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CARJACKING

- **What Is Carjacking?**
- **What Can I Do to Avoid Being Carjacked?**
- **What Should I Do If I Am Carjacked?**
- **Where and When Am I Most Vulnerable to Carjacking?**
- **What is Law Enforcement in Essex County Doing To Prevent Carjacking?**

Q. What is Carjacking?

Carjacking is the illegal taking of a motor vehicle from its driver and occupants by force, violence, or intimidation; often at the point of a gun. Carjacking is a type of hijacking, where the driver and occupants of the vehicle in question are threatened with harm or are harmed by the perpetrator, so as to gain possession and control of that motor vehicle. The perpetrator(s) also often steals wallets, cell phones and any other valuables from the driver and occupants. To gain control of the car, the carjacker may physically push/pull the driver out of the driver's seat and out of the car. In some instances, the driver / occupant are shot by the perpetrator(s). This crime is extremely hazardous, threatening the physical safety of the victim.

Q. What can I do to avoid being carjacked?

- Approach your car with the key in hand. Look around and inside the car before getting in.
- Park in well-lighted areas, near sidewalks or walkways. Avoid parking near dumpsters, woods, large vans or trucks, or anything else that limits your visibility.
- Never leave valuables in plain view, even when the car is locked. Put them out of sight in the trunk.
- Keep doors locked and windows rolled up, no matter how short the distance or how safe the area.
- Look around, especially at places where you slow down or stop, such as garages and parking lots, intersections, self-service gas stations, and car washes, highway entry and exit ramps, and ATMs.
- When coming to a stop, leave enough room to maneuver around other cars, especially if you sense trouble and need to get away. Look around for possible avenues of escape. Keep some distance between you and the vehicle in front so you can maneuver easily if necessary--about one-half of your vehicle's length. (You should always be able to see the rear tires of the vehicle in front of you).
- Avoid driving alone, if possible. Travel with someone, especially at night.
- Don't stop to assist a stranger whose car has broken down. Help instead by driving to the nearest phone and calling police for help.

- Always keep your car well maintained, and make sure you have plenty of gas.

Q. What should I do if I am carjacked?

- If a carjacker threatens you with a gun or other weapon, give up your car. Don't argue. Your life is worth more than a car.
- Listen carefully to all directions from the carjacker.
- Make no quick or sudden movements that the carjacker could construe as a counter attack.
- Always keep your hands in plain view.
- Make the attacker aware if children are present. The attacker may be focused only on the driver and not know children are in the car.
- Get away as quickly as possible.
- Contact the police immediately.
- Describe the event to the police. What time of day did it occur? Where did it happen? How did it happen? Who was involved?
- Describe the carjacker(s). Try to remember their height, weight, scars or other marks, hair and eye color, the presence of facial hair, build (slender, large), and complexion (dark, fair).
- Describe the carjackers vehicle. If possible get the color, make, model, and year, as well as any marks (scratches, dents, damage) and personal decorations (stickers, colored wheels); and the license plate number, if possible.
- The golden rule for descriptions is to give only that information you absolutely remember. If you are not sure, don't guess!
- The objective is not to thwart the criminal but to survive!

Q. Where and when am I most vulnerable to carjacking?

- High crime areas.
- Lesser traveled roads.
- Intersections where you must stop.
- Isolated areas in parking lots.
- Residential driveways and gates.
- Traffic jams or congested areas.
- Accidents are one ruse used by attackers to control a victim. Following are common attack plans:
 - The Bump: The carjacker bumps the victim's vehicle from behind. The victim gets out to assess the damage and exchange information. The victim's vehicle is taken.
 - Good Samaritan: The carjacker(s) stage what appears to be an accident. They may simulate an injury. The victim stops to assist, and the vehicle is taken.
 - The Ruse: The vehicle behind the victim flashes its lights or the driver waves to get the victim's attention. The carjacker tries to indicate that there is a problem with the victim's car. The victim pulls over and the vehicle is taken.
 - The Trap: Carjackers use surveillance to follow the victim home. When the victim pulls into his or her driveway, the carjacker pulls up behind and blocks the victim's car.
 - If you are bumped from behind or if someone tries to alert you to a problem with your vehicle, pull over only when you reach a safe public place.

Q. What is Law Enforcement in Essex County doing to prevent carjacking?

Millburn Police are expanding their patrol practices as well as working closely with the Essex County Prosecutor's Office Major Crimes Unit.