

Carjacking

PREVENT BEING A VICTIM BY TAKING A PROACTIVE APPROACH

Carjacking — stealing a car by force. It is a crime that is occurring with alarming frequency. It can happen on your way to the grocery store, or on your way home from work. No one is exempt from this crime that seems to be sweeping the Nation. The National Insurance Crime Bureau, statistics indicated that tens of thousands carjackings occur in the United States each year.

Are you a target for carjacking? Do you know what precautions to take to lessen your chances of becoming a victim? Here's a scenario of a carjacking that is increasingly becoming more commonplace every day:

Take a simple shopping excursion, for example. After shopping, you walk back to your car with your arms full of packages and forget to look around before unlocking the car door. As you place the packages on the seat, a man walks up behind you and takes you completely by surprise.

Don't be a victim of a carjacking. Be alert enough to prevent such an occurrence. Prepare in advance by taking precautions appropriate for the surroundings. Here are some safety tips that will help prevent a carjacking:

- Try to select safe times and locations to travel.
- Carry a cellular phone for emergency communications when possible.
- When driving, keep your vehicle doors locked and windows rolled up at all times.
- Be especially alert at intersections, gas stations, ATMs, shopping malls, convenience and grocery stores — all are windows of opportunity for carjackers.
- Park in well-lighted areas with good visibility, close to walkways, stores, and people.
- Avoid parking next to vans or high profile vehicles. Lock all the doors of the vehicle.
- When returning to your vehicle, have your keys ready as you approach your vehicle to avoid wasting precious seconds while entering. Look around and inside before getting in. Lock all doors immediately.
- If a carjacker wants your vehicle or other valuables, it is usually best to cooperate. Arguing or fighting may cause the robber to escalate the violence.
- If the carjacker has a weapon, give up the vehicle with no questions asked. Your life is worth more than a vehicle.

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Source: National Crime Prevention Council