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## Reduce Your Risk of Becoming a Carjacking Victim

Incidences of carjacking and other auto-related crimes have appeared regularly in news stories. Despite the danger, there are measures you can take to guard against crime when you are behind the wheel or walking to your vehicle. The National Safety Council suggests the following techniques to reduce the chances of becoming a carjacking victim.

### **Be alert while driving.**

Before leaving, plan a route to avoid dangerous areas. If you need to drive in unfamiliar areas, try not to drive alone. Always drive with your windows up and car doors locked. Regularly check your mirrors and scan ahead for potentially dangerous situations.

Be conscious of escape routes while driving. Always leave room to maneuver out of the area when you come to a stop, keeping enough distance ahead so that you can see the rear tires of the vehicle in front of you touch the pavement.

Carjackers sometimes hit a car from behind and then pull a weapon when the victim gets out to investigate. If you think you have been bumped intentionally, don't leave your car. Motion to the other driver to follow you to the nearest police station. If confronted by a person with a weapon, give up your car.

If your vehicle breaks down, pull as far as possible away from moving traffic, tie a white handkerchief around the antenna, close the windows and lock the doors. If anyone approaches to offer assistance, open the window slightly and ask the person to call the police or towing service. Ask uniformed personnel to show identification.

### **Parking your vehicle.**

Use caution when you enter or leave a parking lot. Park in well lit areas where you can see and be seen by others. When getting in or out of your vehicle always be aware of what is going on around you.

When returning to your vehicle, approach with caution. Have your keys ready, glance underneath the vehicle and check the front and rear floors. If someone is loitering near your car, avoid them and walk to a place of safety such as a lighted store, house or other building. Call the police.

As in every situation, the foremost concern is your personal safety. If you are confronted by a carjacker, don't resist. Hand over your keys and step back from the assailant. Remember: a car can be replaced but your life cannot.