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Police data reveals 30% increase in stolen vehicles in three years

The number of vehicles stolen in England and Wales has increased by a shocking 30% in just three years, according to data seen by [RAC Insurance](#)*

A freedom of information request showed that a total of 65,783 vehicles were reported stolen in 2013 to 40 police forces in England and Wales, but by 2016 this had risen to 85,688**.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, more vehicles are stolen in London than anywhere else in the UK with 26,496 thefts being reported to the Metropolitan Police

Force in 2016 – this equates to nearly a third of all vehicles stolen (31%). Similar to the national trend, this represented a 29% increase on 2013 when 20,565 were stolen.

Outside London, the region with the highest reported number of vehicles stolen is the West Midlands with West Midlands Police reporting 5,930 thefts, a 43% increase on 2013 (4,161) and a 33% on 2015 (4,474), closely followed by West Yorkshire Police with 5,597 which recorded a 57% rise when compared to the 2013 figures.

Third spot outside of London in the vehicle theft table is the Greater Manchester police force which saw 4,999 stolen vehicles in 2016. Fourth was Essex on 3,623 and Thames Valley Police was fifth with 2,799.

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RAC Insurance director Mark Godfrey said: “Unfortunately, these figures show a very unwelcome rise in the theft of vehicles from much lower numbers in 2013. Technology advances in immobilisers, keys and car alarms had caused the number of vehicle thefts to decrease significantly from more than 300,000 in 2002*** but sadly they have now increased after bottoming out in 2013 and 2014.

“We fear thieves are now becoming more and more well equipped with technology capable of defeating car manufacturers’ anti-theft systems. This is bad news for motorists as it has the effect of causing insurance premiums to rise at a time when they are already being pushed up by a variety of factors,

not least the recent change to the discount rate for life-changing personal injury compensation claims and the rises in insurance premium tax.

“Drivers can also take certain steps to reduce the likelihood of their vehicle being stolen, for example parking in well-lit areas, not leaving anything valuable on view inside and, of course, never leaving the keys in the ignition when they’re not in the car, something that tends to happen on cold mornings when de-icing vehicles.

“In addition, anti-theft devices such as steering wheel locks which were popular in the 1980s and early 1990s are starting to make a comeback as they are still a very effective visible deterrent. This is quite ironic as they were replaced a number of years ago by alarms and immobilisers, which until now, offered better theft prevention.

“Telematics – or black box – technology is another potentially useful weapon in the fight against car theft. We have seen several instances where we have been able to track stolen vehicles using RAC Telematics devices and have even helped the police recover vehicles successfully.”



[Watch video on YouTube here](#)

The RAC is a leading player in the telematics or ‘black box’ field providing businesses with the capability to monitor the health of the vehicles in their fleets as well driver behaviour to better control costs. In addition, RAC Black Box Car Insurance offers motorists, particularly young drivers, affordable insurance policies.

[RAC Black Box Car Insurance](#) works via a matchbox-sized device which tracks speed, braking and acceleration along with where and when the policyholder drives in order to calculate how safe they are through a Driver Score. Unlike some telematics policies, there are no curfew or mileage limits so the policyholder is free to drive when, where and how far they like.

The RAC telematics black box is fitted free of charge in approximately an hour at a time and location convenient to the policyholder. The telematics box also includes the RAC's patented accident detection technology, which correctly detected 92% of accidents in Transport Research Laboratory tests, even at speeds as low as 5mph, in contrast to most other boxes on the market which identify around 50%.

For further information about RAC Black Box Car Insurance visit www.rac.co.uk/blackbox or call 0330 1591 042.

Notes to Editors

* RAC Insurance made a freedom of information request to all 44 British police forces about: theft of vehicles, theft from vehicles and vandalism of vehicles. Three forces – Sussex Police, South Wales Police and Police Scotland did not provide data. The full data table can be downloaded from the bottom of this page

** Crime in England and Wales figures compiled by the Office of National Statistics show there were 92,800 vehicle thefts in 2016.

*** Office of National Statistics as quoted in www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/transport/11558743/Number-of-cars-stolen-in-the-UK-falls-to-48-year-low.html

About the RAC

First formed in 1897 the RAC has been looking after the needs of its members and championing the interests of motorists for 120 years.

Today it has more than eight million members and is one of the UK's most progressive motoring organisations, providing services for both private and

business motorists. Whether it's roadside assistance, insurance, buying a used car, vehicle inspections and checks, legal services or up-to-the-minute traffic and travel information – the RAC offers a solution for all motoring needs. The RAC is committed to making motoring easier, safer, more affordable and more enjoyable for drivers and road users.

The RAC is the motorist's champion and campaigns to support the interests of its members and UK motorists at a national level. This includes voicing concerns about the increasing cost of motoring, particularly the price of fuel and the high level of tax levied on it, advancing levels of road safety, and supporting the needs of all drivers, from young to old.

The RAC's annual [Report on Motoring](#) – first published in 1989 – provides a clear insight into the concerns and issues facing today's motorists.

For the very latest news on UK fuel prices, check [RAC Fuel Watch](#) or follow [#racfuelwatch on Twitter](#). RAC Fuel Watch is a comprehensive guide to the latest UK unleaded petrol and diesel prices – both at the wholesale level and at the pump. RAC Fuel Watch analyses how prices changed through the previous month and compares the most recent prices with those from three, six and 12 months before.

Key facts:

- RAC patrols fix four out of five vehicles at the roadside and on average within 30 minutes
- RAC vans carry more than 500 parts and tools to get members' vehicles going again
- 92% of members would recommend RAC Rescue to their friends and family

Contacts



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