

Preventing Theft of Vehicles

Auto theft costs Canadians more than \$1 billion every year. About half of all stolen vehicles are used to commit another crime or are driven – often recklessly – for simple purposes of transportation (this is called ‘destination theft’). In these cases, the thieves are usually amateurs who take advantage of owner negligence by grabbing the first vehicle they can find that’s been left unsecured. In the other half of cases, vehicles are stolen by professional thieves involved in organized crime rings.

Canada is a primary source country for stolen automobiles. High-end vehicles are targeted for export overseas. Thieves may target specific car models, such as Dodge Ram pickup trucks, Jeeps, Lexus, and Durangos. They may also target specific parts or items inside the car, which is more common for older vehicles: tires and wheels are easy to steal and resell, catalytic converters have a lot of metal with a high resale value, tailgates for certain truck models, batteries, airbags and registration information. Most vehicle crime is a crime of opportunity. Thieves look for these crimes of opportunity. They can happen anywhere, even if you believe you are in a safe neighbourhood. These crimes often happen quickly.

Invest in Vehicle Protection if Possible

Investing in vehicle protection is crucial for safeguarding your valuable assets and ensuring your peace of mind. Vehicles are significant investments, and taking proactive measures to protect them can prevent costly damages, theft, and other risks. By prioritizing vehicle protection, you not only extend the lifespan of your car but also enhance its safety and security. Here, we explore the importance of investing in vehicle protection and how it contributes to overall vehicle longevity and owner confidence.

Electronic immobilizers disable your vehicle’s engine when the ignition is turned off. An engine with an immobilizer won’t start until it recognizes a special key (with computer chip) or electronic device (usually on key ring). Passive and manual immobilizers exist. Electronic immobilizers offer the highest level of protection. If your vehicle is equipped with a passive electronic immobilizer, you could save on your insurance coverage. More information can be found here regarding anti-theft deductible savings [Discounts and savings \(icbc.com\)](https://www.icbc.com/Discounts-and-savings) . For enhanced security, consider installing a vehicle tracking system that uses GPS technology to locate and track your vehicle. If your vehicle is OnStar capable, visit [Stolen Vehicle Assistance | Theft Alarm & GPS | OnStar](#) .



Hacked

In the last couple of years, car thieves have developed ways to trick the computer into thinking the correct key is being used when it is in fact counterfeit.

Car thieves can break into a vehicle, plug into the diagnostics port under the dashboard, download the car's information, and program their own key fob. This allows the thief to start the vehicle without having the original key fob. The device is similar to the one mechanics use to get information from a vehicle's computer. A similar method called relay theft involves using the Bluetooth signal of a key fob in a nearby location to boost the vehicle.

Vehicle break-ins can also lead to identity theft. By grabbing a purse, raiding the glove box, and/or obtaining a VIN, thieves can obtain personal information from vehicle registration documents and other personal documents. Identity thieves may use this information to open accounts, secure loans, or accrue large amounts of debt under their victim's name.

To help safeguard against a hack, if you have a connected car, ensure its onboard software is up-to-date, regularly change your car's onboard network Wifi password. Additionally, a physical steering wheel lock can give you extra piece of mind.

