

**News Release
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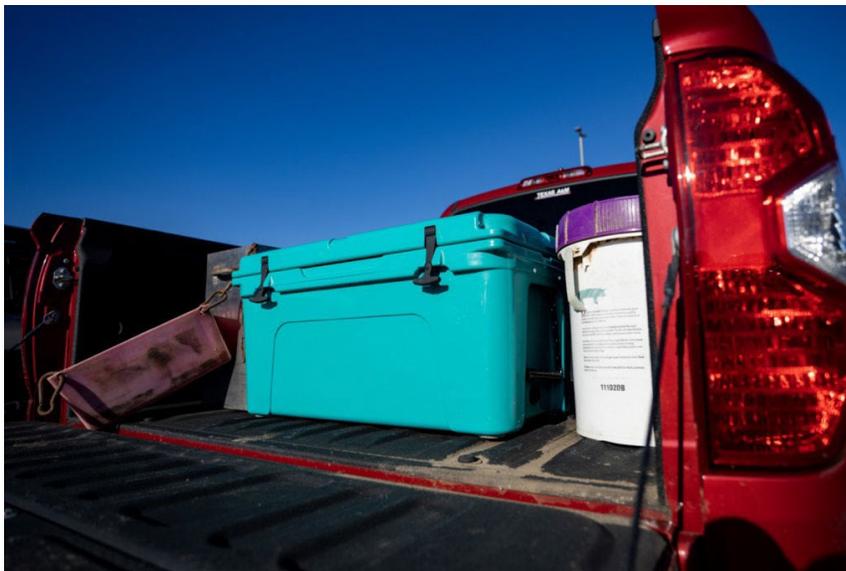
Compiled By Kay Rogers

Preventing vehicle burglary theft this stock show season.

Experts offer common tips, devices to thwart theft of equipment.

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Livestock stock show season brings about travel with trucks, trailers and expensive equipment, which can also lead to unfortunate theft.



Experts advise not to leave valuable items in the pickup bed as stock show season soon begins. (Texas A&M AgriLife photo by Sam Craft)

[Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service](#) experts are advising show families and friends to implement common safety practices when traveling this show season.

“It’s amazing how many people leave expensive things unsecured, even on the seat of the car,” said Jeff Fant, AgriLife Extension Disaster Assessment and Recovery agent, San Angelo. “San Angelo has a big stock show and rodeo, yet you would not believe how many people leave expensive coolers and other items in the back of a pickup.”

Expensive saddles and tack items are another area of concern, said Bryan Davis, Disaster Assessment and Recovery team lead, Seguin.

“It’s easy to get in a hurry and jump out of the vehicle without thinking about what you’ve left in the bed of the pickup or leaving trailer gates unlocked,” Davis said. “You’d also be surprised at how many people leave a vehicle unlocked. Approximately 50% of all vehicles stolen are left unlocked.”

Traveling tips

The following are traveling tips:

- Hide or remove valuables from plain sight to avoid attracting thieves, especially firearms and computers.
- Never hide a second set of keys in or on your car. Extra keys can easily be found by thieves.
- Park in well-lighted areas or attended lots. More than half of all vehicle thefts occur at night. Auto thieves do not like witnesses and prefer unattended parking lots.
- Never leave your car running, even if gone for a minute. Vehicles are commonly stolen at convenience stores, gas station, ATMs, etc. Many vehicles are also stolen on a cold morning when the owner leaves the vehicle running to warm up. Leaving your key in an unattended motor vehicle is a crime in Texas.
- Don’t leave the registration, title or insurance card in your vehicle. A thief will use these to sell your stolen car. File the title and registration at your home or office and carry your insurance card in your purse or wallet. Consider carrying this information digitally on a mobile phone.
- Park with your wheels turned toward the curb and use your emergency brake. Make your car tough to tow away. Wheels should also turn to the side in driveways and parking lot.
- If you have a garage, use it rather than parking outside where your vehicle is more vulnerable. Lock your garage and your vehicle doors.
- Engrave your Vehicle Identification Number, VIN, or a personal identification number on expensive accessories and parts. Stolen cars/parts are more easily traced when VIN’s have been etched on major parts and expensive accessories.
- Lock your car and take your keys.
- Do not keep any papers with personal identification on them — name, address, phone number, etc. If the criminal finds this, they know who you are, where you are, and how to make contact.

Added Vehicle Protection

Davis also suggests investing in an ignition or fuel kill switch.

“Splice an inexpensive toggle switch into your ignition wire or starter to stop it from starting,” Davis said. “The fuel kill switch cuts off the flow of fuel when the switch is off.”

Another option is a visible steering lock inside the vehicle.

“These visible steering wheel locks prevent the steering wheel from being turned properly. Gas or brake pedal locks disable the fuel and braking functions,” Davis said. “Gearshift locks disable shifting of the transmission by locking it in place. Tire or wheel locks wrap around the wheel and prevent the vehicle from moving. Hood locks prevent the thief from gaining access to your security system and battery. An armored collar around the steering column protects the column and ignition.”

Car alarms with sensors that detect glass breakage, motion tampering and towing also work well.

“Panic buttons, back-up batteries, flashing parking lights or headlights, and automatic engine disable features are also recommended,” Davis said.

Vehicle tracking devices also feature a silent transmitter hidden in a car that enables the police to track it.

“Overall, use common sense and remember to lock up important equipment and valuables,” Fant said.