



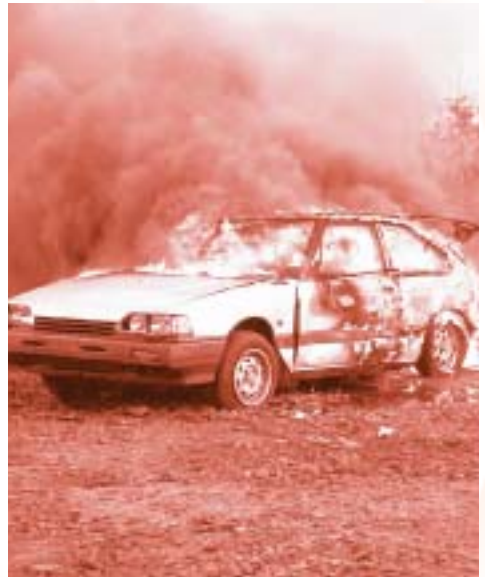
Arson Prevention Car Fires

Car Fires

The Growing Problem . . . and How to Help Extinguish It

Every year in the UK around 102,000 road vehicles (or about 280 every single day) go up in flames and over 58 people die as a result.

80% of car fires are started deliberately to cover criminal activity, to make a fraudulent insurance claim or as an act of vandalism. One in 12 reported stolen vehicles will be set on fire.



Many other vehicle fires break out simply due to a lack of basic maintenance and can be prevented.

The financial loss of having a car fire is bad enough and, although insurance may compensate for this, nothing can help with the shock and inconvenience that follow even a small fire.

A little care and forethought can reduce the risk of your car being stolen, and perhaps set on fire. Follow the checklist below every time you leave your car.

Check List

- **Where to leave your car**

At night, park in a well-lit place. Thieves like working in shadows, so avoid poorly lit areas. In a ticket-exit car park, take the ticket with you and always try to use a secured car park.

- **Remove the ignition key**

Don't leave the key in the ignition - not even for just a few seconds to go into your home, a shop or pay for petrol.

- **Close all windows**

When you leave the car, close windows. Don't forget the sun roof.

- **Fit and use an anti-theft device**

Most car thieves are opportunists, so they will probably move on to a car without a device fitted. You can often obtain an insurance discount for an approved alarm / immobiliser.

- **Always lock doors and boot/tailgate**

Even when the car is in your own drive or garage, lock it and take the key with you.

- **Hide property**

Whenever possible take your property with you when you leave your car. Otherwise always lock belongings in the boot. In a hatchback the rear shelf should be in position. In an estate car cover up property with a sheet or blanket.

- **Report abandoned cars to the police**

Stolen cars which are abandoned may then be set on fire if left. Reporting an abandoned car to the police could help someone else get their car back intact.

Don't forget - 35% of car fires are accidental, so you can help yourself by taking the following precautions:

- **Electrical**

Check wiring on a routine basis, watching for signs of wear or damage. Beware of bad connections and brittle insulation. All alterations or additions to the electrical system should be carried out in a competent manner - preferably by qualified mechanics.

- **Petrol**

Routinely check all fuel lines for signs of undue wear and ensure their connections are reliable.



- **Welding**

Never use heat, naked flames or welding equipment near the fuel tank or feed pipes. Regularly check both inside and outside the vehicle whilst welding.

- **Commonsense**

Modern car interiors are largely composed of polymers, plastics and other synthetic materials - all of which are particularly flammable. The smoke and fumes from the outbreak of fire are highly toxic and can be deadly, if inhaled. Simple commonsense and the proper use/disposal of matches and cigarettes will minimise the risk.

- **Be prepared**

Keep a multi-purpose dry powder or foam spray extinguisher conforming to BS EN3 in your car.

If a fire breaks out

- Stop
- Switch off engine
- Release bonnet - but do not open
- Get everyone out of the vehicle
- Get far away from the vehicle and stay away
- Keep onlookers and others away
- Dial 999 and call the fire brigade
- Warn oncoming traffic
- If you believe it is safe to do so, attempt to put out the fire with a dry powder or foam extinguisher. If the fire is in the engine compartment, do not open the bonnet but aim the dry powder or foam through the radiator grille or under the edge of the bonnet. Use with caution and if in doubt, don't attempt to tackle the fire
- Never use water on an engine fire - it can short out wiring and spread burning petrol with disastrous effect

In all vehicle fires, the first thing to think about is personal safety; any vehicle can be replaced - people cannot. Think and act quickly, in the safest way possible.



If you have any information about a suspicious fire call Crimestoppers Arson Alert