never store your vehicle's documents, such as its logbook and insurance certificate, inside it.
- When leaving your vehicle, take out the removable radio cover or remove the stereo if you can.
- Don't forget to remove your satnav device, wipe away the sucker mark from your windscreen and remove the bracket.
- To prevent damage and discourage vandalism, tuck in wing mirrors and remove or put aerials down.
- Number plate theft is becoming increasingly common. Make sure your number plates are secured to your vehicle correctly. Use of security screws or stronger adhesive is recommended, but check with your vehicle manufacturer so as not to invalidate the warranty.

# Protecting your vehicle

## Vehicle security measures

- Have an alarm and immobiliser fitted if your vehicle doesn't already have one. This is an effective way of deterring criminals. A Thatcham-compliant immobiliser or steering lock can help secure older vehicles.
- Make sure your vehicle's windows are etched with its registration number or the last seven digits of the vehicle identification number (VIN), or some other unique identifying number linked to a recognised database.
- Locking wheel nuts are cheap and easy to fit to ensure that no one can steal your alloy wheels.
- Catalytic converters can be marked using a specialist metal security marking chemical and secure labels to warn potential thieves that the catalytic converter carries an identification mark.

To reduce the risk of your vehicle's catalytic converter being stolen:

- Garage your car whenever possible.
- Park in well-lit busy areas or Park Mark accredited car parks.

## Key Security

- Keep your car keys safe and out of sight at home.
- Ensure keys are not left near unlocked doors or open windows in your home, to ensure they are not on show or easily available to opportunist thieves.
- Never leave your keys in your vehicle, even for a second. Treat them as you would your cash and credit card

## Security tips when driving

- Keep your doors & windows locked, especially when travelling through built up areas.
- Keep valuables out of sight to prevent them being snatched.
- Never pick up hitch hikers.
- Ensure someone knows where you are going and when you plan to be back.
- Plan ahead and find out where the Park Mark accredited car parks are if you are travelling to an unfamiliar place. There are several mobile phone applications you can download that help to locate these car parks throughout the country. The car parks are police-approved and are an estimated 50 times safer than parking on the side of the road.



# Buying and selling used cars

## Buying a used car - be prepared

Most car sellers are genuine, whether it is a private sale or through a garage. However, some sellers are not genuine and may be selling stolen cars.

You can protect yourself by following this advice:

- Consider checking with one of several private companies that hold information on vehicles whether the car has been reported stolen, seriously damaged or is still subject to finance.
- Always arrange to meet the person selling the car at their house, not at your house or another meeting place. Ask to see proof of the seller's identity and address - an official letter or driving licence, for example.
- Always check the registration documents and service history. Never buy a car without the registration document (V5C) - make sure it has a DVLA watermark and has not been altered in any way.
- Check any security etchings to make sure they match and have not been removed.
- Make sure the car's VIN matches that on the registration document (V5C) - The VIN, formerly known as the chassis number, is a unique 17 character number issued to every vehicle by the manufacturer and can be found:
  - Stamped on the body or chassis or frame.
  - On a manufacturer's VIN plate under the bonnet or fixed to the post between the front and rear doors.
  - On an additional plate fixed securely to the top corner of the dashboard, where it can easily be seen through the wind-screen. This is called a visible VIN.

## Selling a used car

There are some simple steps you can take to protect yourself from becoming a victim of crime when selling a car:

- Never let the buyer go on a test drive alone. They may not come back.
- Don't leave the buyer alone with the keys in the ignition.
- Be careful when accepting cheques or banker's drafts. If they are fraudulent or counterfeit, you will lose the money. Like cheques, banker's drafts take time to be cleared, so don't part with your car until you are sure the payment is genuine.
- Ask the buyer for some form of identification such as a passport or driving licence. If in doubt, check with the police.

Visit [www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring) for more detailed information and advice about buying or selling a used car.

## Nottinghamshire Alert

Nottinghamshire Alert is a system which allows Nottinghamshire Police, Neighbourhood Watch in Nottinghamshire and other organisations that work for the public to send community safety messages to you quickly and efficiently.

If you are interested in getting updates on major incidents, advice on crime prevention and community safety and alerts about criminals operating in your area, make sure you are registered with the system.

You can report antisocial behaviour in your area and receive responses from police about the incident you have reported and find out how to join a Neighbourhood Watch scheme or set up your own in your street by registering.

### What do I get?

- A totally free service — you can control your message settings and choose to receive alerts via email, text message to your mobile phone or recorded voicemail. You can unsubscribe at any time.
- Information about crime trends, incidents and appeals from authorised police officers and police staff.
- Report suspicious and antisocial behaviour (not crime), receive updates and responses about them.
- Start, manage or request to join a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in your area.
- Configure how, when and which messages you'd like to receive.

If you want to know more about Nottinghamshire Alert, contact Nottinghamshire Police's Pre Crime Unit.

**Tel:** 101, extension 800 3011

**Email:** [nottinghamshirealert@nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:nottinghamshirealert@nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk)

To register for Nottinghamshire Alert, visit [www.nottinghamshirealert.co.uk](http://www.nottinghamshirealert.co.uk)

If you would like a paper copy of the registration form, call **101** or visit your local police station to request one.

**For more advice on crime prevention contact  
Nottinghamshire Police's Pre Crime Unit  
Arrow Centre  
Hucknall  
Nottinghamshire  
NG15 8AY**

**Tel: 101**

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Crimestoppers anonymously on  
0800 555 111**