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Carjacking - What is it?

Carjacking is a violent crime that has been on a dramatic increase. It is a crime in which a car is taken from a person by force--at gunpoint or knifepoint, for instance.

- ** Keep your doors locked and windows shut** anytime you're not in your car, even for a few minutes.
- ** Always have your mobile phone handy**—and charged.
- ** Avoid being alone in your vehicle in certain areas**, such as isolated areas or desolate areas of parking lots.
- ** Practice safe parking**. Stick to well-lit areas. If you have any doubts about where you parked after the fact, find a security guard to accompany you to your vehicle.
- ** Take extra care when parking in commercial areas**. Park in a spot close to the building's main entrance and in a well-lit area. Don't sit in the car and go through receipts or have a conversation on the phone or with your child in the backseat. Get in, lock the doors and go.
- ** Be aware of your surroundings**. Pay special attention to people who seem to be lurking or cars that suspiciously follow you into driveways. Call 911 and use your key fob or other car alarm if you feel a threat.





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**** Be wary of how carjackers lure victims.** These include bumping your car, pretending to be stranded motorists or flashing their lights as if there were something wrong with your car. In each of these scenarios, you might be tempted to pull over—only to have your car taken. Stay inside with the windows shut and the doors locked and, if you feel a threat, drive to the nearest police or fire station.

**** Know how to react if your car is bumped from behind.** Carjackers use a ruse called “The Bump.” They rear-end cars and steal them when the drivers get out to assess the damage and gather information. If your car gets hit from behind, call 911 if possible and only pull over and get out when you reach a safe, public place. Stay inside your vehicle with the doors locked and windows shut.

**** Don't sit in your car with the door unlocked or the windows rolled down.**

**** Don't stop at isolated ATMs,** which might put you, as well as your car, in danger. If you must stop at a drive-thru ATM, have your ATM card ready, keep your car in drive, and pull up as close to the ATM as possible. Check your rearview mirror before stopping.

**** Don't disregard safety because it's daytime.** Not all carjacking's happen under the cloak of night. Be as alert during the daylight as you would be at nighttime.

**** Look, listen, and trust your instincts when approaching your car.** Keep your head up, ears open, and eyes peeled when you're returning to your car. Don't ignore your gut feeling if you sense that something is wrong. If you see someone standing around in the parking lot, or you merely sense something is not right, don't proceed to your car. Return to a place where people are and ask for a security escort to walk you to your car.





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**** Stay alert at intersections.** Observe 360 degrees around you through your mirrors and windows. Keep about one-half of the length of your vehicle between you and the vehicle ahead of you, so that you can maneuver out if necessary. As a rule of thumb, you should be able to see the rear tires of the vehicle ahead of you.

**** What should I do if I am carjacked?** Surrender your car without a fight. If the carjacker threatens you with a gun or other weapon, give up your car. Don't argue. Your life is worth more than a car. Take note of the suspect's appearance and the direction in which he drives away and contact the police immediately.

**** Most stolen cars are recovered later.** You will probably get your car back. The Police Department will collect evidence that is usually left in the cars by the suspects and use it to prosecute those responsible. The Lakewood Police Department is working with the Cleveland Police Department, the Cuyahoga County Prosecutors Office, and other agencies to put an end to these types of crimes. Report any suspicious behavior.

