



Buying a vehicle

If you're buying a vehicle always ask to see proof of the seller's identity and address, for example an official letter or driving licence.

Make sure the car's VIN matches that on the registration document (V5) and the DVLA watermark hasn't been altered. You can find the VIN:

- stamped on the frame
- on a manufacturer's VIN plate under the bonnet or fixed to the post between the front and rear doors
- on an additional plate fixed securely to the top corner of the dashboard where it can easily be seen through the windscreen.

If you are approached about buying a vehicle and the offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Remember, if you return to find your vehicle has been stolen, report it to the police as soon as possible by calling 101. The police will notify the DVLA and arrange recovery on your behalf if the vehicle is located.

Contact us

Report a crime:



To report a non urgent crime visit www.kent.police.uk/report



Talk to us on LiveChat – available 24/7: www.kent.police.uk/contact



In an emergency, if crime is in progress or life is in danger, call **999**



If you have a hearing or speech impairment, use our textphone service 18000. Or text us on 999 if you've pre-registered with the emergency SMS service.



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Kent Police

Most vehicle crime is carried out by opportunistic thieves. Remembering a few quick and easy security measures could help prevent the expense and inconvenience of your vehicle being broken into or stolen.

Making sure you only buy from legitimate suppliers, securing your vehicle properly and removing all valuables are just some of the things you can do to help.

Kent Police carry out road checks, works with CCTV operators to identify potential offenders and offers top tips for owners to help reduce the risk of vehicle crime.

General security

- Photograph your vehicle – noting any identifiable marks.
- Security-mark your vehicle. Etch the windows and other areas with the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), making it more difficult to be sold on.
- Lock all doors and windows every time you leave your vehicle and if you've got an alarm or immobiliser, use it.
- Consider fitting anti-tamper screws to your number plate to reduce the risk of theft.
- Make sure your vehicle and its contents are insured and your policy is updated as soon as anything changes.



- Consider using a lockable fuel cap and investing in a steering or gear lock.
- Drive a 4x4 or large vehicle? Security mark and secure your catalytic converter as these are easier to remove.

At home

- Newer vehicles are harder to steal without the keys so make sure you never leave them close to house windows or doors or in an open bag.
- If you have a garage, keep your vehicle locked inside. If you have two vehicles, use the other vehicle to block the garage door and consider installing a garage alarm and security lighting to deter thieves.
- Make sure all tools and valuables are removed from your vehicle overnight.



- Left something indoors? Never leave your vehicle with the engine running.
- Encourage your neighbours to be vigilant and to report any suspicious activity.
- Take care with keyless car entry and proximity.

Out and about

- Take all valuables with you when you leave your vehicle. Even sat nav marks on a windscreen or a bag or jacket left visible can make breaking in seem attractive.
- Whether you're paying for fuel or doing the school run, never leave the keys in the ignition or leave windows or sun roof open.

- When parking look, for car parks displaying the Park Mark sign as these meet certain security criteria.



- Wherever you park, choose an area that's in view from passers-by and well-lit.
- Out shopping? Make sure your keys are secure – it only takes a few seconds for a pickpocket to strike.
- Put purchases in the boot rather than the back seat.

Motorbikes

- When out and about make sure you secure your motorbike, even if you only leave it for a few moments, and try to park in view of CCTV.
- Invest in a good lock. Motorbikes can be wheeled away so make sure your lock is heavy and cannot be cut easily. Consider buying a disc-lock, which stops the wheel from turning forwards or backwards.
- If you have an alarm make sure it's activated and advertise it using a sticker to deter thieves.
- Remove any valuable accessories that could be stolen without the need for tools.

