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## Nearly 65,000 Texas Vehicles Stolen in One Year Auto Crime Peaks in July, Prompting Official 'Watch Your Car Month' Declaration

**Austin, Texas** – Almost half of the vehicles stolen in Texas each year are easy targets because the keys are left inside the vehicles. With auto crime spiking each year in July, the Auto Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority (ABTPA) today kicks off Watch Your Car Month to remind drivers to make smart choices that can prevent auto crime.

"We're asking drivers to take responsibility for their vehicles and what's inside them," said ABTPA Board Chair Carlos Garcia, who is also police chief for the Port of Brownsville. "Taking simple steps, like hiding personal belongings, can significantly decrease the chances of becoming a victim."

ABTPA adds that the people committing auto crimes are not kids out for a joy ride. They are thieves who are likely to move on to home burglary, drug trafficking and other serious offenses.

While the overall number of statewide auto thefts has decreased dramatically over the long term — by 61 percent since 1991 — the latest Crime in Texas report shows a 2.5 percent increase in Texas auto thefts between 2011 and 2012.

According to the 2012 report, the number of statewide motor vehicle thefts increased to 64,982 in 2012, up from 63,379 in 2011. Stolen vehicles accounted for 8 percent of the total number of Texas property crimes in 2012.

The Texas Crime Analysis report also highlights how often vehicle thefts occur – one every eight minutes. Here's the top 10 list of stolen vehicles, in order: 1. Ford pickup; 2. Chevrolet pickup; 3. Dodge pickup; 4. Chevrolet Tahoe; 5. Honda Civic; 6. Honda Accord; 7. GMC pickup; 8. Chevrolet Impala; 9. Toyota Camry; and 10. Nissan Altima.

ABTPA is launching a new marketing campaign this year – "It's not Rocket Science" – to help drivers take simple steps to reduce the risk of car theft and burglary. The idea is to prevent auto crime by using a little common sense.

## Simple Tips to Reduce Auto Crime

- Always lock your vehicle and take your keys.
- Never leave your car running and unattended.
- Park in well-lit and high-traffic areas.
- Take valuables with you when you are not in your vehicle.
- Keep valuables out of sight.

## **About ABTPA**

ABTPA awards financial grants to agencies, organizations and concerned parties in an effort to raise public awareness about vehicle theft and burglary, and to implement education and prevention initiatives.

## **About the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV)**

The TxDMV is charged with overseeing the state's motor vehicle services that provide consumer protection, assist motor vehicle-related businesses and raise revenue for the state.



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