

Ohio State Highway Patrol

Monthly Commander's Column



State troopers fight against auto theft

Vehicle theft reduction has always been a priority in Ohio, but the effort has taken on additional importance as it relates to preventing other crimes in our state. State troopers, along with our law enforcement colleagues throughout the state are well aware that criminals are traveling in stolen vehicles amidst unsuspecting and law-abiding motorists to carry out their crimes.

For this reason, vehicle theft reduction is an important priority for Ohio State Highway Patrol troopers. The Patrol has a dedicated program for auto theft recovery which assures our commitment to the recovery of stolen vehicles and the protection of Ohio roadways. Last year, through successful traffic enforcement and criminal interdiction operations, state troopers recovered 673 stolen vehicles in Ohio – up from 503 in 2008.

To protect your vehicle from break-ins, which could lead to theft of the vehicle itself or of property items from the vehicle, we recommend the following:

- Never leave your car running or leave the keys in the ignition when it is unattended.
- Keep your car doors locked at all times.
- If you have a garage, park your car inside and lock the garage door.
- Don't store packages or valuables in plain sight.
- Park your car in a safe, well-lit, or well-traveled area at night.
- Have your vehicle identification number etched into the windows and major parts of your car to make your car harder to resell on the black market.
- When you park on the street, turn your wheels toward the curb, use the emergency brake, and try to park between other cars. This will make it harder for a thief to tow.
- Avoid parking your car in a long-term parking lot.
- Take out any removable electronic devices, like CD players or GPS navigation systems, when you leave your car.

If your vehicle is stolen, report it to your local law enforcement agency immediately. Stolen vehicles are often used in other crimes. Quick action can not only help recover your vehicle but may also prevent its use for illegal purposes.

According to federal sources, vehicle theft is the second most profitable crime in the United States, surpassed only by the illegal narcotics trade. The ongoing efforts of Ohio troopers continue to be a driving force in the overall reduction of auto theft and are having a significant impact on related crimes across the state.

An internationally accredited agency whose mission is to save lives, investigate crime and enforce the law with compassion and unbiased professionalism.