

Auto Burglary Crime Prevention Tips

Auto Burglary is a Crime of Opportunity

Most thefts occur when valuables are left unattended. The thief normally seeks privacy to commit his/her act. Virtually any article left in plain view is apt to be stolen. Most property that is stolen is left unattended or unlocked.

Who provides the burglar with the opportunity?

The victim provides the burglar with the opportunity by leaving their vehicle unlocked or their window open. Most property stolen is left in plain view where anyone walking by the car can see it lying there.

What are their favorite targets?

Anything of value. The property most preferred is cash or loose change that is left in the console or ashtray of the vehicle. They also like CD's, wallets, purses, cellular phones, radar detectors, radios, speakers, and Laptops or I Pods.

When do auto burglaries occur?

Most auto burglaries occur at night while the vehicle is parked outside the victim's residence. Some burglars also target vehicles that are parked in parking lots while their owners are at work, in class, or shopping. They know it's going to be a long time before the owner returns to their car and the likelihood of being caught is low.

What can I do to keep from being the victim of an auto burglary?

Park your car in a garage or parking lot that is supervised by an attendant. Park your car in well-lit areas away from places of concealment, such as alleys and behind bushes. Close your windows and lock your doors. Never hide a key in one of those magnetic key boxes, because if you can find it, so can a burglar. **Take your valuables with you when you leave your car or lock them in the trunk out of sight.**

What should I do if I find my car has been burglarized?

Report anyone that is seen trying door handles, looking in cars or loitering in the parking lot. Call the Albuquerque Police Department at 242-COPS. If the burglary is in progress Call 911. They call taker will ask you who you are and where you are calling from. Then they will ask you to describe the suspect (race, sex, height, weight and clothing description).

Auto Burglary Prevention Tips

- Remove visible items from your vehicle - If you leave items visible in your car, you are a target. Be aware that someone may be watching as you put a wallet, purse, or cell phone under your seat, especially at a gym. Take these with you or secure them in your trunk.
- Lock Up! Lock your vehicle and take your keys, even for quick errands. Lock the trunk, hatchback or tailgate to block access into the vehicle.
- Close all windows, including vent or wing windows and sunroofs.
- Vehicle alarms - Buy an alarm and use it! Many people believe that alarms no longer make a difference, however, they do remain an effective deterrent to a burglar. Remember criminals are looking for the easy target.
- Vehicle Registration - Black out the address on your registration and photocopy it. Keep the copy, not the original, in your car. You must have the registration available to present to a police officer upon request.
- Do not attach personal information to your keys - If your keys are stolen, having your personal information or vehicle license number attached only compounds the problem. A criminal now may have access to your home, automobile or office.
- Mail - Do not leave outgoing or incoming mail in your car, especially where visible. This has your name and address on it.
- Garage Door Opener - Avoid leaving this in your car if possible.
- Park Safely! At home, park in your garage if you have one. Lock your car and all garage doors.
- Park in a well-lit area.

Check to see that your vehicle is visible from pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Remember, only you can prevent auto burglaries by removing your valuables from your vehicle and locking them in a safe place. Help us to protect your property.

Call Pete Gelabert, Crime Prevention Specialists for the Albuquerque Police Department, Northwest Area Command, at 897-8803 for crime prevention tips.