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

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

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

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

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Layer #2 – Warning Devices

Laminated Glass
Impact resistant protective glazing applied to vehicle windows designed to fortify the windows against penetration or splintering.
Cost: Standard
Benefits: Excellent protection for vehicle windows

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

Layer #4 – Tracking Devices

Tracking Devices
Most tracking devices are electronic transmitters hidden in the vehicle which emit signals to the police or monitoring stations when the vehicle is reported stolen.
Cost: $400 to $1,500
Benefits: Effective in recovering stolen vehicles