# Parking Lot Security

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## Safety Talk

**What's at Stake?**

When you are going to or leaving from a parking lot, garage, or other parking area how often do you check over your shoulder to see who is behind or near you; pay attention to your surroundings – really pay attention instead of walking and looking at your phone or daydreaming; look in and around your vehicle for anything suspicious or out of the ordinary?

**What's the Danger?**

Parking areas are danger zones. You are vulnerable to theft, assault, and other violence when you travel from a workplace or shopping area to the relative safety of your vehicle. This is particularly true at night and off-shift hours when there are few, if any, people around.

**How to Protect Yourself**

Here are 14 safe parking strategies you can follow.

1. Park only in well-lit areas and avoid parking next to vans or thick shrubbery. Don't walk near vans either. Within seconds the doors could slide open, someone could grab you and just as quickly close the doors and take off.

2. Park near building entrances, rather than in isolated areas of the parking lot or parking garage. Try and choose a parking space that is visible from the building lobby or from the street.
3. Use parking escort services or travel to and from your vehicle with co-workers.
4. Find your vehicle key before you leave the building for the parking area, so you're not searching for them when you reach your vehicle. Carry your key in your hand in the position you would use to open your door. The key can be used as a weapon if you are threatened.
5. To discourage thieves, carry your wallet in an inside pocket. Hold your purse or briefcase securely but be prepared to use it as a weapon or let it go rather than risk injury by defending it.
6. Look around before you head for your car, watching for loiterers and observe other vehicles, particularly vehicles with someone in them. Stay clear of vehicles with darkly-tinted windows, which could conceal occupants.
7. As you approach your automobile, look under it and beside it to make sure there isn't someone hiding. Before entering the vehicle, check in the back seat for a possible intruder.
8. If you have a two-door car, get into the habit of flipping the seats forward when you leave the car. If you return and find they have been moved back, you will know someone has been in your car and might still be there. Leave the area and call the police or parking lot security staff.
9. Be suspicious if you return to your vehicle and find a flat tire. This could be an attempt to catch you off guard, so you can be attacked.
10. Lock the doors as soon as you enter your vehicle. Keep them locked when you are driving and when you leave it parked.
11. In parking garages, avoid isolated areas such as stairwells. You might consider walking down the auto ramp instead, if you can do so without risk of being struck by a vehicle.
12. If you are staying later than you expected, move your vehicle to a less isolated spot before it gets dark.
13. Lock valuables in the trunk and don't leave identifying

documents such as insurance papers in the vehicle. Out of sight is safer.

14. While a personal parking space is a great job perk, don’t have your name on it. This information might make you a target.

**Final Word**

Parking lots can make you an easy target for crime. Stay safe by staying alert, observant, and ready to run or fight.