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It is advisable to ensure that your motor insurance policy provides adequate cover for additional fitted accessories.

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# The best 20 car crime prevention tips!

A silver Vauxhall Omega Elite car is shown from a front-three-quarter view, positioned to the right of the main text. The car's license plate area displays "Omega Elite".

The UK has one of the worst car crime problems in the world, accounting for a quarter of all recorded crime. Half a million vehicles are stolen every year. Roughly one a minute. Over 30% are never seen again. Property is stolen from a vehicle every 13 seconds. And the cost? Literally billions of pounds a year. Which we all end up paying.

Such is the size of the problem that the Prime Minister has set a national target of reducing vehicle crime by 30% over five years. But what can we all do to help? There are several simple steps we can all take to

greatly reduce our chances of becoming a victim of car crime. You can start by reading this leaflet. It tells you the things that really work when it comes to putting the brakes on vehicle crime.

# Use your common sense.



**1. Crazy as it seems,** the majority of stolen cars are left unlocked, often with the keys in the ignition. Even if you're leaving your car for just a few seconds, always close all windows, lock it and take the keys with you.

**2. Find out exactly what security features** are fitted to your vehicle, find out how they work and then make sure you use them. Even the best security devices in the world are useless if they're not activated.

**3. Take care where** you park. If possible, choose a busy, well-lit area. A quarter of car crime takes place in car parks, but you can reduce this risk by almost three-quarters by using a car park with a 'Secured Car Park' award. Just look for the 'Secured Car Park' plaque. And if you've got a garage at home, use it!

**4. Most modern cars** can't be driven without the proper key, so look after your car keys. Don't leave them lying around at work or in public places. At home, don't leave them in your hallway where they can easily be stolen through the letter box or an unlocked door.

**5. Hide your possessions** in the boot or glovebox before you begin your journey. Car thieves might be a pain in the neck, but most of them aren't stupid. They will often hide and watch people park to see if they conceal any valuables before leaving the vehicle.



**6. Leave nothing** in your vehicle on show that might attract attention – not even things that don't look valuable, such as clothing. Thieves might be tempted to break into your vehicle just to find out if you're trying to hide something.

**7. Never leave cash,** cheque books, credit cards, your vehicle documentation, mobile phones or other valuable items in your vehicle, ever. It's just asking for trouble. They're not very big or heavy. So take them with you!

# Car thieves do!

8. Don't buy a used car until you've read The Car Buyers' Guide, published by the Home Office and available from your local crime prevention officer. You can also check a car's history with services such as the AA used car data check (0800 234999) or the HPI check from Equifax (01722 422 422). Remember, you are much safer buying a used car through a manufacturer's approved scheme, such as Vauxhall's Network Q.



9. When buying a used car privately, always view it in daylight at the seller's home – never at your home or another place. You need to be sure where the seller lives. Beware also, if they give you an address but meet you in the street. If they won't let you into the house to sign the paperwork, make your excuses and leave. They might not live there at all!

10. Never buy a used car without the registration document (V5) – however plausible the excuses for it not being available. Make sure it has a DVLA watermark and hasn't been altered.



11. Ask to see a used car's old MoT certificates, service records, repair bills etc. Most legitimate owners will have kept them. Check carefully for changes to the mileage or other suspicious alterations.

12. If you're selling a car for cash, check that the notes aren't forgeries. If you accept a cheque, don't release the car until the cheque has cleared. If in doubt, ask for a banker's draft or printed building society cheque. Contact the bank or building society for confirmation that the draft or cheque has been issued.



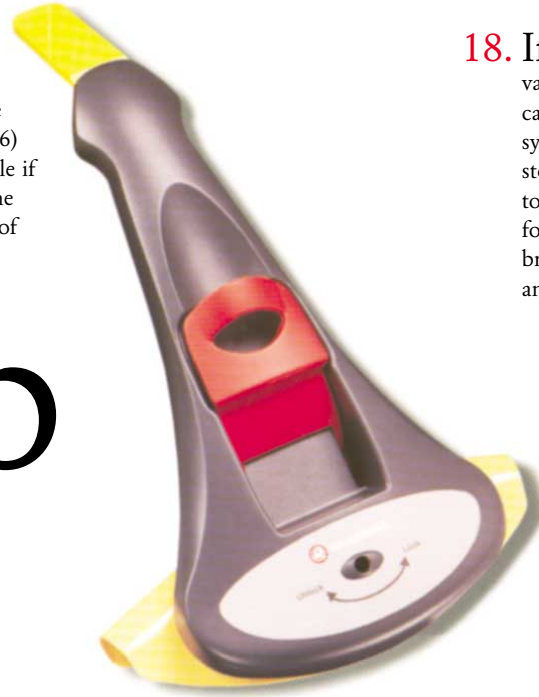
13. Make sure a used car's VIN (Vehicle Identification Number) matches that on the registration document. You'll usually find the VIN on a manufacturer's VIN plate under the bonnet and/or on an additional plate fixed to the dashboard so it can be seen through the windscreen (known as a visible VIN). Check that it hasn't been altered or disturbed. All new Vauxhalls are fitted with a visible VIN plate, including matched bar-coding.

14. Drive as new a car as possible. Cars over eight years old are many times more likely to be stolen than newer models. It really is worth paying the extra for a more modern vehicle... and it might cost you less in the long run.



# Don't get taken for a ride.

**15. Thatcham** – the insurance industry’s own research centre – tests car security products and publishes lists of devices that have withstood five minutes of criminal attack. Look for the ‘Thatcham-Compliant’ label, or call their Helpline (0990 502 006) to see if a product is listed. Insurance discounts are often available if these devices are fitted. Ask your Vauxhall dealer for a copy of the Vauxhall Accessory Collection brochure, which includes a range of Thatcham-Compliant security accessories.



**18. If you own a particularly valuable car or one that is especially attractive to car thieves, consider fitting a vehicle tracking system. It won't prevent your car from being stolen but it does make it much more likely to be recovered. Ask your Vauxhall dealer for a copy of The Accessory Collection brochure, which includes details of the Tracker and TrakBak systems.**



# Wise up & beat the

**16. Don't buy a new car that isn't fitted with an electronic engine immobiliser. These devices are the most significant recent development in the fight against car crime. If you own an older vehicle, consider having one professionally fitted. An electronic engine deadlock immobiliser is standard on all new Vauxhalls.**

**17. Another important security consideration when buying a new car is a deadlock central locking system. Again these have played a significant role in the reduction of 'thefts of' and 'thefts from' newer cars in recent years. Deadlock central locking is available on virtually all new Vauxhall cars, standard on most, and available on many Vauxhall vans.**

**19. Know your insurance ratings.** Insurance premiums are based on risk ratings – the higher the risk, the higher the premium. Before buying a car, check its rating with your insurance company or in the motoring magazines. An 'E' rating is best; this means the car exceeds security requirements and will save you money on premiums. An 'A' rating means the car meets security requirements. Avoid vehicles with a 'D' or 'U' rating. Virtually every new Vauxhall offers an 'E' insurance rating. If you own a Vauxhall, call the Vauxhall Insurance hotline on 0800 064 0077 for an immediate quote.

**20. Help the police** by providing information about vehicle crime and criminals. You can talk to the police anonymously if you wish through Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. Don't take the view that it's none of your business. Car crime is everybody's business.

So wise up! And help put the brakes on car crime! Vauxhall sponsors the Crimestopper's SMART (Stop Motor crime and Ring Today) campaign.

# car thief!

