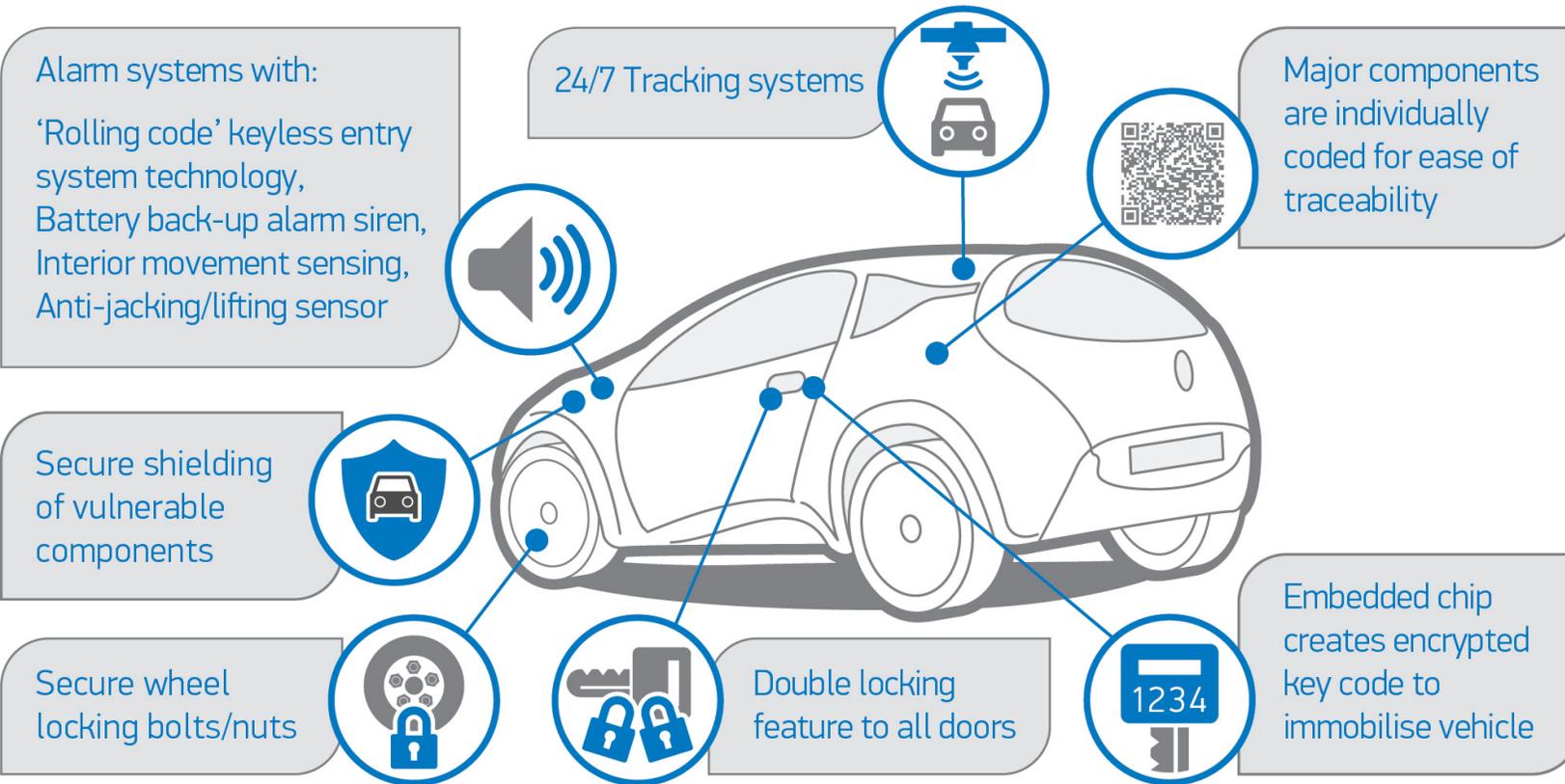


## BEATING THE CAR THIEVES: 7 HIGH TECH SECURITY FEATURES



7 high tech car security features

Sep 08, 2016 00:01 BST

## Motorists offered car security advice as police urge vigilance to cut vehicle crime

**Two in five car owners don't appear to think twice about leaving their car keys with a stranger, despite the potential security risk, according to the results of a YouGov consumer survey published today by the automotive industry, government, police and insurance bodies.**

Responding to police figures showing reported incidents rose by 8% in the year to March 2016, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), Home Office, Metropolitan Police Service and Thatcham Research, the motor

insurers' automotive research centre, have joined forces to understand the nature of modern day car theft and develop solutions to tackle it.

The survey, which provided some understanding of consumer awareness on vehicle security, found that in the past 12 months, 43% of British drivers have left their car keys with someone they don't know, with 71% of them not checking whether the company or individual was a member of an accredited code of practice or other professional standard. In comparison, just 11% said they have trusted their house keys to a stranger.

Meanwhile, just 11% of people said the first thing they look for in a car park is CCTV, gated entry or manned barriers. At home, respondents admitted to leaving their car keys in clear view or close to the front door on a hallway hook or sideboard, leaving them at risk of opportunistic thieves.

Cars are more secure than ever before, with manufacturers continually working on new security features. Investment in new technology means that all new cars sold in the UK now have an immobiliser and many are fitted with an alarm and double locking as standard.

Car owners can also play an important part in protecting their vehicles by taking simple preventative measures, including parking in well-lit and secure parking spaces, double checking your car is locked before walking away, and checking the credentials of any company with which you leave your keys.

Sarah Newton, Minister for Safeguarding, Vulnerability and Countering Extremism, said, "With thefts significantly lower than they were 20 years ago and manufacturers using the latest technology to make our cars safer than ever, the public would be forgiven for putting vehicle crime to the back of their minds. But the recent rise in the number of reported crimes is a reminder that determined thieves are still out there and we should remain vigilant. I welcome the advice being delivered as part of this initiative to inform vehicle owners about the hidden dangers and the steps they can take to secure their vehicles."

Mike Hawes, Chief Executive, SMMT, said, "New cars have never been more secure and the latest technology has helped bring down vehicle theft dramatically. Manufacturers invest billions of pounds every year to stay one step ahead of the criminals, and the latest models include sophisticated immobilisers, smartphone-controlled tracking devices and random key codes

to prevent cloning. Technology can only do so much, however, and while car makers, the police and government continue to work together to ensure that stealing cars is as difficult as possible, these latest figures show there's more consumers can do to minimise risk."

Andrew Miller, Chief Technical Officer at Thatcham Research, said, "Thatcham Research has worked for many years with vehicle manufacturers to drive continuous improvement in security as well as in safety, and the most recent vehicle theft statistics reflect the high level of security technology now found on most cars. As well as choosing the best-performing cars, consumers should make sure they are aware of best practice procedures to keep their vehicles secure."

### **TEN EASY WAYS TO SAFEGUARD YOUR CAR**

1. Think about who you leave your vehicle keys with. Treat them as you do your house keys – do you know the person you are leaving your keys with? Do you trust them?
2. Check who you are leaving your vehicle keys with. Where possible, check that a company you entrust your keys to is a member of an accredited code of practice or other professional standard such as Motor Codes ([motorcodes.co.uk](http://motorcodes.co.uk)); the British Parking Association's Park Mark scheme ([parkmark.co.uk](http://parkmark.co.uk)); or the Car Wash Advisory Service's WashMark initiative ([carwashadvisoryservice.co.uk](http://carwashadvisoryservice.co.uk)).
3. Think about where you park your vehicle – is it in a safe place? Well-lit and well-populated areas or car parks with security features such as CCTV, manned barriers or gated entry will give you greater peace of mind.
4. Check that your vehicle is locked before leaving it. Listen for the locking noise, watch for the lights to flash or mirrors to fold, or simply pull the door handle.
5. Think about where you leave your spare key. Don't leave it in your vehicle, and be mindful of how many spares you have and where they are kept.
6. Check that you haven't left valuables on display in your vehicle. We all know that this can attract opportunist thieves.

7. Check that the vehicle's windows are closed, even if you are only leaving it for a few minutes. Open windows make it all the easier for thieves to gain access.

8. Think about where you keep your keys at home. Keep them well away from the door or windows and out of sight.

9. Check that your alarm or immobiliser is enabled when you leave your car. A simple check could save considerable expense and inconvenience later.

10. Check whether your vehicle has an alarm or immobiliser. If it doesn't, think about buying an aftermarket alarm, steering wheel lock or other locking device. These are proven to deter thieves.

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Thatcham Research is the independent voice of automotive safety & repair, advising motorists, insurers and vehicle manufacturers to help reduce accident frequency, severity and costs and to realise the vision of 'Safer cars, fewer crashes'.

As well as its world leading crash and track research, Thatcham Research tests and accredits crash repair parts, vehicle repair technicians, and a number of other products and services within the collision repair industry for insurers, motor manufacturers, equipment manufacturers and suppliers.

A founder member of the international Research Council for Automobile Repairs (RCAR), Thatcham Research has also been a member of the European New Car Assessment Programme (Euro NCAP) since 2004.

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