

## **Car Break-Ins: Avoiding Car Theft Smash-and-Grab**

It takes less than a minute for a thief to break your car window and snatch the iPod, laptop, or purse on the front seat.

Think about that the next time you dash in to pick up a cup of coffee or return a DVD.

That's 60 . . . 59 . . . 58 . . . 57 . . . 56 . . .

Each year, \$1.26 billion in personal items and accessories are stolen from vehicles in about 1.85 million thefts. For every theft, experts estimate there are several break-ins and attempted break-ins.

Don't become a statistic. Nationwide offers 10 common sense habits and tips for preventing car break-ins.

### **Car Break-In Prevention Tips**

#### **1. Keep your car visible**

Park in well-lit areas near people or with an on-duty parking lot or garage attendant. Avoid having your car concealed by larger vehicles, fences, or foliage; thieves like to work in private.

#### **2. Don't make it easy**

Keep windows and sunroofs closed and doors locked. Almost one-fourth of thefts from vehicles are from unlocked cars.

#### **3. Activate your vehicle's alarm**

Don't have one? Factory-installed and theft systems are best, but a professionally-installed alarm can discourage a car break-in thief who likes to work in silence.

#### **4. Hide your valuables**

Many smash-and-grab thieves act on impulse, so keep your stuff out of sight – either with you or in a locked trunk. Don't count on the glove box; thieves know to look there, and they're easy to break into.

#### **5. Hide your valuables II**

If you have a wagon or SUV that leaves your cargo area open, get a retractable fitted cover to keep shopping bags or other belongings hidden.

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## **6. Don't hand a thief your keys**

Take your keys with you. And if you think you have a great hiding place for a spare key, car break-in thieves know to look above the visor, in the center console, under the floor mat, in the trunk well, etc.

## **7. Stow your stuff before arrival**

Experienced thieves often stake out parking lots to watch for people putting items in their trunk. Help prevent car break-ins by putting valuables like laptops, messenger bags, and electronic devices into your trunk before you get to the parking lot.

## **8. Stash the evidence, too**

After you've put your stuff in the trunk, don't forget such telltale evidence as power plugs, MP3 adapters, and navigation system windshield suction-cup mounts. Thieves know what they're looking for, so hide the electronic accessories, too.

## **9. Trust your instincts**

If you see suspicious activity, find another spot to park. If you're concerned, tell the attendant or report your suspicions to police. You may be helping keep another person from being a victim of a car break-in or worse.

## **10. Take it one more step**

Many vehicles are broken into with the intent of stealing the vehicle itself. Visible anti-theft devices, like steering wheel locks, steering column collars, or brake pedal locks may discourage the would-be thief from breaking in and trying.

## **Learn more about how to prevent car break-ins**

The aftermath of a car break-in can be expensive, both in repair costs and replacement of your valuables, as well as making you feel vulnerable. Help protect yourself with a good [auto insurance policy](#) and by following Nationwide's 10 car break-in prevention tips. Visit [Nationwide.com](http://Nationwide.com) for more [car safety tips](#).