

PLAYING IT **SAFE**

Helpful tips provided by Beyond Insurance Brokers Inc.

Be Wary of Thieves While Your Car is Warming Up

Keep Your Vehicles Safe

As winter claws across Canada and temperatures plummet, vehicles need extra time to warm up on frosty mornings.

Many Canadians admit to leaving their cars unattended in the morning with the engine running to warm it up. Opportunistic thieves capitalize on this widespread winter habit by prowling neighbourhoods and stealing unattended, running vehicles.

To add insult to injury, insurers may refuse claims of theft due to leaving your car unattended and unlocked when warming it up. Whether you are driving a company or personal vehicle, leaving it unattended with the engine running is extending an open invitation to car thieves.

How It Happens

Car thefts can be random, but many are planned. Criminals tend to target specific makes and models, and often organize themselves into inconspicuous groups. They stalk vehicles parked overnight, waiting for their owners to start them and leave them unattended. A few minutes—even just seconds—is enough time for a thief to steal your vehicle.

Car theft increases as temperatures drop and winter weather grows worse. Whenever a winter storm descends on Canada, thieves exploit the frigid weather and new-fallen snow by planning a spate of thefts. Be extra vigilant the first day

after a snowfall or chilly winter storm, when thieves are most likely to strike.

How to Stop It

A thief needs only a small window of opportunity to steal your personal or work vehicle. Because it can happen so quickly, preparation and vigilance are paramount. Heed the following advice to steer clear of car thieves:

- Carry your car keys wherever you go—never leave them in the ignition, even if you leave for a only a few seconds.
- Sit inside your car while it de-ices—never let it de-ice unattended.
- Lock and secure your vehicle when exiting it.
- Keep valuables locked inside the trunk and out of sight, or bring them with you.
- Store important car documents and a spare key in your home or office—leaving them inside the car makes it easier for thieves to quickly sell your vehicle.
- Park in busy, well-lit areas near surveillance cameras.
- Use a garage to store your car.

By staying vigilant and following these simple precautions, you can make sure your car and possessions stay safe during the winter.



Stay Vigilant

Warming up your car by letting it run unattended exposes you to theft. Sit inside your vehicle while it de-ices!

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