

Questions & Answers

Q. What is carjacking?

A. It is an armed auto theft, or auto theft by threat or force from a person.

Q. When and where are carjackings taking place?

A. Typically while the vehicle is stopped or the driver is in the process of getting into or out of the vehicle.

Q. Why are cars being carjacked?

A. Many times, cars are being taken for the purpose of committing another crime. Sometimes the cars are just being taken for a joyride. Whatever the reason, carjacking is a serious and dangerous crime.

Q. How can I avoid becoming a victim?

A. Drive with your car doors locked and windows up. Be aware of suspicious looking people and possible hiding places in the area of your car when getting in and out. Travel well-lit roads and try not to travel alone. Keep valuable objects out of view, such as in the trunk of your car.

Q. What should I do if I become a victim of carjacking?

A. Comply with the demands of the carjackers immediately. Give them your keys if necessary. Resisting may place you in greater danger and increase the risk of

personal harm. Remember that your life is more valuable than your car!

Q. Should I carry Mace or any other chemical agent to protect myself?

A. While the use of a chemical agent, or pepper agent, is a matter of choice, we encourage you to use good judgement to avoid increasing the risk of personal harm. Chemical agents can be taken from you and used as weapons against you. Don't consider using Mace unless you are convinced that your life is in danger.

Q. What should I do at a red light or a stop sign?

A. While approaching a red light or stop sign, leave enough space between your car and the car in front of you, so that you can pull away quickly if necessary. Be wary of pedestrians approaching your car asking for change, directions or handing out flyers.

Q. What should I do at gas stations?

A. Be aware of your surroundings. If you leave your vehicle, take your keys out of the ignition and remember to lock your door as soon as you are back in your car. Avoid gassing up at night in dimly lit or deserted gas stations.

Q. What should I do if someone is following me?

A. Don't drive to your home. Drive to the nearest police station, or open, well-lit business. Use your horn to alert people to trouble.

Q. What should I do if they take my car and get my car registration?

A. Try to avoid this situation by keeping your car registration on your person rather than in your car. If the carjackers get your registration, tell the police immediately.

Q. What should I do if my car breaks down in a desolate area?

A. Lock your doors and close your windows. Stay where you are until the police come to assist you. Do not open your car door or windows to strangers. If necessary, just crack your window slightly and ask someone to call the police for you.

For more information, please contact the Somerset County Prosecutor's Office at (908) 231-7100, or your local police department.

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Carjacking & Abduction Prevention



Somerset County
Prosecutor's Office

CARJACKING & ABDUCTION PREVENTION

Carjacking - What Is It?

Carjacking is the term for a crime where a car is taken from a person, either by force or the threat of force.

It is more serious than a car theft, because the victim is present during the crime. A dangerous weapon is often used by the robber. Carjacking has been on the rise all across the country, not just in New Jersey. If you are aware and alert to the possible dangers, you can greatly reduce your chances of becoming a victim of this kind of violent crime.

It is very important to learn what you can do to avoid carjacking or to minimize the danger if it should occur to you or members of your family.

Learn the 4 A's to prevent carjacking:

**AWARENESS ALERTNESS
AVOIDANCE ACTION**

Please tell your family and friends about the 4 A's.

This brochure contains many good safety tips, most of which are just good common sense ideas.

Awareness

- Plan ahead. Be prepared.
- Know your route. Use well-lit and well traveled roads.
- Have an alternate route in case of problems.
- Let someone know your route & when you plan to arrive.
- Don't travel alone if at all possible.

- Walk with a purpose. Don't walk aimlessly.
- Be aware of people who may be following you to your car.
- Be aware of "Bump and Rob" techniques. If you are bumped don't get out of your car. Write down the plate number and drive to the nearest police station.
- Recognize that carjacking can occur anytime, anywhere, in any neighborhood.
- Be aware that any car may be the target of carjackers, not just expensive, high profile cars.
- Consider some form of mobile communication, i.e., cell phone, CB, etc.

Alertness

- Be alert to any activity near your car.
- Be alert to people loitering in your parking area.
- Be suspicious of people approaching your car asking for directions, change or giving out flyers.
- Always give your car a quick inspection for any tampering.
- Check door handles, locks and back seat before entering.
- Always keep valuables out of view if you must travel with them in the car. If you think someone has tampered with your car, don't enter.
- When stopping in traffic, leave enough room in front of you, so you can pull away quickly if necessary.
- Be alert to danger when approaching drive-up automated teller machines.

Avoidance

- Don't drive without first locking your doors and closing your windows.
- Never leave keys in the ignition or the car running for any reason.
- Avoid parking in secluded, poorly lighted areas, especially at night.
- Don't walk to your car alone. Remember that both men and women are vulnerable to carjacking. Walk in pairs, whenever possible.
- Don't stand by your locked car looking for your keys. Have your keys out, ready to unlock and enter the car without delay.
- Drive to a safe public place and call the police if you think someone is following you.
- Don't get out of the car if you see suspicious people. If you are in doubt, or are approached, drive away.
- Don't leave your car unlocked, even when running brief errands, and always take your keys with you.
- To avoid other thefts that sometimes follow carjackings, separate your car keys from your house and office keys.
- Don't allow your car to run out of gas.

Action

Certain actions may keep you safe!

- If someone demands your car keys, don't resist. Nothing is more valuable than your life.
- If someone asks for assistance, do not get out of your car. Go to the nearest police station to get help. If someone

approaches your car, turn on your headlights and sound your horn.

- If you think you are the victim of a "Bump and Rob" situation, after being bumped, drive immediately to the nearest police station or until you observe a police officer. **Remember, the law requires anyone involved in an accident to stop, render aid and identify themselves. You must report the accident.**
- **If in serious danger**, you may consider proceeding cautiously through a stop sign or red light if, in your judgement, you will not endanger others.
- Again, call the police immediately after an incident.
- If possible, make mental notes of physical descriptions of any suspect or vehicle and direction of escape.
- Have a pen and notebook available to write down these descriptions for the police.
- If house keys are taken, change your locks immediately.
- Don't leave your car registration or other materials with your address in your car.
- Always carry a small flashlight.
- Consider carrying a pocket alarm. The alarm emits a high-pitched, very loud, siren-like sound, that often sends attackers running.
- Consider getting an alarm system for your car.
- Have a plan and don't panic.