



Carjacking tips: Minimizing the risks

Carjacking is the term for the crime of a car being taken from a person either by force or threat of force. Minneapolis has approximately two auto-mobiles taken by force from the driver each week (based on 2006-2008 statistics.). Some of these vehicles are taken by overpowering the driver, others are taken with the use of weapons. The vehicles are taken for a variety of reasons — for parts or transportation.



What you can do to protect yourself from becoming a victim includes the following:

AVOIDANCE

You will be safer if you avoid certain situations.

- f* Don't drive without first locking your doors and closing your windows.
- f* Avoid parking in secluded, poorly lit areas, especially at night.
- f* Don't walk to your car alone. Remember that both men and women are vulnerable to carjacking. Walk in pairs whenever possible.
- f* Carry a small flashlight or a keychain light.
- f* Walk with a purpose. Don't walk aimlessly toward your car.
- f* Have your keys out, ready to unlock and enter the car without delay in order to avoid standing by your locked car looking for your keys.
- f* Drive to a safe public place and call the police if you think someone is following you.
- f* Don't get out of your car if you see suspicious people. If you are in doubt, or are approached, drive away.
- f* To avoid other thefts that sometimes follow carjackings, separate your car keys from your house and office keys.
- f* Don't pick up hitchhikers.
- f* Always keep valuables out of view if you must travel with them in the car.

AWARENESS

Be aware of your surroundings.

- f* Plan ahead and know your route. Use well-lit and well-traveled roads.
- f* Have an alternate route in mind in case of problems. Let someone know the route you will take and when you plan to arrive.
- f* Don't travel alone if at all possible.
- f* Avoid shortcuts that take you through unfamiliar or unsafe areas.
- f* Be aware of people who may be following you to your car.
- f* Recognize that carjacking can occur anytime, anywhere.
- f* Be aware that any car may be the target of carjackers, not just expensive, high-profile cars.

ALERTNESS

Be alert to potential dangers.

- f* Be alert to any activity near your car.
- f* Be alert to people loitering in parking area.
- f* Be suspicious of people approaching you and your car.
- f* If you think someone has tampered with your car, don't enter.
- f* Check door handles, locks, and back seat before entering.
- f* When stopped in traffic, leave enough distance between your car and the one in front of you, so you can pull away quickly if necessary.

ACTION

Certain actions will help keep you safe if you are a victim.

- f* If someone demands your car keys, don't resist. Nothing is more valuable than your life.
- f* If someone asks for assistance, do not get out of your car. Offer to call 911 and drive to a safe location to make the call.
- f* If in serious danger, you may consider running a stop sign or red light if, in your judgment, you will not endanger others.
- f* Make mental notes of physical descriptions and direction of escape. Write it down if you have a pen and notebook available.
- f* If house keys are taken, change your locks immediately. If a garage door opener is in the car, change the security setting immediately. If possible, do not leave your garage door opener in your car.
- f* Consider carrying a pocket alarm. The alarm emits a high-pitched, very loud, siren-like sound that often sends attackers running. If you're in danger, consider honking the horn or using the panic button on your key fob to attract attention.
- f* Consider getting an alarm system for your car.
- f* If you are a victim, call 911 immediately, and make a report.

Remember, if you become a victim of carjacking:

- f* Comply with the demands of the carjackers; your life is worth more than the car.
- f* Try to get away rather than get in the car. Isolation with suspect(s) can be dangerous.

Contact your crime prevention specialist for additional prevention information. Call 311 (or 612-673-3000) or see http://www.minneapolismn.gov/police/crimeprevention/police_outreach_safe-teams to locate your neighborhood crime prevention specialist.

For further crime prevention resources, please visit

www.minneapolismn.gov/police/crimeprevention/index.htm

English: Attention. If you want help translating this information, call 612-673-3737

Spanish: Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llame 612-673-2700

Somali: Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' aan wac 612-673-3500

Hmong: Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2800

Sign Language: TTY 612-673-2626

If you need this material in an alternative format, please contact the Minneapolis Police Department at 612-673-3082.