VIN Etching

VIN's or Vehicle Identification Numbers have been placed on vehicles since 1969. One VIN has been engraved on a metal plate on the dashboard near the windshield. Others, depending on the manufacturer, are placed in and on various parts of the vehicle.

When a car is reported stolen, law enforcement agencies send this number to the FBI's computerized National Crime Information Center. While the engine and transmission typically have VIN's, a new program has been instituted to further protect your vehicle from theft which is etching the VIN on the windows utilizing a chemical process.

Auto theft investigators believe this is an excellent deterrent to professional thieves since they either have to remove or replace the windows before selling the car or its parts.

Collar

The collar is a metal alloy device that deters thieves from breaking the lower shift bowl of the steering wheel column.

The collar is a device that may be purchased at an auto supply dealer. The collar is made for all vehicles and may be installed by the purchaser.

Steer Wheel Locking Devices

Steering wheel locking devices are hardened steel rods that lock the steering wheel and prevent the wheel from being turned more than a few degrees. Another steering wheel lock device that is less expensive is a bar or grid lock - an adjustable steel rod that hooks under the brake and locks to the steering wheel. The above items may be purchased at many auto supply dealers.

Other Devices

There are several GPS vehicle tracking devices available. These tracking devices are extremely helpful in the quick recovery of the vehicle and arrest of the suspect. Some devices are a one time expense that is suprisingly inexpensive compared to the cost of the vehicle.

Another system is the ignition disabler that disables the starter when the engine is turned off. This can be activated by a code, a key, a toggle switch, or a pressure pad. This device must be installed at a qualified auto service shop.

Orange County Sheriff's Office
Crime Prevention Unit
407-254-7106

Emergency 9-1-1

Non-Emergency
407-836-HELP (4357)

Visit us online at
www.ocso.com

ORANGE COUNTY
SHERIFF

Sheriff Jerry L. Demings

But I was only away from my car for a minute!
Every day people leave their vehicles unattended for short period of time and when they return, their vehicles are gone or have been burglarized.

AUTO THEFT/ AUTO BURGLARY:

Don't Let a Criminal Drive or Steal From Your Car

10-1461 (10/12)

Florida ranks fourth in the nation for auto thefts. In fact, a vehicle is stolen every five minutes in Florida.

Why do criminals steal cars?

- High profit and low risk
- Joyride
- Chop shop/parts/stereo equipment
- For domestic and foreign resale

GENERAL RULES TO AVOID AUTO THEFT/ BURGLARY...

How to Give a Thief a Hard Time

- Always lock your car and remove the keys.
- Lock valuables in the trunk and don't leave personal identification or credit cards in your vehicle.
- Never leave your vehicle running while unattended. (This is a violation of state law, Sec. 316.1975, F.S.S.)
- Install an anti-theft device that is highly visible, hard to defeat, and that renders the car undrivable.
- Use an alarm or wheel lock device.
- Photocopy your vehicle registration and insurance papers and keep them in your wallet, not in the glove compartment.
- Park in a garage, if possible, or choose a well lighted, heavily traveled area to park.
- Don't hide spare keys in the car.
- Always be observant for possible "carjackers" as you drive and while entering/exiting your vehicle. Your car horn is a good deterrent to crime.
- Record serial numbers of aftermarket stereo equipment.
- Don't leave enticing items visible.
- Engrave your driver license number on your stereos, speakers, and cellular phones.
- Etch the vehicle ID number on the windshield.
- Report any suspicious activity to your local law enforcement agency.

NOTE: Citizens should contact their insurance companies for recommendations on other preventative measures. Some insurance companies may offer a discount for specified alarm equipment.

CARJACKING

A recent trend in auto theft is carjacking. Carjacking is when a car is taken from a person either by force or a threat of force. There is no guaranteed way of avoiding being carjacked, but there are some simple, common-sense precautions you can incorporate into your daily routine to increase your safety.

Before You Enter Your Car

- Be alert of your surroundings. Have a plan of action. Do not give a carjacker the opportunity to confront you.
- Have your keys in your hand.
- Make sure no one is hiding in or under your car.

If You're Confronted

- Avoid verbal/physical confrontations.
- If controntation is unavoidable, cooperate and do exactly as you are told.
- Avoid leaving in a car with a carjacker. Take your chances right there instead of at some remote secondary crime scene.
- Once the criminals leave, walk or run away and call law enforcement immediately. Be ready to give a description of your car and the suspect(s).

ENTERING/EXITING YOUR VEHICLE

- Keep your doors and windows locked.
- Plan your route. Be aware of your surroundings, as crooks prey on people who appear distracted.
- Avoid known trouble spots. If you sense danger, trust your instincts and get to a populated area as quickly as possible.
- Never overload your arms with package.
- Allow room between your car and the one in front of you so you can drive around it quickly if you need to get away from a situation.
- If your vehicle is bumped from behind and it seems suspicious, motion to the driver to follow you. Move at a slow but steady speed to the nearest well-lighted, well-populated area and immediately call law enforcement.
- Avoid going out alone after dark.
- Park in a well-lighted area close to the entrance of buildings.
- Carry a large flashlight if you park in an area that may be dark or deserted when you return.
- Have keys in hand as you approach your car. Fumbling for the keys leaves you open to attack.
- Don't leave anything worth stealing in plain view in your car.