

Our ref: Keyless Car Theft



Dear Neighbourhood Watch Member,

We are writing to advise you that keyless car theft is unfortunately on the rise in Sussex.

Any vehicle with a keyless entry or start system is at risk of being stolen. The most targeted vehicles in Sussex have historically been Range Rovers (especially Sport models), Mercedes and BMWs. A keyless entry system allows the car to unlock when the fob is nearby, without pressing a button. Likewise, a keyless start system involves pushing a button to start the car without the need to insert a key.

Vehicles are most likely to be stolen overnight from residential driveways using relay theft. This is when thieves use a device to boost the signal between car and car key, tricking the car into thinking the key is nearby. This allows thieves to unlock, start, and drive a vehicle away without needing to steal the keys.

Sussex Police is proactively targeting believed car thieves, but we also wanted to write to our Neighbourhood Watch Members to make sure you are aware of this current trend. We hope that you can help us reduce thefts by informing and encouraging your communities to make their vehicles a less attractive target to organised criminals.

We ask all owners of keyless vehicles to follow these simple precautions:

1. Store all keys and spares in signal blocking pouches, also called faraday bags. The seams wear over time, and this can impact the effectiveness of this pouch, so remember to periodically check that it works.
2. Use a steering wheel lock where possible, especially overnight.
3. If you have access to a secure garage, use it whenever possible. Based on current trends, your vehicle is unlikely to be stolen from a garage by keyless methods.
4. Does your car have a tracker installed? If so, make sure it's activated and that you have any relevant apps installed. Trackers to suit a variety of budgets are also available if your car doesn't come fitted with one as standard.
5. If you would like to invest in additional security, consider an aftermarket immobiliser. Regardless of how the thief gains access to a vehicle, these immobilisers are designed to prevent it being driven without an extra step –such as a secondary fob or a code.

We recommend using products that are '[Secured by Design](#)' police preferred specification. These items have been tested and certified to a recognised standard to ensure effectiveness.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. You can find further information on keyless vehicle theft [here](#).

Sussex Police