



Interesting Facts

- What is it: A robbery where the object of the robbery is a car.
- Where is it: Mostly in big cities - less so in the suburbs, small towns and rural areas.
- When is it: Usually during hours of darkness, but it can happen anytime.
- What suspects look for: Opportunity, ease of attack.
- Chances for victimization: Low probability, but high potential for serious consequences.
- Statistical information:
 - One percent of all vehicle theft is categorized as Grand Theft Auto.
 - Two percent of all robberies involve "carjackings."
 - Three percent of all vehicles in Los Angeles City and Los Angeles County involve "carjackings."
 - A high percentage of the victims are affluent. Suspects target expensive vehicles



You may contact the Los Angeles Police Department by calling the following, toll free, at 1-877-ASK-LAPD (1-877-275-5273) or TTY 1-877-275-5273 for the hearing impaired. You may also obtain additional information on this subject, along with additional crime prevention tips, by visiting the Los Angeles Police Department's Web site at www.lapdonline.org and clicking on the "Crime Prevention Tips" icon.

Should you have information regarding a criminal investigation or activity, please contact your local police station or the LAPD crime hotline at 1-877-LAWFULL (1-877-529-3855).

Los Angeles Police Department
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Crime Prevention Unit
150 North Los Angeles Street
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www.lapdonline.org

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Carjacking Prevention

www.lapdonline.org



Vehicle robbery is by no means a new crime, nor is it sweeping the nation in epidemic proportions. Vehicle owners have been victims of this crime for decades. The term "carjacking" was coined by the news media. The term has raised fear levels out of proportion with the actual probability of becoming a victim. Realistically, this is a crime of low probability, but potentially high consequences.

Being the victim of a "carjacking" can be dangerous, even deadly. Experts theorize improvements in vehicle alarm systems, locking devices, and other anti-car theft technology have made it more difficult to steal cars using traditional, surreptitious methods. Now suspects take the vehicle, keys, and other items of value from the victim while the victim is present.

Chapter 103 of Title 18, United States Code states: Whoever, possessing a firearm, takes a motor vehicle that has been transported, shipped or received in interstate or foreign commerce from the person or presence of another by force and violence or by intimidation or attempts to do so shall,

- If no bodily injury results, be fined or imprisoned for not more than 15 years, or both; or
- If serious bodily injury results, be fined or imprisoned for not more than 25 years, or both; or
- If death results, be fined or imprisoned for any number of years up to life, or both.

Section 215 (a) of the California Penal Code states that "carjacking" is the felonious taking of a motor vehicle in the possession of another, from his or her person or immediate presence, or from the person or immediate presence of a passenger of the motor

vehicle, against his or her will and with the intent to either permanently or temporarily deprive the person in possession of the motor vehicle of his or her possession, accomplished by means of force or fear.

Perpetrators utilize specific criteria to select their victims or targets. Perpetrators focus on people who are unaware or unprepared. Whether driving, or walking to your vehicle, you can significantly increase your personal safety and reduce the risk of becoming a victim with the proper attitude. The attitude you convey while in or approaching your vehicle can have a disparaging effect on potential attackers. Walk and drive purposefully, with confidence. Give the appearance that you are totally aware of your surroundings. Be aware of what is going on around you; the people, the total environment. Street criminals prefer to avoid people displaying this demeanor.

"Carjackings" can happen anywhere; in a parking lot, on a street or freeway, or in one's own driveway. Never wait for a potentially dangerous situation to occur. Periodically perform mental exercises and think about what you would do in this personal safety situation. Follow your instincts. If you feel you are in danger, react. Your personal safety is the first priority in a time of emergency. Do anything you can to draw attention to yourself and attempt to flee the area.

Things to do to reduce risk of becoming a "carjacking" victim:

- Know the area in which you are travelling.
- When travelling out of town, plan all trips carefully. Carry maps with routes and destinations clearly marked. Service your vehicle regularly to ensure it is mechanically sound. It is much safer to travel on main roads during daylight hours.
- When possible, drive in the lane nearest the center of the road to distance any would-be pedestrian attacker from your vehicle. Drive on well-lighted, well-traveled streets. Avoid shortcuts that take you on dark, isolated streets.
- When stopped in traffic, leave sufficient space between your vehicle and any vehicle in front of yours. If someone approaches in a threatening manner, the open space will allow you to move forward or leave the location.



- Do not park next to vans or other high profile vehicles that could conceal a suspect. When returning to your vehicle, have your keys in hand and be ready to unlock and enter your vehicle without delay.
- If your vehicle breaks down on the road, attempt to move your vehicle to a safe location. Activate the emergency flashers and stay locked inside until help arrives. If someone stops to offer assistance, request they summon help from an authorized emergency roadside service.
- If the driver of a vehicle with no markings motions you to pull over to the side of the road, do not pull over. Keep driving to the nearest open business or where other people are present. However, comply immediately when directed by an officer in a marked vehicle. Nevertheless, if you sense anything out of the ordinary, you may request to see identification. Law enforcement officials understand this type of concern.
- If you feel you are being followed by another vehicle, do not drive home. Drive to the nearest police or fire station. If one is not nearby, drive to an open business and honk your horn.
- If you are involved in a minor traffic accident and suspect suspicious circumstances, do not check the damage in a remote area or on the freeway. Motion the other driver to follow you to the nearest police or fire station or open business to exchange information.
- If you are attacked and the suspect has a weapon and demands your valuables or vehicle, comply. Your property can be replaced or recovered later.
- Once you and your attacker are in your vehicle, the "carjacker" has total control. There is no way to predict if the "carjacker" will harm you. One tactic you might consider, if you are outside your vehicle is to fall flat on the ground. The "carjacker" may not want to take the time to force you inside the vehicle.

