

Criminal Investigation,
Seventh Edition

Chapter Seventeen
Vehicle Thefts and Related Offenses

Miscellaneous Statistics and Notes

- Motorcycle theft is on the increase.
- National and international rings operate particularly in cities near ports.
- Since the fall of the Soviet Union there has been an increase in auto thefts in Europe.
- The theft of airbags and the resale of stolen airbags is becoming epidemic.
- Heavy truck and tractor-trailer thefts are on the increase.

Auto Theft Myths

- Auto theft only happens to others.
- Auto theft is a victimless crime, since insurance companies pay for the loss.
- Most cars stolen are new cars.
- When an auto thief is convicted the punishment is severe.

Auto Theft Facts

- It is estimated that in approximately 20 to 30 percent of the auto thefts, the owner left the keys in the car.
- Everyone with insurance pays an increase in their rates to pay for the cars stolen.
- Approximately 85% of the stolen cars are recovered.

Auto Theft Facts

- Punishment for auto theft is not swift or sure, as is true for most of the justice system.
- The theft of older model cars is prevalent.
- Tax dollars are devoted to the investigation and prosecution of auto theft cases.
- Victims of auto theft must pay their insurance deductible.

Investigation

- Investigators need to know the meaning of the vehicle serial number and where the “secret” number is on the vehicle. Manuals exist telling the investigator this information.
- Specific parts of vehicle are required to have numbers and the investigator needs to know which parts are numbered.

Investigation

- If the investigator is involved in with the investigation of boat and aircraft theft the investigator needs to know similar information about these types of vehicles.

The End