

MSU-ES Dawg Tracks



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Safety Tips: Avoid Carjacking



In the past, we were just a little group of Mississippians going to work, church and family visits on Sundays. Then, starting over with almost the same routine on Monday. Crime was very insignificant, maybe stealing from a store or watermelons in season.

As of recent years all this has changed. We are faced with the same threats that the big cities were involved in 25 or 30 years ago. Car, home, store, and Internet thefts are almost commonplace now. We don't like it and we know that our local legal authorities are trying to help, but sometimes these events are happening faster than they can be dealt with.

Carjacking was one crime that you never heard, or rarely heard, mentioned here in the Deep South. Now it is fairly commonplace to hear of a carjacking or other heinous crime.

As an example concerning carjacking, I read about a lady who pulled up to a busy intersection and a stranger appeared on her side of the car. He pecked on the window. The lady rolled the window down and BAM! He seized the car and was gone, taking her with him.

Carjacking is a violent crime where the robbers steal more vehicles by force or with a threat of force. They may be armed with guns, knives or both, and they may grab the driver and pull him or her out of the car. Sometimes they make the driver go with them and drive. They appear to be working alone, but normally have an accomplice who will be at a remote point.

The normal order for carjackers is to chop the car up in parts, sell them and invest in drugs or other crime related activities. They are violent people, so it is imperative for you to concentrate on protecting your life and not your property.

TIPS TO AVOID AND SURVIVE CARJACKING:

- When you are approaching your car in a parking lot, be on the lookout for suspicious people. If you sense that there may be trouble, go to a safe place instead of your vehicle.
- When you get into your car, lock the doors and windows immediately.

- When you stop at a light, leave enough room between you and the vehicle in front of you so that you can see the tires on the vehicle in front of you. The National Safety Council teaches this in their Safe Driving Course. By leaving this distance in front of you, it enables you to see the other vehicle. It does two things for you. One, it enables you to pull out of the traffic lane in case of an emergency and the other reason is that it gives enough room so that if the vehicle in front of you experiences problems, you still have room to get out.
- Keep your windows rolled up, particularly in congested traffic areas and at stoplights and in turn lanes.
- If your vehicle is struck from behind, you could be the victim of a "bump and rob." If possible, signal to the other driver to follow you to the nearest police station or a busy well-lighted area. Otherwise, wait in your car until the police arrive and be sure to turn on your signal lights or flashers.
- Be suspicious of anyone who approaches your car - even with an excuse such as handing out flyers or asking directions.
- If you are going to speak to the person, crack the window a little instead of rolling it all the way down.
- Think twice before helping someone with car trouble - instead call the police or a towing service.
- If you think that you are being followed, drive to a police station or to a crowded, well-lighted area.
- Use your cell phone to call for help if you think you are in danger.

Carjacking is becoming an increasing concern for workers today. It doesn't matter that you are driving on company business or a regular commute to work, learn how to avoid violent encounters. Don't try to fight a carjacker. Give up your car to protect your life.

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