



Carjacking Prevention Safety Tips

December 2, 2021

The Village of Bellwood Police Department would like to remind residents to review the following crime prevention tips every driver should keep in mind to avoid being a carjacking victim:

- Carjacking offenses are crimes of opportunity-the offenders are always searching for the most vulnerable prey or highest value auto. Race, sex, age, religion, or lifestyle are not factors that these violent criminals consider prior to committing a crime.
- Always keep your doors locked and windows up whether you are inside or out of your car.
- When stopped, keep at least one car length between you and the car in front of you.
- Keep your purse, backpack, tablets, laptops, and other valuables in the trunk or out of sight.
- Always be aware of your surrounding; even in areas or places you feel safe.
- Keep watch for individuals approaching your car asking for directions, handing out flyers, asking for money, or asking for a ride.
- Stay vigilant at public garages, parking lots, gas stations, car washes, drive-up ATM machines, and at all stop lights or stop sign-controlled intersections.
- Look around to see if you are being followed prior to parking your car on a street or in your driveway. If you are not sure, pull around the block once or twice to make sure it is safe to park.
- Be aware of “Bump and Rob” style offenses where a car, containing at least two occupants, lightly rear-ends or bumps your car. Once you exit your car, one of the offenders will exit and attempt to drive off with your car while you are evaluating the damage.

Law enforcement professionals recommend not exiting your vehicle immediately but cautiously determine if it is truly an accident or an intentional act. If you feel it may have been intentional, drive to the nearest police station or to a well-lit public area.

- Keep your cell phone charged and readily available but keep it out of your hand while driving. Offenders always look for potential victims that appear to be distracted. Always use a hands-free device.
- Keep your car keys and house keys on separate key rings.
- Invest in GPS car tracking services through your manufacturer or a product offered by an automotive professional,
- Subscribe to family mapping, lost phone tracking, and other cell phone GPS software or apps that can immediately assist law enforcement if your car is stolen with your phone in it.
- Do not leave your car running unattended for any reason.

If you are the victim of a carjacking, the safety of you and your passengers is the priority. Do not argue or fight with the carjacker. Immediately leave the car and your belongings and call 911 if your phone is on your person. If you can gather a description of the vehicle, offenders, or suspects, please relay that information to the 911 dispatcher.

Remember, your safety and the safety of your passengers come first!

As always, please call 911 to report any suspicious activity in your neighborhood.