



*** VEHICLE SAFETY ***

-PRECAUTIONS YOU CAN TAKE-

RULES TO DRIVE BY

Women are more likely to be targeted than men because thieves think they'll put up less resistance. Those driving alone are the most likely victims, though carjackers also approach people accompanied by small children, whom the robbers typically don't notice, until they're next to the car. The crime is so frighteningly random that police find it difficult to set up decoys or surveillance units to catch carjackers. But there are some measures you can take to protect yourself.

ENTER YOUR CAR AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE

Have your keys ready when returning to your car, instead of fumbling through your purse for them at the car door. And, with the motor still running, look around you before getting out of your car. Carjackings commonly take place when victims are either leaving or entering their parked cars.

ALWAYS KEEP YOUR DOORS LOCKED AND WINDOWS ROLLED UP

Many victims of assaults, robberies, carjackings and rapes simply made it too easy for the perpetrator. They forget to lock their car doors. They stopped for a red light and the assailant seized the opportunity to open the door and initiate his attack. Keeping windows shut and doors locked may deter the criminal because he'll have to openly brandish a weapon—and perhaps draw attention—to make you open the door. It will also give you a few extra seconds to drive away if he can't immediately gain entry.

STAY ALERT AT RED LIGHTS AND STOP SIGNS

Look all around you—especially back and sides—so you can be aware of anyone approaching you. Assailants often stand on the curb and wait for a potential victim to pull up to a traffic light with their windows wide open. When a suitable looking victim shows up they stick a gun in the window and rob the driver and/or steal their car.

Less ambitious criminals use the same approach but instead of using a gun, they reach into a stopped vehicle and grab the driver's handbag, brief case or other valuable items.

MINIMIZE DRIVING LATE AT NIGHT

Although vehicle crimes occur at all times of the day, experts agree that most of them take place between 10 pm and 2 am, when the roads are less populated. Friday and Saturday nights are also prime times, as they are for most violent crimes.

CONSIDER A CAR PHONE OR CB RADIO

Installing one of these in your car may make it possible for you to call for assistance.

DON'T ASSUME YOU'RE SAFE IN AN INEXPENSIVE CAR

While many car thieves have targeted luxury vehicle--Mercedes, BMW, and Porches-- just as many have gone after nondescript makes. Almost any type of vehicle is a target.

WHERE YOU'RE MOST AT RISK

1. Parking lots. The lots at shopping centers, fast-food establishments, rest stops and convenience stores are common sites because of their proximity to major highways and the fact that they're usually so vast that patrons may have to park in remote areas.
2. Red lights and stop signs. Drivers are often distracted at these points.
3. Parking garages. STAY ALERT and have your keys in your hand ready to open your car door.
4. Interstate ramps. Slowing down or stopping before merging with traffic on a busy interstate or when exiting makes a driver a sitting duck.
5. Gas stations. Self-service stations are risky because the driver has to stand outside of the car to pump gas. But full-service stations are just as dangerous late at night.
6. Automatic Teller Machines, (ATM'S). If you notice anyone already using the ATM, circle the building until the area is clear. Be aware of parked vehicles in the lot, check to see if anyone is sitting in a car. Do not leave your car running, and the door open while you are transacting your business. Stay alert to any danger, while you are in the area. If someone approaches you, don't wait until they are close to you before you react.

OTHER ON-ROAD TIPS

1. If bumped from behind by a car, and you feel unsafe, drive to a nearby police station, or other well-lit place of business.
2. Leave your valuables out of sight in your vehicle.
3. Keep car keys separate from house keys.