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December 14, 2015

**Press Release for Immediate Distribution:**

**Twelve Tips for Twelve Days: Protect Your Car This Holiday Season**

As we all gear-up for the peak of the holiday season, it's important to remember that many communities report an increase in motor vehicle theft and burglary activity between late November and the new year. Whether you find yourself rushing around town for gifts or are planning an extended trip away from home, the holidays present more opportunities for people who may want to steal your car or valuables. The Automobile Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority (ABTPA) would like to give you **twelve tips** for the next **twelve days** to help you protect your property:

1. Lock your car and take your keys. Approximately 50 percent of all vehicles stolen are left unlocked.
2. Hide your valuables from plain sight to avoid attracting thieves. Don't leave your holiday gifts in the car.
3. Never leave your car running, even if you'll only be gone for a minute. Vehicles are commonly stolen at convenience stores, gas stations, ATMs, etc. Many vehicles are also stolen on cold mornings when the owner leaves the vehicle running to warm up. Leaving your key in an unattended motor vehicle is a crime in Texas.
4. Your vehicle may be more vulnerable when you park outside. If you have a garage, use it. Lock your garage and your vehicle doors, even when parked in a garage.
5. Park in well-lit areas or attended lots. More than half of all vehicle thefts occur at night. Auto thieves do not like witnesses and prefer unattended parking of lots. If you park in an attended lot, leave only the valet key if you have one.
6. Don't leave documents with important personal details such as the title or insurance card in your car. A car thief can use these to sell your stolen car. File the title and registration receipt at your home or office, and carry your insurance card in your purse or wallet.
7. Disable your vehicle when leaving it unattended for an extended period. Remove the electronic ignition fuse, coil wire, or distributor rotor, or otherwise disable your vehicle any time thieves may have extended access to it.
8. Never hide a second set of keys in or on your car. Extra keys can easily be found by thieves.
9. Park with your wheels turned toward the curb and use your emergency brake. Make your car tough to tow away. Wheels should also be turned to the side in driveways and parking lots.
10. Get locking devices for inside your car. Visible steering wheel locks provide a deterrent and prevent the steering wheel from being turned properly. Gas or brake pedal locks disable the fuel and braking functions. Gearshift locks disable shifting of

the transmission by locking it in place. Tire/Wheel locks wrap around the wheel and prevent the vehicle from moving. Hood locks prevent the thief from gaining access to your security system and battery. An armored collar around the steering column protects the column and ignition.

11. Have an ignition or fuel kill switch installed by someone who is qualified to provide services. Ignition kill switches can be used to stop the car from starting. A fuel kill-switch cuts off the flow of fuel when the switch is off.
12. Have a safe holiday season!

For more information see [www.txwatchyourcar.com](http://www.txwatchyourcar.com) or call 1-800-CAR-WATCH (227-9282)

Bryan E. Wilson  
Director