



Auto Theft

The theft of your automobile is only the start of your nightmare. Items left inside the vehicle such as cell phones, radar detectors, iPods, etc. will be stolen as well. Your personal papers may be used to commit further crimes including credit card fraud, cheque forgery, etc. Garage door openers may be used in house break-ins, including your own. You'll have to find alternate transportation and may have to replace the stolen vehicle altogether. It can take less than a minute for a criminal to break into your vehicle and steal it. On average, 16 cars are stolen each day in Calgary.

Not only does auto theft cost the victim time and money, but it costs society, because it drives insurance premiums up and many times stolen vehicles are used to commit other crimes.

Below is a list of the make, model, and number of stolen vehicles in Calgary between January 1 and December 31, 2009:

1. Ford Trucks - 557 stolen
2. Honda Civic - 314 stolen
3. Dodge/Plymouth Vans - 237 stolen
4. Dodge Trucks - 225 stolen
5. Dodge/Plymouth Neons - 224 stolen
6. Chevrolet Trucks - 207 stolen
7. GMC Trucks - 171 stolen
8. Jeep Cherokees - 105 stolen
9. Honda Accord - 99 stolen
10. Acura Integra - 46 stolen

Total stolen vehicles - 6022

Recovered vehicles - 5392



Here are some tips you can use to avoid being the victim of a car thief:

1. Always close the windows, lock the doors and pocket the key, even if your vehicle is parked in front of your home.
2. Don't leave vehicle registration, insurance policies, credit cards or other valuable papers in the glove compartment. Keep them in your wallet or purse.
3. Copy your license plate and vehicle information (VIN) numbers on a card and keep them with you. If your vehicle is stolen, the police will need this information to take a report.
4. Don't place any personal information on the vehicle's key ring.
5. Never leave valuables in plain view, even if your car is locked. They attract thieves. Put them in the trunk, out of sight.
6. Never hide a second set of keys in or on the vehicle. Thieves know all the hiding places. Store a spare key in your wallet.
7. Always park in well lit areas with plenty of pedestrian traffic, when possible.
8. Many vehicles today come with some type of security system from the factory. Normally there are upgraded systems available if you ask. The best choices are systems that shut off the fuel supply so that a car can't be started or driven. Other security systems include:
 - an electronic vehicle disabling device
 - a steering wheel locking device
 - a vehicle alarm
 - a hood locking device
9. Never leave your car running unattended, even to dash into a business, store, or warming up in the winter. Vehicles are commonly stolen at ATM's, convenience stores, etc.
10. If you have a garage, use it and lock the garage doors. Also, lock your vehicle, even when it is parked in the garage.
11. If you see suspicious people in or around motor vehicles, call the police. Call (403) 266-1234 if it isn't an emergency. If it is an emergency, such as a life and death situation, injury accident or a crime in progress, call 911.
12. If your vehicle is stolen, report it to the police immediately.