



# Auto Theft Overview

Emerging Auto Theft  
Trends and the Impact  
on Dealerships



## Time for LoJack

With auto theft up, it's time to make sure that buyers of vehicles protect their investment by using a trusted stolen vehicle recovery system. Over 200,000 stolen vehicles equipped with a LoJack System have been recovered in the U.S. alone. Our logistics team has the new dealer launch process locked down, with in-dealer process recommendations, in-person and online training tools, and easy-to-use point of sale materials to help dealers succeed in selling the LoJack System.

## Auto Theft on the Rise Nationally

Recent FBI statistics confirm what you probably already knew: nationally, auto thefts are on the rise again. This represents a reversal of the trend toward lower motor vehicle thefts over a period of years, which was in part driven by security innovations from automobile manufacturers. Motor vehicle thefts in the U. S. have spiked sharply, possibly indicating that the latest security systems have fallen prey to thieves as they refine their techniques. In 2016, according to the FBI Uniform Crime Report, there were an estimated 765,484 auto thefts across the US—that's over an 8 percent increase in just one year. Increases were seen in almost all regions, but they were especially sharp in the Southeast, South Central, Mountain and Pacific Northwest states. The breadth of the increases should be a warning call to consumers to add a layer of protection against loss due to auto theft.

## It's Not Just About Joy Rides Anymore

Today's auto theft is a far cry from joyrides or petty larceny, relying instead on a sophisticated network of thieves, mechanics, resellers, and chop shops working in concert. Vehicles are often either loaded onto container ships for international sale or disassembled and sold as parts, making them very difficult to track. The parts can be sold at close to their legitimate retail values, making chop shops an especially profitable venue for criminals. A good chop

---

### U.S. Auto Theft by the Numbers



Over **765,000** vehicles stolen



Average dollar loss per stolen vehicle of **\$7,680**



**\$5.9 Billion** lost nationwide to vehicle theft

Source: 2016 FBI Uniform Crime Report

---

shop can disassemble an entire car in as little as one hour, netting easy money that finances other criminal activity. In fact, according to Citizens Against Auto Theft, 97% of people arrested in Colorado for auto theft have warrants for other violent crimes.

A chop shop was recently discovered by police in the remote desert of San Bernardino County. Hidden in a remote location miles from the nearest roads, the chop shop was only discovered because officers picked up a LoJack® signal from a stolen 2006 Cadillac Escalade. Incidentally, 31 additional vehicles were also found at the chop shop, putting the total value of the find at approximately \$500,000.





## Regional Differences Emerge

Regional trends in auto theft emerge due to localized circumstances, populations, and knowledge. Car thieves don't have a national newsletter for sharing information, so techniques for stealing particular vehicles emerge and evolve based on profitable opportunities that arise in specific localities.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, criminals have learned how to steal the attractive and profitable 2010-2015 Chevrolet Camaro SS by disabling the horn and installing a customized ECU module that bypasses the security system and OnStar protection. This enables a thief to steal the Camaro without the need for the RF module in the owner's key, and without alerting OnStar or triggering the alarm system. Over 350 Camaros have been stolen in the Bay Area in just the last few years, according to the Alameda County Regional Area Task Force, contributing to Oakland's a high rate of auto theft in the United States.

Subaru owners in Colorado are reporting an unusually high rate of car theft during the same period of time. Coloradans Against Auto Theft (CAAT) has launched a statewide public awareness campaign, LockDownYourCar.org, reminding drivers about tactics that can make their cars more difficult targets for auto thieves. In Colorado, where many people do not lock their car doors, the campaign informs the public about the domino effect that occurs when a thief steals a car and uses the proceeds to fuel other crimes. According to the Auto Theft Intelligence Coordination Center (ATICC), 18,047 vehicles were stolen statewide in Colorado in 2016, up more than 20 percent over 2015 and more than 55 percent over 2014, underscoring the need to educate the public.

Ford F-Series Super Duty trucks are favored by drug and human traffickers across Texas. Heavy duty F-250 and F-350 series trucks are attractive to drug cartels due to their high storage capacity and off-road capability, making them perfect for carrying large loads of illegal contraband through wild country in Texas and Mexico. The older models are especially

popular as they lack modern security systems and are therefore easier to steal. Even when they are heavily loaded, these trucks can appear not to be carrying much at all due to their heavy duty suspensions, making them less suspicious to law enforcement or customs officials.

## Circumventing OEM Protections

LoJack has seen one constant across the last decade: thieves are circumventing the protections that are put in by the original equipment manufacturer (OEM). With the advent of advanced car keys, theft by simply hotwiring a car seemed to be a thing of the past. In market after market, we see that thieves are using techniques to get around the sophisticated key required to start a modern vehicle. Above, we saw how thieves are circumventing advanced security systems in Camaros. Sometimes, those techniques can be as simple as using a tow truck or a flatbed car hauler. The increase in auto thefts show that stealing cars continues to be a lucrative crime that consumers need to protect themselves against.

## Fraud at Dealerships

We also see that fraudulent purchases of vehicles are an issue at dealerships, where thieves use identity theft to convert stolen information into a hard asset that can be sold for profit, either in parts or a complete vehicle. Sometimes those vehicles are exported, where they can be sold at dramatically higher prices in international markets. Other times, the crime is less sophisticated, but no less painful for the dealership. A recent example had an East Coast dealership install a LoJack Stolen Vehicle Recovery System on a car. The purchaser fled the state and a records check determined that the vehicle was purchased fraudulently. It was recovered using the LoJack System in a western state after it was reported stolen.

For over 30 years, the LoJack® Stolen Vehicle Recovery System has helped law enforcement recover over 200,000 stolen vehicles in the United States alone. It is the only stolen vehicle recovery system integrated with law enforcement. Now LoJack is delivering new innovation to connected cars and dealer inventory management. LoJack is a wholly owned subsidiary of CalAmp (NASDAQ: CAMP). CalAmp is a pure-play pioneer in the connected vehicle and broader Internet of Things (IoT) marketplace. The company's extensive portfolio of intelligent communications devices, robust and scalable telematics cloud services, and targeted software applications streamline otherwise complex IoT deployments. These solutions enable customers to optimize their operations by collecting, monitoring, and efficiently reporting business-critical data and desired intelligence from high-value mobile and remote assets. CalAmp is headquartered in Irvine, California and has been publicly traded since 1983.

© 2017 LoJack Corporation. CalAmp and LoJack are among the trademarks of CalAmp, LoJack and/or its affiliates in the United States, certain other countries, and/or the EU. Any other trademarks or trade names mentioned are the property of their respective owners.



LoJack  
40 Pequot Way  
Canton, MA 02021  
[lojack.com](http://lojack.com)