Protecting my vehicle



West Mercia POLICE

www.westmercia.police.uk

westmerciapolice @WMerciaPolice @westmerciapolice

Contents

Help and advice guides	2
Vehicle safety	4
Safe parking	6
Cold mornings	7
Victim of vehicle crime	8
Further support and prevention	10



Being a victim of any crime can be extremely distressing and difficult to process.

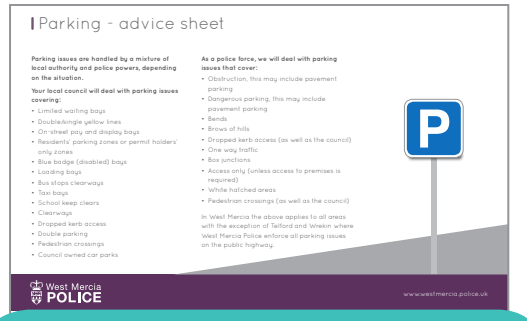
This leaflet will give you a range of information designed to inform you of the process and crime prevention advice to protect your vehicle in the future.

It also offers useful help and support on what you can do if the worst should happen.

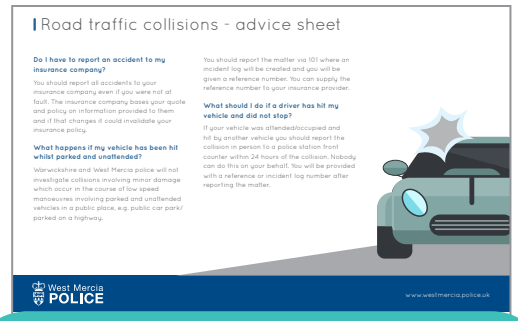
> People never think they will be a victim of crime until it happens to them.

Help and advice guides

The following help and advice sheets are available to download at www.westmercia.police.uk/maketherightcall



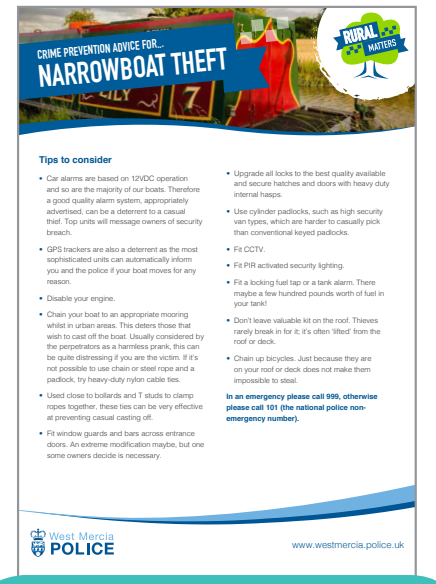
Parking



Road traffic collision



Fuel theft



Narrowboat theft



Cycle security



Caravan theft

Vehicle safety

Vehicle crime is not common in West Mercia and we are working hard to reduce it even further, but there are simple steps you can take to make life even harder for criminals.

Most vehicle crime is opportunistic and happens as a result of a vehicle being left vulnerable or unsecured. You can help us prevent opportunist thieves from striking by following these tips.

- Never leave anything on show in your vehicle.
- Take your sat nav and audio equipment with you.
- Remove the sat nav cradle and wipe away the suction marks.
- Never leave the car with engine running or the keys in the ignition.
- Fit self-locking screws to prevent number plates being stolen.
- Always lock your car and fully close windows and the sunroof.
- Fit anti-theft devices to steering wheels, fuel caps and wheels.
- Park in well-lit areas or secure car parks.
- Never leave your mobile phone behind.
- Don't store items in the boot, take them with you.
- Don't put the stereo in the glove box.

Keep your keys safe

A car key burglary is a crime where an individual breaks into your home with the specific aim of removing your car keys and stealing your car.

Perpetrators of this crime often work to order and will target specific vehicles, based on demand and value. If a criminal is targeting a certain vehicle they will also be targeting the owner, looking for easy ways to exploit their security and get to their keys.

The most common methods used by thieves are to follow victims home or 'cruise' around residential areas looking for opportunities. If you think you are being followed or see any suspicious vehicles, take the registration number and report it to the police.

Reduce your chances of becoming a victim of car key burglars. Simple crime prevention methods are the most effective way to deter potential thieves. The more difficult you make it for them, the less likely they are to bother.

You can use a number of methods to protect both your car and home:

Protecting your car:

- Always keep your keys somewhere safe and out of sight.
- Always lock your car away safely in the garage, if you have one.
- Fit a high quality alarm to your vehicle.

- Use additional security systems such immobilisers and visible security locks.
- Always take your keys with you when leaving the vehicle unattended.
- Always keep your keys safe and concealed in public places.
- Make sure doors, windows, the boot and sunroof are secure whenever you leave your vehicle.
- If you own more than one vehicle, park the lesser valued vehicle behind the more expensive one on the driveway, making it more difficult to remove.

Protecting your home:

- Make sure all windows and doors are securely locked.
- Install a high quality burglar alarm.
- Install an exterior security lighting system.

www.westmercia.police.uk/article/8673/Keep-your-keys-safe

Keyless entry vehicles

Keyless entry vehicles, although convenient, are currently an extremely easy target for theft with increasing numbers being stolen. However, there are several steps you can take to reduce your risk:

- Ensure your vehicle is properly locked and keep keys far away from doors and windows to ensure the vehicle is no longer in range of the key's signal.
- Place keys in a metal/foiled lined box or container, or another container that blocks the keys signal from reaching the vehicle when it's not in use.
- Switch off the key's wireless signal when you don't need your vehicle. If you are unsure if the key has this function, find out in your owner's manual.
- 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 these as 'too much hassle'
- Other steps include checking if there are any software updates for the car itself, remaining vigilant for unusual activity in your area and having an after market immobiliser or tracker fitted.



Safe parking

A Which? survey among drivers found that finding a safe and secure place to park their car was the issue that caused them most concern.

The Park Mark Safer Parking Scheme is a national standard for UK car parks that have low crime and measures in place to ensure the safety of people and vehicles. A Park Mark is awarded to each car park that achieves the challenging standards.

The distinctive Park Mark signage helps drivers find car parks where they can confidently leave their vehicle, knowing the environment is safer for them, their passengers and their vehicle.

Find your safer parking car park using the Park Mark car park finder: www.parkmark.co.uk/car-park-finder



If you are unable to use a safer parking car park, or if you are parking in the street or on your driveway, always remember to:

- Park in open well-lit and secure areas wherever possible.
- Ensure windows, sunroof and boot are all secured and doors locked when leaving your vehicle unattended, no matter how briefly.
- Take keys with you when leaving the vehicle unattended.
- Remove any valuables and personal belongings from the vehicle.
- Remove your sat nav and its cradle and wipe away any sucker marks. www.westmercia.police.uk/article/8675/Sat-nav-security
- Fit an alarm or immobiliser.
- Activate the steering lock - whenever and wherever you park.
- Have the vehicle registration number etched on each of the windows.
- Postcode your vehicle stereo using an ultraviolet marker.
- Keep your vehicle in a garage if possible.
- Keep vehicle keys secure and out of sight.
- Fit a locking petrol cap and wheel nuts.

For further information visit www.westmercia.police.uk/article/8674/Safe-parking

Cold mornings

Although vehicle crime is low across West Mercia, every winter the force receives a number of reports from drivers who have had their cars stolen after leaving the engine running, while they wait in the warmth of their home for it to heat up and defrost the windscreen.



Some vehicle owners nip inside for just a few seconds to collect a bag or finish the last mouthful of their breakfast or coffee - but that's all the time an opportunist thief needs.

To 'freeze out' the thieves, West Mercia Police advises motorists to:

- Clear windscreens with de-icer and a scraper.
- Sit in vehicles while the heater de-mists the windscreen.

Drivers who ignore this advice are taking big risks. Thieves will drive around residential areas looking for likely targets. When they spot a vehicle with its engine left running on a drive or outside a home, it's there for the taking.

One person will be dropped off, get into the target vehicle and simply drive away.

Many of the vehicles are never recovered, and some - especially high value models such as Mercedes, BMW and Audi - may be shipped overseas.

It is also worth remembering if your car is stolen when keys have been left in it, you may find your insurance will not cover you. If your house keys are stolen along with your car, your home is then vulnerable too.

So, this winter, don't give criminals an easy ride by leaving your car running unattended.

Vehicle crime

If you have been a victim of vehicle crime, the below advice could help us bring the offenders to justice and provide you the support you need.

Vehicle crimes may include:

Theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle - It is important that reports concerning the theft of a vehicle are reported to the police as soon as possible so that a marker can be placed on the vehicle.

Theft from a motor vehicle - Theft from a motor vehicle would include instances where someone has gained entry to your vehicle and proceeded to steal something from inside the vehicle such as a dash cam. Theft from a motor vehicle would also encompass someone stealing the registration plates off your vehicle.



Interfering with a motor vehicle - Interference with a motor vehicle is when someone has interfered with a motor vehicle, trailer, or anything carried in or on it with the intention that they, or another, commit a specified offence. For example, if someone tries to remove the roof rack or box off your vehicle.

What to do now?

In an emergency please call 999. You can contact the police on 101 to report the crime, visit a police station. For advice and reassurance please follow the below link to identify your safer neighbourhood team where their contact details are available www.westmercia.police.uk/myarea

Before contacting the police to report that your vehicle has been stolen you must ensure that you are the registered keeper of the vehicle and have the following information:

- The make, model and registration plate of the vehicle.

You may also be asked the following questions when you report your vehicle as stolen:

- How much fuel was in the vehicle before it was stolen.
- Whether the vehicle was taken with or without keys.
- Whether you are a smoker/non-smoker as this could be relevant information if the vehicle is found, and forensics have

examined it and they find cigarette butts in the vehicle, if you are a non-smoker then it can be assumed that the cigarette butts belong to the suspect(s).

If you are calling to report that something has been stolen from inside your vehicle such as a mobile phone, a dash cam or other items which you may have left in your vehicle, it would be useful to have the makes, models and serial numbers of the items. If you are able to provide any makes, models and serial numbers it means that we can search our systems to see if any of the items have been handed in.

By having specific information about property that has been stolen means that we can detail the stolen property onto the crime report. If your items are found at a later stage, they can be searched for and traced back to your as your details would be on the crime report.

What happens next?

One you have contacted the police, they will circulate the vehicle as stolen on the Police National Computer (PNC) and dependant on the time frame the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) can be alerted for hits on the vehicle. The police will issue you with a crime reference number and a contact number for you to keep them updated on any further information you may have concerning the theft of your vehicle.

After seven days of reporting your vehicle as stolen, anniversary checks will be completed to see if there have been any hits on your vehicle and you will be updated accordingly.

What else can I do?

You should inform your insurance company and provide them with the crime reference number.

If number plates have been stolen from your vehicle, then you can go ahead and replace them. If you are stopped for any reason by the police then you can provide them with the crime reference number when explaining that you are driving the genuine vehicle.

If you or a neighbour has CCTV which covers the offence location, you could review this prior to calling the police and update them accordingly on whether there is any CCTV coverage of the offence and what it may show.

If the item that has been stolen from your vehicle is a mobile phone, a laptop a games console, a bike or a camera then you can register your property as stolen on www.immobilise.com which is the UK national property register. However you would need specific serial numbers for your items before you can register them on the website.

For further information visit www.westmercia.police.uk/article/46230/Vehicle-crime

Further support and prevention

Victim Support

Victim Support is an independent charity that help people affected by crime and traumatic events. They are not part of the police or any other criminal justice agency.

www.victimsupport.org.uk
T: 0808 168 9111

We Don't Buy Crime

'We Don't Buy Crime' takes an innovative approach to reducing and disrupting the market for stolen goods and protecting your home and possessions by making them less attractive to the would-be criminal. We want to prevent crime happening in the first place but if the worst should happen, we provide the victim with a tailored and quality service.

This includes providing victims of burglary dwelling with a free SmartWater home marking pack, included in their 'We Don't Buy Crime' victim pack.

To find out more visit: https://www.westmercia.police.uk/we-dont-buy-crime

This campaign has had great success in 'We Don't Buy Crime' towns and villages, where every residential property has the opportunity to mark their possessions with SmartWater free of charge. This offer is extended until 31 December 2018.

Please vist https://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/WDBC-application-briefing.pdf?x19529 to see how you can become part of this and the success achieved so far.

We don't buy crime sticker
http://www.westmercia.police.uk/media/4587/We-Dont-Buy-Crime-window-sticker/pdf/Circle_Sticker.pdf

SmartWater

How SmartWater works

- SmartWater has a unique forensic code that, once applied, makes equipment traceable back to their owner
- SmartWater is easy to apply and only visible under UV light
- Each application is guaranteed to last 5-years
- Recognised by criminals - SmartWater THIEVES BEWARE® deterrent signage sends out a powerful warning to thieves
- When deployed by police, SmartWater has helped reduce burglary by up to 85%.

When you purchase SmartWater, please ensure you register your forensic code as per the instructions to ensure your property can be traced back to you.



Thanks to West Mercia and Warwickshire Police's 'We Don't Buy Crime' project, you can purchase SmartWater for your home at a special promotional price of £19.95* with no annual fees.

Please visit:
https://shop.smartwater.com/redeem/

Or call: 0333 320 7797
Use discount code: WDBCRIME25

Immobilise

Register your valuables to help reduce property crime and improve the chances of getting them back in the event of loss or theft.

https://www.immobilise.com/home#registration

Counter Terrorism Policing

Report suspicious behaviour here:
https://act.campaign.gov.uk/

You can also report suspicious activity by contacting the police in confidence on 0800 789 321.

Crimestoppers

An independent charity that gives you the power to speak up to stop crime, 100% anonymously.

Whoever you are, wherever you live, from communities to companies.

By phone and online, 24/7, 365 days a year.
https://www.crimestoppers-uk.org/

Action Fraud

Report online at:
https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/

Action Fraud is the UK's national fraud and cyber crime reporting centre.

If you are buying a second-hand car

Visit the following website to check the vehicles and sellers authenticity:

HPI Check

For checking the status of a used vehicle
www.hpicheck.com

West Mercia
POLICE

www.westmercia.police.uk

westmerciapolice @WMerciaPolice @westmerciapolice