

What is keyless theft?

The process criminals use to steal a car via keyless theft – also known as relay theft – is relatively simple. First, they buy a relay amplifier and a relay transmitter; these electronic devices can be purchased openly on the internet.

Next, they identify a house with a nice car parked outside and, by using these gadgets, can detect whether the car features keyless entry and go.

One criminal stands by the car with the transmitter, while a second waves the amplifier around the perimeter of the house. If the car key is within range, the amplifier will detect its signal, amplify it and send it to the accomplice's transmitter.

This transmitter then effectively becomes the vehicle key and tricks the car into thinking the real key is nearby, whereupon the thieves are able to open the car, get in and drive away.

The whole process can take as little as 60 seconds and can be completed in near silence.

Tips to avoid keyless theft

Keyless theft sounds almost like the perfect crime – but that doesn't mean there aren't steps you can take to stop it from happening to you.

Don't forget the basics

Car owners shouldn't forget to make standard security measures a habit, and ensure their car is properly locked plus keeping keys far away from doors and windows. This will minimise the chances of a thief being able to find and amplify the keys electronic signal.

Can you switch off your key?

Check your vehicle's manual or speak to your dealer to find out if your key has this function.

Physical barriers

You could also purchase a retrofit security device such as a steering wheel lock, a driveway parking post, or even a wheel clamp. Even if the thieves are able to access and start your car, these should prevent them from driving away – and many criminals will consider bypassing these too time consuming and too much hassle.

Tracking devices

Vehicles fitted with this type of technology have a 96% recovery rate when stolen. The odds reduce to 50% for those without, meaning a car tracking device is an excellent way to help ensure your car is recovered should the worst happen.

Signal-blocking pouches

Consider purchasing a Secured by Design approved “**Faraday pouch**” to keep your car key in. These pouches contain signal-blocking materials that stop your key transmitting its code, therefore preventing crooks from being able to detect and amplify the signal.

Storing your key in a Faraday bag, lined with layers of metallic material, is the way to foil them and keep your car safe. The key needs to be placed inside the bag as soon as you have engaged the locks.

If the bag is large enough, it can also be used for a mobile phone, bank and credit cards to prevent electronic hacking and fraud.

Disclaimer:

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