



# COMMUNITY LIAISON UNIT

COLUMBUS DIVISION OF POLICE • STRATEGIC RESPONSE BUREAU

Violence continues to plague our society. The most recent example of senseless violence is Carjacking. Carjacking is a crime where a car is taken from a person either by force or a threat of force. It is more serious than auto theft because the victim is present during the crime. Carjacking is on the rise throughout the country, but if you are aware and alert to the possible dangers, you can greatly reduce your chance of becoming a victim of this violent crime.

Carjackers usually target unlocked cars with unsuspecting motorists. Citizens must be aware of their surroundings and follow preventive guidelines if they are going to reduce this crime opportunity. Everyone is vulnerable to carjacking. Our findings show that regardless of time of day, location, or type of car, everyone is at risk. Carjacking can occur while entering, driving, or exiting your vehicle.

Carjacking occurs for many reasons. The advent of anti-theft devices has caused parked cars to be more difficult to steal; the car is used to flee a crime scene or to commit other crimes; the car has a monetary value to feed a drug habit; gang initiation; or just for kicks.

Remember: If *or* when an incident occurs, only you can make a decision as to what action to take. Every situation is different and must be evaluated accordingly. Your safety is most important we are pleased to offer the following crime prevention information on carjacking for your safety and peace of mind.

## **While you are driving your Vehicle:**

- Plan your route – try not to travel alone.
- Don't drive in unfamiliar areas, avoid trouble spots.
- Keep your doors locked and windows up.
- Look in the rear view mirror often.
- Observe 180 degrees around you.
- Be observant as you approach and area or intersection.
- Don't "drift off" when stopped. Stay Alert.
- Leave room ahead of your car to escape.
- If bumped from behind, motion for the other driver to follow, drive to the nearest Police/Fire 24 hour station. Notify the police via cell phone.
- When stopping to use outside phones, or ATM's, chose a well-lighted and highly visible area.
- Don't stop to help stranded strangers – call the Police for assistance.

## **If Confronted While Stopped**

- Don't panic.
- Avoid verbal/physical confrontation.
- If pulled from your car or confronted while in your car, cooperate – move away quickly.
- Walk/run away from the immediate area.
- Call the Police immediately.
- Give a description of your car and the suspect(s).

## **Options To Consider**

- Have a plan – do something, don't just sit there.
- When confronted by a suspect(s): Drive away with caution –usually a right turn is safest. If traffic prohibits this, use the sidewalk or yard, etc.
- Be extra cautious when someone approaches your car and asks you for information. If you must talk to them, do so with the windows up, the doors locked and ready to drive away if necessary.
- Call the Police immediately.
- Park in a well-lighted area.
- Park near a main aisle.
- Park in an outside parking lot with an attendant if possible.
- If you suspect something is wrong, don't stop.
- Always park where you have a 360 degree view around you.
- Be aware of your surroundings before you get out.
- Use your auto alarm, if you have one, as a personal safety device.
- Carry an additional personal safety device or alarm.
- Roll up your windows before parking.
- Leave your doors locked until you have observed your surroundings and are ready to exit your vehicle.
- Take your keys with you and have them ready in your hand.
- Move quickly away from your car. At home, make sure the garage door is down before exiting.
- Keep your car in working order at all times.

## **If Confronted While Getting Out Of Your Car**

- Avoid verbal/physical confrontations.
- Cooperate – move away quickly.
- Walk/run away from the immediate area.
- Call the police immediately.
- Give the car description.
- Give the suspect description.
- If at all possible, never go with the suspect(s).
- Remember, the primary rule: "If a gunman wants your car, give it up."
- If or when an incident occurs, only you can make a decision as to what action to take. Every situation is different and must be evaluated accordingly. Remember your safety is most important.

## **Getting Into Your Vehicle**

- Understand that anyone can be a victim.
- Park in a well-lighted area at night.
- Be aware of your surroundings – 360 degrees.
- Appear confident and assertive.
- Walk with someone to your car (friend, coworkers, and escort).
- Keep a free hand when approaching your car.
- Have your keys ready.
- Separate your car keys from other keys, in case you need to go back to a place of safety. Look for anyone near your car or near you.
- Check the exterior of your car.
- Check the interior of your car before entering.
- At home, lock car doors before opening the garage to leave.
- Use your auto alarm, if you have one, as a personal safety device.

- Safely place your children in the car, lock the door, and then secure them in their car seat or seat belt.
- Keep your car in working order at all times (tires, fluids, oil, maintenance, etc.)
- Never let the gas tank below half full.

### **If Confronted Getting Into Your Car**

Avoid any verbal/physical confrontations. Cooperate – move quickly away from your car. Walk/run away from the immediate area. Call the Police immediately. Give the car description. Give the suspect(s) description.

### **Remember:**

- Anyone can be a victim.
- Your safety is your responsibility.
- Have a plan and share it with your passengers.
- If at all possible, never go with the suspect(s).
- If a gunman wants your car, give it up. It is not worth your life!
- If or when an incident occurs, only you can make a decision as to what action to take. Every situation is different and must be evaluated accordingly. Remember, your safety is most important.

### *Important Telephone Numbers...*

Life-Threatening Emergencies

**Dial 9-1-1**

Non-life-threatening

Police Assistance

Call 645-4545