



[www.KidsAndCars.org](http://www.KidsAndCars.org)

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From city streets to tree-lined suburbs, shopping malls to parking garages, people are being trapped in car trunks at alarming numbers. It is very important to increase your awareness and take ownership for your own personal safety. Anyone can become a target.

AWARENESS AND PLANNING are the keys!

### **SAVE OUR CHILDREN**

Children cannot be left alone or unsupervised for even a few minutes.

Never leave your car keys where children can access them.

Always make sure your car is locked so that children cannot access a car unsupervised.

Do not underestimate your children's capabilities. If there is a way in, they will figure it out.

Teach your children about the dangers of a car, especially the car trunk.

Arm your children with the facts. Practice escape techniques the same way you would hold a fire drill to show children how to get out of a burning building. If your child is put into the trunk, make sure that they know how to yank out the tail light wires. Instruct them to kick out the brake light fixture and signal for help with their hand through the broken brake light fixture. If the police stop the car, bang on the trunk and scream.

### **GENERAL SAFETY TIPS**

Be alert and aware of your surroundings, especially at night and in isolated areas. Watch for suspicious people or vehicles when you get into and out of your car.

Take the key out of the ignition, roll the windows up tight, and lock the doors whenever you park, even if only for a minute. Locks are your first line of defense.

If someone suspicious approaches your car, drive away quickly, but safely. Be wary of people asking for directions or change, or handing out fliers.

Keep your money separate from your wallet or purse.

Keep house keys on a separate key ring from car keys.

When you pay to park in a lot or garage, leave just the ignition key with the attendant. Make sure no personal information is attached. Do the same when you take your car for repairs.

Never hide spare keys in a secret place or in a magnetic key box under the hood or other accessible place. Car thieves routinely check the visors and ash tray and look under the floor mats. If you feel better with spare keys close at hand, carry them with you.

Make it a habit to choose well lighted filling stations, pay phones, ATM machines, newspaper stands etc.

Put packages and valuables such as calculators, car phones, CD players, tape decks, expensive sports equipment, out of sight in the glove compartment or trunk. Do this before parking your car. If your car has a trunk button release, keep the trunk button locked.

If you are ever in a threatening situation, consider your own safety and that of your passengers first. Think about your car and belongings later.

Install a trunk release in the interior of your car trunk. Basic directions for those of you who want to "do-it-yourself" are available. You can also have an interior trunk release installed at an auto dealership.

At the very minimum, keep a crowbar, pliers, wrench and/or screwdriver in the trunk of your car to pry open the latch or bang for help.

## **ON THE ROAD SAFETY TIPS**

If possible, do not drive alone. There is safety in numbers.

Drive cautiously and allow at least one car length between your car and the car ahead of you. If you feel threatened while driving on city streets, stay in the center lane if possible. Try not to get blocked into the curb lane.

Keep all windows rolled up whenever possible (or at least part of the way up at all times) and all doors locked. Lock doors and close windows as soon as you are inside. Check mirrors and blind spot when stopped. Check gauge to see if you have enough gas to reach your destination.

If you're driving home, and there is somebody walking down the street that you do not recognize, drive around the block and come back after that person has left.

If you're being followed, don't drive into your driveway or try to leave your car. Drive to the police or fire station or an open business for help. Blow your horn to attract attention.

If you have car trouble, raise your hood, put on your hazard lights, and stay inside the car with the doors locked. If a stranger stops, ask him/her to report your predicament to the nearest police station or to call AAA. Keep an envelope with quarters and phone numbers to call and slip it through a partially opened window to someone wanting to help.

Don't stop to help a stranger whose car has broken down. Drive to the nearest phone and call for help instead.

Do not pick up hitchhikers.

Be wary of minor fender-bender incidents. If you are involved in a "bumping" accident in an isolated area, open your window about an inch and advise the other motorist to follow you to police headquarters or a service station to report the accident.

Don't be distracted by your radio or cellular phone while in risky areas; leave them off until you reach a safer locale.

For women driving alone at night, keep a baseball cap in the car. If you wear it, it is difficult to tell your gender in a moving vehicle.

## **COMING AND GOING SAFETY TIPS**

Walk to your car with your keys ready so you can enter without delay.

If you see someone lurking near your unoccupied car, keep walking or go to a safe place until the person leaves.

Park in areas that will be well lighted when you return at night. Park near sidewalks or walkways where there are other people that pass by. And always check the rear seat and floorboard areas before getting into your car.

Avoid shortcuts through parks, vacant lots or deserted places.

Don't park on the outskirts of shopping centers, motels or other parking lots. Park near entrances, especially if you will be leaving your car unattended for an extended period.

Use your garage at home and keep both the car and the garage door locked.

Vary your routine. If you regularly work late downtown, vary your departure times and routes to your destination.

Crime can be reduced with ACTION, not apathy.

## **FACTS**

Every 33 seconds a car is stolen.

More than a million cars are stolen every year.

40% have keys in the ignition

80% are unlocked

Most are stolen by young opportunists