



Keyless Theft of Cars

Do you have a keyless car? Theft of keyless cars are on the increase. Please find some crime prevention advice below.

Keyless theft of cars

What is keyless theft of cars?

The process criminals use to steal a car without the keys – also known as relay theft – is relatively simple. First, they buy a relay amplifier and a relay transmitter; these electronic gizmos can be purchased from the darker corners of the internet.

Next, they identify a house with a nice car parked outside and, by using these gadgets, can detect whether the car features keyless entry and go.

One criminal stands by the car with his transmitter, while a second waves his amplifier around the perimeter of the house. If the car key is close enough the amplifier will detect its signal, amplify it and send it to the accomplice's transmitter.

This transmitter then effectively becomes the key, and tricks the car into thinking the real key is nearby, whereupon the thieves are able to open the car, get in and drive away.

The whole process can take as little as 60 seconds and can be completed in near silence.

How to avoid keyless theft – top tips

Keyless theft sounds almost like the perfect crime – but that doesn't mean there aren't steps you can take to stop it from happening to you.

Don't forget the basics

Car Owners shouldn't forget to take standard security measures, ensuring their car is properly locked and keeping keys far away from doors and windows. This will minimise the chances a thief will be able to find and amplify the key's signal and is general good practice.

Can you switch off your key?

Check your manual or speak to your dealer to find out if your key has this function.

Physical barriers

You could also purchase an after market security device such as a steering wheel lock, a driveway parking post, or even a wheel clamp. Even if the thieves are able to access and start your car, these should prevent them from driving away. Many criminals will consider bypassing vehicles with these devices as they are too much hassle.

Signal blocking pouches

Consider purchasing a Faraday pouch to keep your car key in. These pouches contain signal-blocking materials that stop your key transmitting its code, preventing crooks from being able to detect and amplify the signal.

Storing your key in a Faraday bag, lined with layers of metallic material, is the way to foil them and keep your car safe. The key needs to be placed inside the bag from the moment you blip the locks.

If the bag is large enough, it can also be used for a mobile phone, bank and credit cards to prevent hacking and fraud.

Tracking devices

Vehicles with a tracking device have a 96 per cent recovery rate when stolen. The odds reduce to 50 per cent for those without. Meaning a car tracking device is an excellent way to help ensure should the worst happen, your car is recovered.

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