**Electric Vehicles: Keyless Security Toolbox Talk**

Many electric vehicles (EVs) are priced at a premium due to the manufacturing costs being higher than traditional vehicles. They have keyless entry as standard which enables drivers to unlock their vehicle without needing to press any buttons on the fob, as long as the fob is within range of your vehicle it will open.

Thieves are increasingly looking for ways to exploit keyless entry and steal vehicles. The Police report that it takes less than two minutes for a car to be stolen. In 2019 a vehicle was stolen every five minutes in the UK with most of these thefts by keyless entry.

Keyless theft, also known as relay theft, is the method of stealing a vehicle without using a physical key fob.

**What is Keyless theft and how can a vehicle be driven without the key present?**

Thieves typically use a pair of transmitters to steal a vehicle. The thieves stand outside a victim’s house or office with a transmitter device they use to capture and amplify the signal from the key fob. A second transmitter device is held close to the vehicle the thieves wish to steal. The vehicle picks up the key’s amplified signal from inside the house and is fooled into thinking it’s the actual key. The signal then opens the vehicle, starts the engine and the vehicle is driven away. Keyless vehicles can be driven without their key once the engine has started.

Many EVs use keyless entry and are as vulnerable to theft as traditional vehicles.

**How can keyless car theft be avoided?**

Keyless fobs are very convenient for a driver to use, especially if carrying items to the car, the vehicle can be opened hands free.

Steps to take to reduce the likelihood of having your vehicle stolen:

* Remove all valuables such as dash cam, sat nav and money
* Leave nothing on show inside your vehicle especially bags of shopping or briefcases
* Keep your vehicle fob well away from doors and windows when not in use
* Buy a signal blocking bag also called a Faraday bag for your fob, choose one

that is recommended as some work better than others

* Keep the Faraday pouch in a metal box as an extra layer of security, test the efficacy of the box for blocking the signal by holding it close to your vehicle and trying the handle
* Turn off your key fob’s wireless signal if possible, by referring to your manual
* Use a traditional steering wheel lock in addition to storing the fob safely
* Park defensively by keeping your vehicle in a lockable garage if you have one
* Install a lockable post on your driveway
* At home park your vehicle where you can see it from the house and if possible get motion-activated lights, a door bell camera etc
* High value vehicles may warrant a tracking device being fitted – discuss this with your employer is your vehicle does not have a tracker
* Etch the last seven digits of your Vehicle Identity Number on the windows, headlights and mirrors so thieves will be discouraged from altering your vehicle’s identity (if a company owned vehicle get permission first)

# Key Points to Remember

* All vehicles are vulnerable to thieves who use the method of ‘relay theft’ to gain access to a vehicle before driving off
* Empty your vehicle of all valuables and electronic devices such as Sat Navs before locking it
* Consider parking defensively to make relay theft of your vehicle as difficult as possible for potential thieves

**Driver’s discussion questions**

1. Have you heard of and considered using a Faraday pouch?
2. What other security features could you implement to keep your vehicle safe?
3. What degree of responsibility do you feel towards the security of your company owned vehicle, if you have one?

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