

PREVENTING KEYLESS CAR THEFT



A “keyless entry” car does not have a traditional metal key to open the doors (at least not as the primary way to gain entry) or start the motor. Instead, a digital fob, card or smartphone app is used to gain entry and as long as the digital key is detected inside the car, a push button on the inside allows the car to be started.

Keyless car theft is when a vehicle is accessed and stolen without the use of the original fob or card. This is done by tricking the vehicle into believing that the digital key is being used.



48%*

of all car thefts in the UK during 2020 involved “keyless entry” vehicles, so we’ve pulled together our top tips to help prevent this.

*According to research from insurer LV in 2020.



/// 1. Lock your vehicle

- Never leave your car running idle or unattended, even when defrosting windscreens and windows
- Even if you’re only going to be away from your car for a couple of minutes – to pay for parking, for example – always lock your car
- Make sure that your vehicle is double locked and that all security features are enabled by pressing your key fob twice.



/// 2. Keep your car keys safe

- If you have a “keyless entry” car, make sure that your keys are kept as far away as possible from your vehicle and well away from doors and windows
- Keep your car key in a metal box (this could even be a biscuit tin!) so that the signal can’t be “grabbed” from the outside and used to open your car – and don’t forget to do the same with any spare keys
- According to the Office of National Statistics, 66% of keyless cars are stolen between the hours of 6pm and 6am, so you should get into the habit of keeping your keys safe at all times, both day and night.



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/// 3. Use a blocking pouch

- Use a signal blocking pouch/box (Faraday bag/box) when you're out and about. Signal blocking pouches can stop access to your vehicle by blocking your car key fob from transmitting its code to the vehicle, as the pouches are lined with layers of metallic material



- Putting your keys in a signal blocking pouch whenever you leave the car will stop any thieves from being able to amplify the signal used in relay theft.



/// 4. Turn off the wireless signal

- On some keyless fobs, the wireless signal can be switched off. Check your vehicle manual to find out if this is possible for your car
- If you can't find anything in your manual about turning off the wireless signal, you can contact the vehicle's manufacturer.



/// 5. Use a steering wheel lock or car alarm

- Most modern car thieves are equipped with laptops rather than hand tools, so mechanical devices – such as steering wheel locks – can be a real deterrent
- When purchasing a security device, look out for 3rd party approval such as "Sold Secure". This means that the product has been tested against tools commonly used in car thefts such as crowbars and angle grinders.



/// 6. Park defensively

- Parking your car in a garage overnight is ideal, and you can ask a Master Locksmiths Association approved locksmith to undertake a security check
- If you're parking on your driveway, park defensively i.e. as close to your property as you can so it's more difficult to access the vehicle

Extra Security to Consider:

- Motion-detecting lighting and CCTV
- Driveway security posts
- Well lit areas if you park on the street.



/// 7. Keep your vehicle tidy

- Make sure to keep the inside of your vehicle clear of clutter and hide any electrical items such as Sat Navs or mobile phones
- Try to keep your glove box empty – you can even leave your glove box open to show that you've got nothing to hide
- Don't forget to hide any signs of high-cost equipment, such as cleaning the marks that Sat Nav suction cups leave on your windscreen!



/// 8. Software updates

- As newer cars use more and more connected technology, it's crucial to keep the software in your vehicle up to date.

