



Vehicle security:

Introduction

This module looks at vehicle security. It covers security of cars, caravans and motorcycles.

By the end of this module you will be able to:

- identify the types of risk your vehicles face;
- practise methods of increasing the security of vehicles.

This module is in two parts:

- Part one contains the Development Notes which include separate fact sheets on different aspects of vehicle security.
- Part two contains the Session Notes which lets you run individual sessions based around each fact sheet.



VEHICLE SECURITY

Notes



Vehicle security: Development Notes

A motor vehicle is likely to be either the first or second highest financial expenditure you make in your lifetime.

It is also a fact that theft of, and theft from vehicles account for 26 per cent of the recorded crime figures.

A few simple precautions can reduce this trend significantly.

In this module we will look at some simple advice to safeguard your:

- car;
- caravan;
- motorcycle.



Just look at the consequences of vehicle crime

- You can be stranded away from home;
- The inconvenience of coping without your vehicle;
- Your vehicle may be damaged and require repair;
- Insurance claims which might increase the cost of your premiums.

**GOOD SECURITY acts as a DETERRENT.
There are some things we can do which COST
NOTHING AT ALL.**

These Development Notes contain fact sheets on:

- Basic car security
- Buying a new car
- Buying a second-hand car
- How you can secure your caravan
- Buying a caravan
- Motorcycle security
- Buying a motorcycle



Basic car security

Doors and windows

Lock your doors, windows, boot and sunroof every time you leave your car.

Keys and immobilisers

Remove the ignition key every time. Always set the immobiliser, even when filling with petrol or popping into a shop.

If you do not have an immobiliser, seriously consider having one fitted.



Steering lock and other security devices

Always use them.



A lockable petrol cap forces thieves to abandon your car when it runs out of petrol.





Valuables and other possessions

Never leave them on display. If you can't take them from the vehicle, lock them in the boot.

In particular, NEVER leave the following anywhere in the car:

- cheque book and credit cards;
- driving documents and personal correspondence;
- mobile phones. Forty per cent of car break-ins involve the theft of a mobile phone. Property mark your phone and battery and keep details of serial numbers in a safe place;
- radio/cassette players.

Always remove them. All equipment should be marked visibly and permanently with the vehicle registration number - keep details of serial numbers in a safe place.

Etching

Have all the glass surfaces of the vehicle etched with the vehicle registration number. This includes side windows and headlamps.





Aerials

When parked, put the aerial down.

Security when driving

Keep valuables out of sight and keep all doors and windows locked. Thieves have stolen handbags by opening car doors or breaking windows while vehicles have been stationary or in slow-moving traffic.

Security when parking

If you have a garage USE IT AND LOCK IT. If you do not have a garage, park your vehicle on the drive or in a well-lit, open location.

Thieves target car parks. Look for one that is well managed with restricted entry and exit points, good lighting and security cameras.

If possible, use the police 'SECURED CAR PARKS' scheme.

This shows that the operator is meeting conditions that create a safer parking environment. Holders of the award display a plaque and road signs indicate its location.





Buying a new car

It is a fair assumption that if you buy a new car it should be SECURE.

Insist on a model with built-in security features.

Look for:

- **An immobiliser** - most manufacturers now fit these as standard.
- **Doors fitted with deadlocks** - sometimes called double locking. Or you could have doors fitted with new electronic locks.
- **A central locking system.**
- **Visible VIN** - Vehicle Identification Number. The VIN is a seven-digit number which identifies your car from every other car on the road. Some manufacturers now bond the VIN plate to the dashboard so that it is visible through the windscreen. A thief knows that if they steal a car marked in this way they will have to remove the whole windscreen and damage the dashboard before they can sell it on. This cuts into profit and acts as a deterrent. A visible VIN also helps the police check a vehicle's identity.
- **Removable panel and/or security-coded car stereo equipment** - some manufacturers now fit stereo equipment with component parts dispersed throughout the vehicle. Some cars are fitted with stereos that don't fit into other makes of vehicle.





- **Etching** - the vehicle registration number and/or VIN etched on all glass surfaces is a further deterrent to theft.
- **Lockable fuel cap.**
- **Car alarm.**
- **Wheel nuts** - especially if you have expensive alloy wheels.
- **Security glazing** - specially strengthened glass fitted to the side windows of your car makes it much more difficult for a thief to break in, particularly if deadlocks have also been fitted. However, a British Standard for car security glazing has only recently been agreed so it may be some time before this feature is standard on most cars.
- **Tracking devices** - you may wish to check whether a vehicle tracking device can be supplied. These enable a car to be tracked by the police or system operator if it is stolen.





Buying a second-hand car

Many cars are stolen in order to be sold to innocent purchasers. Although the majority of used car sales cause no problems, always consider the following:

- Does the dealer use the services of **HPI Equifax** or **CCN Motor file**? These two organisations can confirm whether or not a vehicle:
 - has been reported stolen;
 - has been written off by an insurance company;
 - is subject to outstanding finance.
- Be cautious with small ads.
- Check that the vehicle details on the car are the same as the vehicle documents.
- Be wary if there are signs that marks or etchings have been removed.
- If there is a mark showing the car is linked to a security register - CHECK IT OUT.
- Don't buy if the seller cannot produce the registration document.
- If you buy at auction, take advantage of indemnity clauses. A small fee is charged but you are protected if you subsequently find you've bought a stolen car.
- Consider having the vehicle professionally inspected.



How you can secure your caravan

Fact one

Caravan thefts are increasing.

Fact two

Parking at home in your driveway or garden is no guarantee against theft. You still need to fit security devices.

Fact three

There are many ways to protect caravans.



Security steps – caravans

Hitch locks

Provide a reasonable degree of protection from an opportunist thief. Get one manufactured from heavy steel to cover the tow socket fixing bolts - make sure it has a good lock.

Wheel clamps

A good deterrent when the caravan is stored in a compound or at home. Some are better than others. Certain designs are vulnerable to hacksaw attack or unbolting of the wheel with the clamp still in place.

Wheel stands

Wheel stands can be a good deterrent but make sure they are locked in place. The chassis manufacturer may recommend the use of axle stands for winter storage.

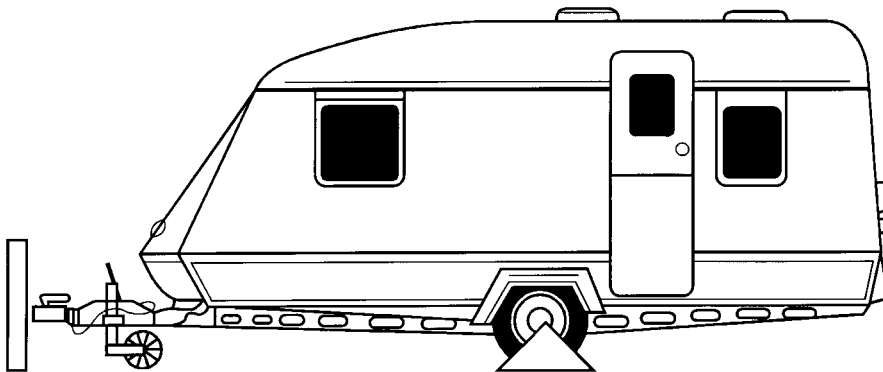
Security posts

Useful if you keep a caravan at home. Security posts cemented into the drive can allow a caravan to be hitched to them and secured with a hitch lock. Other posts are retractable allowing the caravan to be blocked in the drive once the post is lifted and locked.



Other steps

- Photograph your caravan, especially any distinctive features.
- Etch the caravan chassis number or postcode on all windows - use an ultra-violet marker pen on items/fittings inside.
- Roof marking with your postcode can assist the police, especially with the increase in police aircraft and helicopters. Commercial kits are available or you can do it yourself.
- The fitting of a reliable alarm alongside other security devices can deter thieves. Make sure it is reliable and properly fitted.
- Keep a record of the caravan chassis number. If the caravan has been CRIS registered (Caravan Registration Identification Scheme) keep the documents safe and away from the caravan.
- Ensure safe storage of a caravan. Don't choose on price alone. Some sites have high security compounds, 24-hour guards and sophisticated alarm systems. Remove all personal belongings and contents.





Buying a caravan

- Don't buy in public houses, car parks or motorway service stations. Always try and visit the seller's home address.
- If the seller's house displays a 'For sale' sign, check to see who lives there. Sellers have been known to use the drive of an empty house.
- Check the number plate. Is it the same as the tow car? Is it a temporary or hand-written number plate?
- If a telephone number is given and you are advised to ring between certain times, make sure you are not ringing a 'phone box. Dial 100 and ask the Operator to check.
- Check the caravan chassis number. Has it been altered or removed? If in doubt contact the local police.
- Caravans manufactured since 1992 should have a 17-digit number stamped into the A-Frame and etched into at least three of the windows. The owners should also have a formal registration document.
- You can check with the Hire Purchase Information (HPI) and ask for a CRIS (Caravan Registration and Identification Scheme) check. You will need to give a 17-digit number and the name and address of the owner. HPI will confirm:
 - the owner details;
 - if the caravan is listed as stolen;
 - if there is a finance deal outstanding.

There is a small charge for this service.

If in doubt, walk away and contact your local police.

If you are selling a caravan

Never part with a caravan until the cheque has been cleared. Cheques can be forgeries, or stolen. This includes building society cheques and bank drafts.



Motorcycle security

The problem

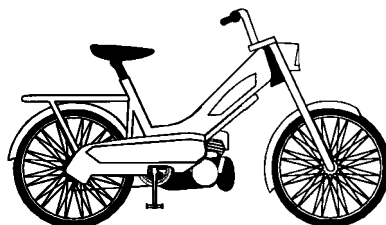
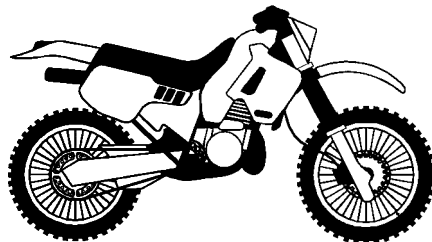
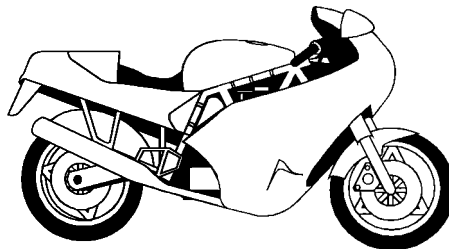
Motorcycles are an easy target for a thief. They can be:

- wheeled away;
- bundled into a van;
- ridden off.

ALL MACHINES large or small are at RISK.

Professional thieves target the machines they want:

- for resale;
- to cannibalise them to rebuild damaged motorcycles;
- to sell them abroad.





Think basic security

Motorcycles may seem harder to secure than cars but BASIC SECURITY can help.

Parking

- During the day, park in a busy, public place.
- At night, park in a well-lit area.
- Try to vary the parking place.
- Whenever possible, use custom-built motorcycle areas, especially ones with fixed parking stands or loops.
- Keep a look out for car parks displaying a 'Secured Car Park' sign.



Locking up

- Always engage the steering lock.
- Wherever possible, attach the motorcycle to an immovable object or another motorcycle, using high tension steel cable and a high quality padlock, or a U-lock through the rear wheel or bike frame.
- Don't leave your crash helmet, or other possessions, attached to the motorcycle or in pannier bags.



Additional security

Fit a motorcycle alarm, available from DIY or bike shops, and make it conspicuous. An alarm warning sticker will help put off an opportunist thief.

Security marking

Security marking as many parts of the motorcycle and accessories as possible with the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), registration number or your postcode, will:

- make them easier to trace – even if cannibalised;
- make the motorcycle – or parts of it – much harder for a thief to sell;
- provide proof of ownership and evidence for police use.

There are various methods of security marking, all inexpensive and easily available, either through DIY or carried out professionally by dealers.

- **Indelible marking** – indelible ink or ultra-violet pens can be used to mark a motorcycle's non-metallic parts and accessories and are available from most stationers.
- **Ultra-violet marks** are invisible to the naked eye but show up under an ultra-violet lamp. However, remember to renew such marks every few weeks before they begin to fade.
- **Engraving or etching** – metal stamps or a glass etching kit can also be used.



Buying a motorcycle

Questions to ask when buying a **NEW** motorcycle

- What built-in security features does it have?
- Does it have a fitted alarm, immobiliser and identification numbers?
- If not, will the dealer fit these at a reasonable price?

Questions to ask when buying a **SECOND-HAND** motorcycle

- Have you seen the original registration document? Remember that a photocopy is not legally valid.
- Is it the seller's name - or another person's - on the registration document?
- Has the motorcycle's frame or engine number been tampered with?
- Does the frame or engine number match the numbers on the registration document?
- Can the seller provide proof of identity and address?
- Does he or she insist on meeting you away from home, possibly to avoid being identified or traced?
- Are you quite sure the sale is genuine? Do not part with any money if you are at all doubtful.



Other measures

Control of Registration - it is in the interests of all motorcyclists to stop registration documents falling into the wrong hands and being used for stolen motorcycles. If your motorcycle becomes an insurance write-off, ask your insurer to pass the registration document to the DVLA. The DVLA now encourages insurance companies to return all registration documents for written-off machines to prevent them being used in this way.

How employers can help - motorcyclist employers, such as despatch rider firms, should actively promote security awareness among their riders. They could consider, for example, including theft awareness leaflets in wage packets or with the despatch documents.

Dealers - dealers should make it standard procedure to check any machine brought in for a service if they do not know its background. This is especially important if they are asked to supply duplicate keys.



Notes



Vehicle security:

Session Notes

About these notes

These Session Notes contain an outline for how you can use the Development Notes on vehicle security to run short training sessions with the members of your scheme.

Because the needs of your Neighbourhood Watch scheme are unique, this session has been left as flexible as possible.

The session outline is designed to let you base short training sessions around each of the individual fact sheets in the Development Notes.

How long the session should last

Between 30 and 45 minutes.

How many people should attend

Fourteen to 16 people is about the maximum size group for these sessions.

The resources you will need

A copy of the relevant fact sheet for each member of the group.



Session preparation

Before you run any sessions on vehicle security you should find out exactly what your scheme members need to know. You could include vehicle security training as a discussion item at one of your meetings. This would help you find out:

- whether people want information on vehicle security;
- what aspects they are most interested in. For example, are there a large number of motorcycle thefts in your area, or does your scheme cover an area that has a number of caravan owners in it?

With this information you will be able to plan ahead and include vehicle training on the agenda for one or more of your meetings.

Session plan and time allocation

Introduction *5 minutes*

Introduce the topic by explaining that 26 per cent of recorded crime figures are related to vehicle crime. However, a few simple measures can help to make vehicles more secure.

Explain that during the session the group will have a chance to look at some suggestions for how to improve the safety of their car, caravan or motorcycle.

Local features *5–15 minutes*

For the aspect of vehicle security you have chosen, the group should discuss anything in your area that causes problems.

For example you could discuss:

- the number of vehicle thefts in your area;
- what type of vehicles or equipment are stolen;
- particular locations where vehicle crime is more common.

In your discussion include details about exactly what the problem is and what you think ought to be done about it.



Vehicle security 15–30 minutes

Give the group a copy of the relevant fact sheet and allow them a few minutes to read through it.

Use the remainder of the time to discuss the ideas in the fact sheet that the group found useful. Relate this discussion back to the local features and ask if these techniques will make your area safer.

Further action and rounding off 30–35 minutes

Ask the group if they want any more information on the aspect of vehicle security you have discussed. If so, you can contact one of the organisations in the 'Information' section of this package. They may be able to send a speaker along to one of your meetings.



Notes