

## VIN Etching



VIN 'S or Vehicle Identification Numbers have been placed on vehicles since 1969. One VIN has been engraved on a metal plate on the dashboard near the windshield. Others, depending on the manufacturer, are placed in and on various parts of the vehicle.

When a car is reported stolen, law enforcement agencies send this number to the FBI 's computerized National Crime Information Center. While the engine and transmission typically have VIN' s , a new program has been instituted to further protect your vehicle from theft which is etching the VIN on the windows utilizing a chemical process. This process makes it impossible to remove from your windows unless you replace all windows on your vehicle.

Auto theft investigators believe this is an excellent deterrent to professional thieves since they either have to remove or replace the windows before selling the car or its parts.



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## Auto Theft/Burglary



Did you know a vehicle is stolen every five minutes in Florida? Florida ranks fourth in the nation for auto thefts.



**ST. LUCIE COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

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## How to avoid Auto theft/burglary

- \* Install an anti-theft device that is highly visible and hard to defeat.
- \* Don't hide spare keys in the car.
- \* Record serial numbers of aftermarket stereo equipment.
- \* Lock valuables in the trunk.
- \* Don't leave personal identification or credit cards in your vehicle.
- \* Always be observant of your surroundings.
- \* Choose a well lighted, heavily traveled area to park your vehicle.
- \* Use an alarm or wheel lock device.
- \* Photocopy your vehicle registration and insurance papers and keep them in your wallet not the glove compartment.
- \* Always lock your vehicle and never leave it unattended while running.
- \* Etch the VIN number on your windows.

### Before entering your vehicle

- \* Be alert of your surroundings.
- \* Look around and under your vehicle for suspicious persons.
- \* Have keys and purse in hand.



## Don't become a victim

- \* Avoid known trouble spots. If you sense danger trust your instincts and get to a populated area as quickly as possible.
- \* Never overload your arms with packages.
- \* Allow room between your car and the one in front of you so you can drive around it quickly.
- \* Carry a flashlight if you park in an area that may be dark or deserted when you return.
- \* Avoid going out alone after dark.
- \* Park your vehicle with the wheels turned towards the curb and use the emergency brake.



## Protect your vehicle

### With Anti-Theft Devices:

- \* **Steering Wheel and Column Locks:**  
A cost effective deterrent that prevents steering of vehicle or cutting of steering column.
- \* **Electric Security System:**  
An audio alarm that sounds when doors, hood or trunk is opened; designed to scare car thieves away.
- \* **Kill Switch:**  
A switch that prevents the vehicle from starting by cutting off fuel.
- \* **VIN Etching:**  
A method of etching the vehicle identification number into windows to identify and deter resale of stolen vehicle parts.
- \* **Vehicle Tracking System or GPS system:**  
A hidden device that allows police to track the exact location of the vehicle.
- \* **Smart Key:**  
An ignition key that has a computerized chip or a transponder key.
- \* **Watch Your Car Using the C.A.T. Program:**  
A program that identifies the vehicle to police during late night hours; police can stop a vehicle and identify the driver if the car is out from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. Contact the Crime Prevention unit at 772-871-5303 for a decal.