



SECURED BY DESIGN SECURITY ADVICE GUIDE

# Keyless Car Theft

Vehicles fitted with a smart or passive key (a contactless key) are susceptible to a type of theft called “Relay Theft”.

There are a wide range of electronic devices, key cloning devices and other tools that can be easily obtained by opportunist thieves and criminal gangs to target your vehicle.



The criminals normally work in pairs, targeting vulnerable and desirable makes of vehicle by using cloning devices which have the ability to grab the signal from the smart key so that it appears to the car or van that the key is present.

The whole process can take as little as 60 seconds and for safety reasons the engine won't cut out when the key is out of range.

Your vehicle is most vulnerable overnight, particularly if parked on your driveway or directly outside your home where most of these thefts occurs.

If you are looking to buy a new vehicle, it's worth looking into the security of your make and model. Thatcham's Research, who conduct testing on security and safety for vehicles, produce a vehicles' Consumer Security Rating assessment for all new vehicles <https://www.thatcham.org/>.

The ratings are based on all-round security, but importantly they must also pass a Relay Theft test conducted by Thatcham Research technicians. Should it fail, a “Poor” rating is given.

Manufacturers and industry bodies have been working to combat Relay Theft for many years – if you are purchasing a new car please speak to your car dealer.

## How to prevent this



When not in use either at home, when out and about or on holiday – store your keys in a security pouch. Security pouches are sometimes termed Faraday bags or RFID signal blockers/shields, these pouches will prevent the signal from your vehicle being captured using electronic devices.



Don't leave your keys in the hallway near the front door as fishing for vehicle keys through the letterbox is a prominent method of stealing them. Grabbing the signal will be easier for the thieves if the keys are near the front door.



Some types of key fobs can be switched to disabled, so check your vehicle manual or ask your dealer for advice.



Consider using physical security like a steering wheel lock or wheelclamp as modern car thieves prefer not to attack these types of physical security devices as they want to get away quickly without getting caught.



Install a Tracker – Tracker systems can increase the chances of recovery of your vehicle if it is stolen. Many systems activate once the vehicle is stolen and track it via GPS and other systems. SBD have several members which specialise in this area and can advise on the best system for your vehicle type and can also fit the product.



It is unclear whether leaving keys in a tin box will prevent potential thieves grabbing the signal but our advice is to choose a product that has been independently tested and approved by Secured by Design.



The installation of closed circuit television (CCTV) which can be linked to your television or video to view your drive is an alternative. If you do decide to use CCTV it is important to read the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) advice on Domestic CCTV systems.

For further advice about any of the security tips listed above, or to find out how to buy police recognised security products, visit [www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com)