



KERN COUNTY ELDER NEWS

Monthly Information Article | Kern County DEAR/EDRT TEAM*

*(Dependent/Elder Abuse Review) Team/EDRT (Elder Death Review Team)

APRIL 2025

SAFETY TIPS TO PREVENT CARJACKING



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Carjacking

Our views of people and our community are built on our experiences and knowledge. It is human nature to want to help others and give them the benefit of doubt. The truth is that not everyone that we encounter has good intentions. Seniors can often find themselves in situations where they have been too trusting—they grew up in a different time, so their world views are different from other generations. Criminals often target vulnerable populations which include seniors and disabled people. While carjackings are not the only crime that is seen to be perpetrated against seniors, they are more common than people think.

What is a carjacking? Pursuant to California Penal Code section 215(a) “Carjacking’ is the felonious taking of a motor vehicle in the possession of another, from his or her person or immediate presence, or from the person or immediate presence of a passenger of the motor vehicle, against his or her will and with the intent to either permanently or temporarily deprive the person in possession of the motor vehicle of his or her possession, accomplished by means of force or fear.”

The Kern County District Attorney's Office has filed sixty-six carjacking cases in the last year and victims affected by this victimization varied in age. Many of these carjackings involved a firearm, a threat of violence, and/or some form of physical violence. A report from the Department of Justice explains that carjackings are more likely to occur between strangers, perpetrators do not discriminate against gender, and 90% of those who were victimized were alone in the car.

How do criminals carjack victims? Criminals use many different methods but the most notable are the following:

Agency Partners

- Bakersfield Police Department
- California Dept. of Financial Protection & Innovation
- California Dept. of Insurance
- CSUB
- Dept. of Social Services Licensing
- GBLA
- Independent Living Center of KC
- Kaiser Permanente
- Kern Co. Aging & Adult
- Kern Co. BHRS
- Kern Co. Coroner
- Kern Co. District Attorney
- Kern Co. DA Victim Services
- Kern Co. Family Law Facilitator
- Kern Co. Public Health
- Kern Regional Center
- Kern Co. Sheriff's Office
- Kern Co. Veterans Service Dept.
- Social Security Admin.
- Strata Credit Union

- They may block your vehicle in; now you have nowhere to go.
- They may pretend to need help on the side of the road or in a parking lot. They will exploit your willingness to aid.
- They may take advantage of traffic jams; again, you have nowhere to go.
- They may also rear-end your vehicle and take an opportunity while you are assessing damage or exchanging information.



Tips to prevent being a victim of a carjacking or theft:

- Avoid traveling alone, if possible.
- Be aware of your surroundings when you are at the ATM, gas station, loading your vehicle or with young children.
- Windows should be rolled up and doors should be locked when you enter your vehicle.
- Take your car keys with you and lock your car doors when you exit your vehicle (especially when you are pumping gas).
- Avoid distractions such as cell phones.
- Have your keys ready to enter your vehicle. Do not wait to find your keys in your purse.
- Do not place valuables (phone/purse/wallet) in the passenger seat.
- If you are shopping, only accept help from store associates.
- Do not pick up or offer rides to strangers.
- Do not drive through unknown streets after dark.
- Park in well-lit areas and closer to the entrances of businesses.
- Be vigilant with individuals who are selling items or handing out flyers in parking lots.
- Allow space in between vehicles when you are driving to avoid getting boxed in.
- If you are involved in a vehicle accident, pull over to a safe and populated area. You can contact 911 to notify them of the situation and your location.
- Insure your vehicle for car theft
- Have documentation ready to identify your vehicle's make, model, year, license plate number and VIN number.

If you are involved in a carjacking, important things to remember are:

- Exit your vehicle immediately
- Do not fight back
- Call 911 immediately
- Have your vehicle information ready to be provided to law enforcement.
- If possible, provide a description of the perpetrator and direction in which they fled with your vehicle.

Your safety is a priority. Helping and accepting help from strangers could put you in a dangerous situation. If you find yourself in this position, refer to the tips listed above. It is ok to say “No, thank you” and seek help from those that you can trust, such as store associates, emergency personnel, family or friends. It is better to be safe than put yourself in a position to be victimized.

Property can be replaced but people cannot. Always remain vigilant and aware.

Sources:

<https://tinyurl.com/y5uzrtfa> | <https://tinyurl.com/mwm8b6cv> | <https://tinyurl.com/yrs65kj5>