

The “Layered Approach” to Protection

Professional thieves can steal any car, but make them work for yours. To prevent thefts, the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) recommends “Layered Protection.” The more layers of protection on your vehicle, the more difficult it is to steal.

The number of layers your vehicle needs varies depending on your vehicle and geographic location. Your budget and personal preferences should determine which anti-theft device is best for you.

Layer #1 – Common Sense

An unlocked vehicle with a key in the ignition is an open invitation to any thief, regardless of which anti-theft device you use. The common sense approach to protection is the simplest and most cost-effective way to thwart would-be thieves.

Secure your vehicle even if parking for brief periods. You should always:

- Remove your keys from the ignition
- Lock your doors /close your windows
- Park in a well-lit area

Layer #2 – Warning Device

The second layer of protection is a visible or audible device which alerts thieves that your vehicle is protected. Popular second layer devices include:

- Audible alarms
 - Steering column collars
 - Steering wheel/Brake pedal lock
 - Brake locks
 - Wheel locks
 - Tire locks/Tire deflators
 - Theft deterrent decals
 - Identification markers in or on vehicle
 - Window etching
 - Laminated glass
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Layer #3 – Immobilizing Device

The third layer of protection is a device which prevents thieves from bypassing your ignition and hot-wiring the vehicle.

Some electronic devices have computer chips in ignition keys. Other devices inhibit the flow of electricity or fuel to the engine until a hidden switch or button is activated.

Popular third layer devices include:

- Smart keys
- Fuse cut-offs
- Kill switches
- Starter, ignition and fuel disablers

Layer #4 – Tracking Device

The final layer of protection is a tracking device which emits a signal to a police or monitoring station when the vehicle is reported stolen. Tracking devices are very effective in helping authorities recover stolen vehicles.

Passive and Active Anti-Theft Systems

Passive and active anti-theft devices are the two options available when considering an anti-theft system. Passive devices automatically arm themselves when the vehicle is turned off, the ignition key removed, or a door is shut. No additional action is required. Active devices require some independent physical action before they are set, such as pushing a button, or placing a “lock” over a vehicle component part. This physical action must be repeated every time the anti-theft device is set or it will not function.