



Crime Bulletin

Is your car an easy target?



It's easy to think that thieves go after those bright, flashy, and expensive cars like BMWs, Mercedes, and sports cars of any make and model. You might even think your old beat-up car is immune to theft.

But in reality, your old car that is worth only a few thousand dollars is much more likely to be stolen than your neighbor's new, expensive model and here is why. Understanding why older cars are stolen more often and show you ways to protect yourself from becoming a victim of vehicle theft.

The Appeal of Older Cars

- To car thieves, newer cars can be more trouble than they're worth (or practically impossible to steal) because they generally have **more advanced security components**. Also, some cars have “**smart key systems**” that make it so they simply won't start without the right ignition key.
- Since older cars did not come standard with the same level of security, it can be much easier for thieves to steal them.
- Furthermore, most thieves are not really looking at the car itself, but at the car's parts. In this way, old cars can provide a lot of value. A thief can make much more money by **selling the parts of an older car** than you could make by selling the entire car to a buyer.
- Many thieves are juveniles between the ages of 13 and 17 and steal older cars because they want to “joy ride” (stealing a vehicle for their personal use). Many older vehicles still have steering wheel columns that can be manipulated making the car easily to start.



Top 10 Stolen Cars in Wisconsin

- 2000 Dodge Caravan
- 1994 Honda Accord
- 1995 Honda Civic
- 1999 Dodge Intrepid
- 1994 Plymouth Voyager
- 1994 Chevrolet full-size pickup
- 1997 Ford Taurus
- 1994 Oldsmobile Cutlass/Supreme/Ciera
- 1998 Pontiac Grand Prix
- 1995 Toyota Camry

Prevention Tips

- Use a car alarm to deter theft.
- Use a tracking system.
- For vehicles older than 2005 consider a steering locking device.
- For vehicles 2005 and older try tools that prevent theft, such as a smart key system or a steering column collar.
- Park in well-lit areas.
- Always lock your car and take the keys!



If you would like further information on keeping your car protected, please speak to your local crime prevention officer