

## **Theft from cars on the rise says AA Insurance**

### ***Awareness of vehicle security up, secure behaviour down***

**Auckland – 2 March 2010** – If you don't want your things stolen, don't leave them in the car – especially if you've parked on the street or in a car park. More than half of car break-ins occur from these two locations, according to the 2010 AA Insurance Drivers Index.

AA Insurance surveyed 4,336 New Zealand drivers aged 18-65 for the index.

Some 19 percent of those surveyed for the 2010 AA Insurance Drivers Index had experienced a car break-in (up from 17 percent in 2009). Of these, a third were while the car was parked in the driver's street or nearby street (up from 26 percent in 2009), 28 percent of the break-ins occurred in a public car park, and 23 percent in the driver's garage, carport or driveway.

Nearly half of those who had experienced theft (49 percent) believe they could have done more to prevent it, up from 37 percent in 2009. Tellingly, almost a third of people (33 percent) say they leave personal possessions like bags or CDs visible in the car. Furthermore, 38 percent of these say their possessions were visible from outside the car (an increase from 31 percent in 2009).

"There's been a significant increase in claims for items stolen from cars parked on the road," says Martin Fox, Deputy General Manager, AA Insurance. "According to our Drivers Index, one in six people have had things stolen from their cars and in hindsight almost half think they could have done more to protect their belongings.

"What this tells us is that more people know what they should do, but this isn't being translated into action. The challenge is to get more people taking better care of their property.

"Thieves will always go for the easiest, fastest option, so leaving valuable possessions visible in your car is really just laying bait for them. There's a real connection between leaving things in the car and having thieves steal them, especially if you park on the street."

Asked what was taken from the car in the most recent theft, people said:

- Stereo equipment installed in the car – 22 percent
- CDs – 21 percent
- Cash/coins – 21 percent

- Sunglasses – 20 percent
- Clothing – 13 percent
- Handbag/wallet/purse – 13 percent
- Mobile phone – 8 percent
- Sports equipment – 7 percent
- MP3 players – 6 percent
- Gym bag – 5 percent

### **Extra security for your car**

While 49 percent of people who had experienced theft from their car believed they could have done more to prevent the theft, only 17 percent upgraded the car's security after the theft.

"People know they can do more to reduce the risk of theft but too often they recognise this only after the fact," says Martin.

The most popular form of car security of those surveyed is a car alarm, with 25 percent of people having an alarm. This was followed by an immobiliser (24 percent) and a security coded or removable stereo system (22 percent). New technology is gaining a footing, with microdots in cars of 1 percent of those surveyed, and GPS tracking systems likewise. However, some 25 percent of those surveyed have no additional security other than locks for their car.

When deciding which car to purchase, security features aren't a high priority for most people. Some 42 percent of people did not investigate its security features, and 30 percent of people said they had thought about security features "a little".

### **Basic car security**

The majority of people (85 percent) always lock the car even if leaving it only for a short period.

People who sometimes left the car unlocked did so parked outside at home (27 percent), in the garage at home (20 percent), at the service station (25 percent), or at the supermarket (8 percent) or at work (15 percent). Some 69 percent of those surveyed are apprehensive about leaving their car in an unfamiliar street.

"An unattended, unlocked car is vulnerable, no matter where you leave it, or where you've gone, says Martin. "Thieves are opportunistic, observant and surprisingly fast."

## **Tips for preventing car break-ins from AA Insurance**

1. Don't display your belongings – it's advertising to thieves. AA Insurance estimates that approximately 20 percent of glass damage to cars is caused by thieves gaining entry to the car to obtain items they can see.
2. When your car is parked, lock it – even if it's in your home garage, or parked on your street. This includes the boot and, if you have one, the sunroof.
3. Tell your neighbours if your vehicle has been broken into at your home – thieves often target vehicles in the same street.
4. Keep valuables (eg wallet, mobile, iPods) on you – not in the glove box or under a seat. Thieves know to check the glove box.
5. Take the detachable faceplate of your stereo with you – without this the stereo is worthless. Keep a record of your car stereo's serial number.
6. Keep bags, gym gear and coats locked and out of sight in the boot.
7. Park in busy, open, well-lit areas. Use an attended, secure parking building if you can.
8. Remove cradles and chargers for navigation systems and cellphones from your dashboard.
9. Keep your vehicle keys with you and spare keys at home or work. Don't hide a spare key on the car – thieves will find it.
10. Consider installing additional car security such as an alarm, immobiliser or removable stereo.

ENDS

### **About AA Insurance**

AA Insurance was launched in 1994 and is a joint venture between New Zealand Automobile Association and Suncorp-Metway Limited.

AA Insurance has over 300 staff servicing 150,000 plus customers and manages over 300,000 policies. Over half of those policies cover motor insurance risks including cars, bikes, caravans and motor homes, and the remainder are house and contents insurance.

In 2008 and 2009, AA Insurance was a finalist in the unlimited/JRA Best Places to Work Survey in the medium-large workplace category, making it one of the top places to work in New Zealand.

AA Insurance Limited has an A+ (Strong) Insurer Financial Strength Rating given by Standard and Poor's (Australia) Pty Ltd on 8 January 2010. For further information visit [www.aainsurance.co.nz](http://www.aainsurance.co.nz).

### **About the 2010 AA Insurance Drivers Index**

The 2010 AA Insurance Drivers Index is an independent internet survey of 4,336 drivers aged 18 to 65 from around New Zealand.

**For more information please contact:**

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