

### **Parking Lot Safety: Don't Become an Easy Target!**

Because we're on the go for so much of our workday, we end up spending a lot of time in the car—or, in some cases, getting in and out of the car. As with so much of what we do, an activity that seems perfectly ordinary and safe can become dangerous. By becoming and staying aware of risks associated with approaching and opening your car, you will be empowered to avoid any dangers before they can occur. Here are six steps you can take:

1. Don't approach your vehicle if a van or other large vehicle with tinted windows is parked next to it. Find a security guard to walk you to your car, or look for a nearby couple walking to their car and say something like, "That vehicle wasn't there when I parked. Would you mind making sure I get into my car safely?"
2. Have your key ready to open the car door. Never stand next to your car searching through your purse. Robbers, carjackers and sexual predators all watch for this type of distraction.
3. Once in your car, lock the doors immediately.
4. Get moving. Don't sit inside of your vehicle adjusting the stereo, rummaging through shopping bags or your purse, or talking on your phone, especially if the lot is not well populated.
5. If you have an unlocking button or keyless entry system, make sure you unlock only the driver door. Unlocking all doors allows a predator to simply slide into your car from the passenger side.
6. Make sure that your dome light is always functioning properly. As you unlock your vehicle at night, glance into the back seat and make sure that an attacker has not gained access to your car.

(Source: *Road and Travel* magazine)

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