

Anti-Theft Devices

Common sense is the simplest and most cost-effective way to thwart thieves. Motorists with high-risk vehicles should also consider using several “layers” of protection.

Layer #1 – Common Sense

Ignition Keys

If removed from the ignition after every use, ordinary ignition keys can significantly reduce the likelihood of theft.

Cost: Standard in all models
Benefits: Easy to use

Door Locks/Closed Windows

Door locks, the original anti-theft device, and closed windows effectively limit access to the vehicle’s interior.

Cost: Standard in all models
Benefits: Prevents easy access

Park in a Well-Lit Area

Parking in a well-lit area discourages thieves from approaching a vehicle because of visibility.

Cost: None
Benefits: Prevents easy access

Layer #2 – Warning Devices

Audible Alarms

Audible alarms are typically equipped with motion or impact sensors which trigger a 120-decibel siren.

Cost: \$150 - \$1,000
Benefits: Effective in preventing thefts, burglaries and vandalism

Steering Column Collars

Steering column collars prevent thieves from “hot-wiring” the vehicle. Some collars are installed permanently. Others must be continuously activated.

Cost: \$100 - \$200 installed
Benefits: Excellent protection for older vehicles

Steering Wheel Locks

A steering wheel lock is a metal bar designed to prevent the steering wheel from turning.

Cost: \$25 - \$100
Benefits: Excellent visual deterrent

Layer #2 – Warning Devices

Steering Wheel/Brake Pedal Lock

Prevents depression of the brake pedal.

Cost: \$15 - \$80
Benefits: Excellent visible deterrent

Wheel Locks

Similar to the circular steel “boots” used by many large city police departments, tire locks prevent the vehicle from being driven.

Cost: \$80 - \$200
Benefits: Excellent visible deterrent

Tire Locks/Tire Deflators

Attaches to the tire valve stem and causes the tire to go flat if the tire rotates before they are removed.

Cost: Under \$50
Benefits: Easy and inexpensive to use.

Theft Deterrent Decals

Theft deterrent decals visually warn thieves the vehicle is protected by an alarm or other anti-theft devices.

Cost: \$2 - \$5
Benefits: Inexpensive but effective

Identification markers in or on vehicle

Security labels marking various vehicle parts enabling the part to be identified if removed from the vehicle.

Cost: \$2 - \$15
Benefits: Inexpensive, discourages thieves from stealing the vehicle and aids in recovery

Window Etching

Etching the vehicle identification number or other traceable number onto the vehicle’s windows makes it difficult for thieves to resell the vehicle or its parts.

Cost: Free to \$100
Benefits: Discourages thieves from stealing the vehicle and aids in recovery

Layer #2 – Warning Devices

Micro Dot Marking

The spraying or painting of an epoxy resin on vehicle parts or in components, that contains small particle dots of identifying markings that can be traced back to the vehicles identification number.

Cost: \$150 - \$250
Benefits: Easy to install, hard to hide or remove

remote monitoring of a vehicle. If the vehicle is moved the system will alert the owner and the vehicle can be tracked via computer.

Cost: \$350 to \$1,000
Benefits: Lets the owner monitor the vehicles security and location by computer from anywhere.

Layer #3 – Immobilizing Devices

Smart Keys

Smart keys contain specially coded computer chips or radio frequencies. Without the exact key, the vehicle's engine cannot be started.

Cost: Standard in some models
Benefits: Effective and extremely easy to use

Fuse cut-offs

Short circuits the electrical system, preventing the vehicle from starting.

Cost: \$40 - \$90
Benefits: Inexpensive and relatively easy to install

Kill Switches

Kill switches inhibit the flow of electricity or fuel to the engine until a hidden switch is activated.

Cost: \$10 - \$125
Benefits: Inexpensive and relatively easy to install

Starter, ignition and fuel disablers

Short circuits the electrical or fuel system, preventing the vehicle from starting, or causes the vehicle to stop running within a short time.

Cost: Standard in some models
Benefits: Inexpensive and easy to use

Wireless, ignition authentication

Transmitters located in key fobs or wallet tabs that activates or completes the ignition circuitry.

Cost: \$250 - \$350
Benefits: Easy to install, hard to detect

Layer #4 – Tracking Systems

These systems emit a signal to police or a monitoring station when the vehicle is stolen. Some systems employ "Telematics" which combine GPS and wireless technologies to allow