

Crime Prevention Bulletin

Crime Prevention advice for motorists

In Portugal in 2012 theft of vehicles and of items from vehicles accounted for around 12% of all reported crime. Many of these crimes are preventable. It makes sense therefore to protect your vehicle and its contents by following some simple advice - it might just be enough to deter thieves from targeting your vehicle.

1. Lock the doors and close the windows when you leave your vehicle, however long you leave it for. This includes, if alone, when paying for petrol at petrol stations.
2. When parking at home, always use your garage if you have one and lock both your vehicle and your garage. If you don't have a garage, try to park in a well-lit, open place. When on holiday if the vehicle is parked in the open, ask a neighbour to occasionally move it for you.
3. When parking in an outside car park or street at night time always try to park it in a well lit area.
4. When parking do not obstruct other vehicles, as occasionally those obstructed may retaliate by scratching or damaging your vehicle.
5. Don't leave anything on display. Even an old coat can be a tempting target for a thief.
6. Remove the stereo, GPS device together with its bracket if you can.
7. Don't keep valuables or important documents (except as required by law) in the glove box. Keep photocopies of vehicle documents separately.
8. Tuck in wing mirrors and put the aerial down to discourage vandals.
9. Use an immobilizer or steering lock to help secure older vehicles.
10. Have the windows etched with the vehicle's registration number (VRN) and make a note of its chassis number.
11. Lock your car doors while driving at all times.
12. Keep your vehicle keys in a safe place, even in your house, so that someone breaking-in cannot steal your vehicle too. Keys should never be left in the ignition if the car is left unattended in a public place. Keep them with you.



13. Get an alarm fitted. Alarms can deter thieves not only from stealing your vehicle, but also from taking items from it.
14. Secure your wheels using locking wheel nuts.
15. Mark all equipment, e.g. car stereo, with your car registration number.
16. If hiring a vehicle try to hire one which does not display the hire company's name on the car.
17. Watch out for distraction type crime, which entices you out of your vehicle and leaving the keys in the ignition. Whilst distracted someone else drives the car away or removes an item from it. Common used methods are:
 - Someone leaves an advert on your rear window under the wiper and you get out to remove it.
 - Asking directions and you leave the vehicle to explain the route.

Produced Safe Communities Algarve which includes advice from CrimeStoppers UK and other sources

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