

When you are on the road

- » Drive in the center lane to make it harder for potential carjackers to approach the car.
- » **AVOID** driving alone. Travel with someone whenever possible, especially at night.
- » When you are coming to a stop, leave enough room to maneuver around other cars, especially if you sense trouble and need to get away.
- » Always drive with the doors locked. If a thief can't get in your vehicle, you stand a better chance of leaving with it.
- » **DON'T** stop to assist a stranger whose car has broken down. You can help instead by driving to the nearest phone (or using your cell phone) to call police for help.

Getting out of your vehicle

- » Park in well-lit areas, near sidewalks or walkways. **AVOID** parking near dumpsters, large vans or trucks, woods, or anything else that limits your visibility.
- » Try to park in a garage with an attendant. Leave only the ignition key, with no identification.
- » Even if you're rushed, **LOOK AROUND** before you get out and **STAY ALERT** to the surroundings. Again, trust your instincts if the situation doesn't "feel right," and get away.



Get More Safety Tips

For tips on other ways to stay safe from crime in your daily life, see the other brochures in this series, available from our Website at www.mpdc.dc.gov/safety. Or visit your local police district. To find the one nearest you, visit www.mpdc.dc.gov/districts.

Get Involved!

No one individual or agency working alone can prevent crime. It takes police and citizens working in partnership. The District of Columbia's community policing strategy provides many ways for police and communities to work together to prevent crime and build safer neighborhoods. These include regular Police Service Area meetings in your community, citizen patrols and more. To learn more about community policing activities in your neighborhood, call your local police district:

1st District	Main:.....(202) 698-0555.....	TTY: 727-8506
	Substation:.....(202) 698-0068.....	TTY: 543-2352
2nd District	Main:.....(202) 715-7300.....	TTY: 364-3961
3rd District	Main:.....(202) 673-6815.....	TTY: 518-0008
	Substation:.....(202) 576-8222.....	TTY: 576-9640
4th District	Main:.....(202) 715-7400.....	TTY: 722-1791
5th District	Main:.....(202) 698-0150.....	TTY: 727-5437
6th District	Main:.....(202) 698-0880.....	TTY: 398-5397
	Substation:.....(202) 698-2088.....	TTY: 281-3945
7th District	Main:.....(202) 698-1500.....	TTY: 889-3574

Know Something About a Crime? Don't Keep It a Secret

If you have important information to share with the police, the Anonymous Crime Tip Line and Text Tip Line enables you to give MPD vital information anonymously. Just dial (888) 919-2746 (CRIME) or text to 50411 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Your name will not be used, only the information you provide. Your information could lead to a cash reward. For more details, see www.mpdc.dc.gov/tipline.



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Metropolitan Police Department
300 Indiana Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001

January 2011

FOR YOUR SAFETY



Avoiding Becoming a Victim of Carjacking

*Protecting Yourself and Your Vehicle from
Loss or Personal Injury in a Carjacking*



Your car is replaceable. You're not.

Carjacking is a crime of violence that can be particularly scary. Knowing how to respond in a situation may mean the difference between serious injury or death and walking away unscathed.

The crime of "carjacking" — which is stealing a car by force — captures headlines across the country. Statistically speaking, however, your chances of being a victim of carjacking are very slim, and taking preventive measures can reduce that risk even more.

Who Does It Happen To?

Carjacking is a crime of opportunity — a criminal searching for the most vulnerable potential victim. Sometimes it is the first step in another crime.

Up until 1993, carjacking was reported as either armed robbery or auto theft in the District of Columbia. In response to several highly-publicized incidents, the D.C. Council passed laws providing stiffer penalties for individuals arrested and convicted of carjacking. It is critical that victims report these crimes to the police.

- » Carjacking is not just a problem for large cities — it happens in suburbs, rural areas, and small towns.
- » Even though carjacking can take place at any time, a large share of those cases appears to occur during the late night hours.
- » Carjackers are looking for an opportunity. They don't discriminate, so the victim's sex, race, or age is usually not a factor.

Where Do Carjackers Find Their Victims?

Carjacking can take place anywhere, although some locations are more common:

- » ATMs (automated teller machines)
- » Self-serve gas stations and car washes
- » Garages and parking lots of shopping malls, grocery stores and mass transit.
- » Intersections that are controlled by stop lights or signs.
- » Highway exit and entry ramps, or anyplace else where drivers slow down or stop.
- » Residential driveways and streets as people get into and out of vehicles.

If It Happens to You

- » If the carjacker threatens you with a gun or other weapon, **GIVE UP YOUR CAR!** Don't argue. Your life is definitely worth more than a car!
- » Get away from the area as quickly as possible.
- » Try to remember what the carjacker looked like — sex, race, age, hair and eye color, special features, clothes.
- » **REPORT THE CRIME IMMEDIATELY TO THE POLICE BY CALLING 9-1-1.**

Reducing Your Risk of Becoming a Victim

There are no guarantees that you or someone close to you will not become the victim of a carjacker; however, there are a number of things that you can do to reduce the risk of becoming a victim.

Getting in your vehicle

- » Walk with purpose and **STAY ALERT!**
- » Be wary of people asking for directions or handing out fliers. **TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS!** If something makes you feel uncomfortable or uneasy, get into your car quickly, lock the doors and drive away.
- » **ALWAYS** approach your car with the key in your hand. Look around, under and inside the car before you get in.

When you are on the road

- » **ALWAYS** keep your doors locked and windows rolled up (if it's hot and you don't have air conditioning, roll them up at least part-way) no matter how short the distance you're traveling or how safe the neighborhood.
- » Drive in the center lane to make it harder for potential carjackers to approach the car.
- » **AVOID** driving alone. Travel with someone whenever possible, especially at night.
- » When you are coming to a stop, leave enough room to maneuver around other cars, especially if you sense trouble and need to get away.
- » Always drive with the doors locked. If a thief

can't get in your vehicle, you stand a better chance of leaving with it.

- » **DON'T** stop to assist a stranger whose car has broken down. You can help instead by driving to the nearest phone (or using your cell phone) to call police for help.

Getting out of your vehicle

- » Park in well-lighted areas, near sidewalks or walkways. **AVOID** parking near dumpsters, large vans or trucks, woods, or anything else that limits your visibility.
- » **NEVER** leave valuables out in plain view, even if the car is locked. **ALWAYS** put them in the trunk or out of sight.
- » Try to park in a garage with an attendant. Leave only the ignition key, with no identification.

Even if you're rushed, **LOOK AROUND** before you get out and **STAY ALERT** to the surroundings. Again, trust your instincts if the situation doesn't "feel right," and get away. There are no guarantees that you or someone close to you will not become the victim of a carjacker; however, there are a number of things that you can do to reduce the risk of becoming a victim.

Getting in your vehicle

- » Walk with purpose and **STAY ALERT!**
- » Be wary of people asking for directions or handing out fliers. **TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS!** If something makes you feel uncomfortable or uneasy, get into your car quickly, lock the doors and drive away.
- » **ALWAYS** approach your car with the key in your hand. Look around, under and inside the car before you get in.

