



Watch Your Car

TEXAS AUTO BURGLARY & THEFT PREVENTION AUTHORITY

2011 FACT SHEET

BACKGROUND

Established by the 72nd Texas Legislature in 1991, the Texas Automobile Theft Prevention Authority (ATPA) became the first statewide effort to reduce auto theft. The 80th Legislature amended the ATPA mission in House Bill 1887 to also emphasize reducing vehicle burglaries.

The resulting agency, the Texas Auto Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority (ABTPA), is charged with assessing automobile burglary, theft, and economic theft (burglary or theft committed for financial gain) in Texas, analyzing the methods and providing financial support to combat the problems.

In 2009, the ABTPA became part of the newly established Texas Department of Motor Vehicles.

to raise public awareness of vehicle theft and burglary and implement education and prevention initiatives.

FUNDING

ABTPA is funded by a legislatively mandated annual assessment of \$1 for each vehicle per insurance policy. The fee is paid by individual policyholders and collected by the insurance companies.

For FY 2011, ABTPA funded 28 grants to local law enforcement agencies totaling \$13,390,000. Funded programs are currently located in counties, which account for 90 percent of the state's theft problem.

COMMITTEES

The Insurance Fraud Committee comprises representatives from insurance companies, Office of the Attorney General, Texas Department of Insurance, and law-enforcement agencies who address the growing problem of insurance fraud.

The Committee identifies goals that address issues relating to vehicle theft "give-ups or walkaways," arson, VIN switches, and insurance fraud.

The Grantee Advisory Committee

considers matters of concern to both grantees and the ABTPA, leveraging the experience, knowledge, and legal insight of law enforcement professionals to address the problem of auto theft.

Since ABTPA's inception, vehicle theft rates in Texas have been reduced by 70 percent. This translates into lower automobile insurance rates for all Texas drivers.

ORGANIZATION

ABTPA consists of 7 Board members appointed by the Governor to represent law enforcement, consumers, and the insurance industry. Through the guidance of the Board of Directors, the ABTPA has been able to continually reduce the incidence of auto thefts.

ABTPA has fostered a statewide cooperative network of law enforcement groups, prosecutors, insurance industry representatives, local tax assessor-collectors, and concerned citizens to combat vehicle theft and burglary through enforcement, prevention, public information, and education initiatives.

In addition to providing guidance and oversight, ABTPA awards financial grants to agencies, organizations, and concerned parties in an effort

2009 QUICK FACTS

- 76,617 vehicles were stolen in Texas.
- The economic loss owing to vehicle theft equaled \$738,487,759.
- 66% of those vehicles reported stolen were recovered.
- 285,501 burglaries from motor vehicles (including vehicle parts) occurred.
- The economic loss from motor vehicle burglaries equaled \$220,315,208.
- The motor vehicle theft rate in Texas was 309.2 for every 100,000 persons.
- Over the last 20 years, ABTPA has funded and managed 570 grants totaling over \$239 million.

Fact Source: Texas Department of Public Safety, Uniform Crime Reporting, 2009



The Border Solutions Committee, a bi-national committee established by the ABTPA in 1992, fosters communication with Mexico to reduce stolen vehicles on both sides of the border.

BORDER INITIATIVES

Border Auto Theft Information Center (BATIC) was established in 1994 to assist in the recovery of stolen vehicles from the U.S. and Mexico. BATIC provides information to U.S. and Mexican law

enforcement personnel regarding stolen vehicles via its 1-800 toll-free number. Since its inception, BATIC has received 2,063,501 inquiries and recovered 30,246 stolen vehicles estimated at \$406,673,452.

Border Partners, an initiative of the Border Solutions Committee, assists Mexican and U.S. law-enforcement agencies in recovering stolen

vehicles in the El Paso–Juarez area. Authorities on both sides of the border access the same database of stolen vehicles and jointly investigate and prosecute auto thieves.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

The long-running *Watch Your Car* campaign has not only increased Texans’ awareness of vehicle burglary and theft, but provided grantees with a coordinated theme, operational plan, and materials for theft-reduction and education.

As part of the *Watch Your Car* initiative, the “You Hold the Key” campaign increased understanding among Texans that leaving doors unlocked and keys in the ignition results in roughly 50,000 stolen vehicles in Texas every year. Stolen vehicles, the campaign reminds drivers, is a “gateway” to other crimes.



YOU HOLD THE KEY

In 2009, the ABTPA launched “You Are Being Shadowed,” a public awareness campaign that

stresses wherever Texans go, car thieves are also there burglarizing and stealing vehicles. The initiative has won multiple awards including a 2010 Bronze Telly and a 2010 PACE Competition Region II Award.

Fully 94% of ABTPA appropriations is expended on grant related activity; only 6% is earmarked for administrative costs, including ABTPA personnel in the TxDMV, an attorney in the OAG, and staff for the Help End Auto Theft (H.E.A.T.) vehicle registration program in the DPS.

TRADEMARKS

In January 2010, the United States Patent and Trademark Office awarded ABTPA registered service marks for the “Watch Your Car” logo and design and for the “You Hold the Key” logo.

These logo/marks are used for promoting public awareness of the need for vehicle theft and vehicle burglary prevention. Any entity currently using the “Watch Your Car” and/or “You Hold the Key” logos should obtain official permission to use either graphic.

SUMMARY

ABTPA, with administrative support offered by the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV), has fostered a statewide cooperative network of law enforcement groups, prosecutors, insurance industry representatives, local tax assessor-collectors, and concerned citizens to combat vehicle theft and burglary by means of enforcement, prevention, public information, and education initiatives.

GATEWAY CRIMES ASSOCIATED WITH AUTO THEFT

Auto theft is just the first step leading to serious criminal activity, including:

- **Drug related crimes**
- **Gang related crimes**
- **Insurance fraud**
- **Domestic crimes**
- **Robbery**
- **Terrorism**
- **Violent crimes**



Texas Department of Motor Vehicles

HELPING TEXANS GO. HELPING TEXAS GROW.

To learn more, visit www.txwatchyourcar.com or call (800) CAR-WATCH.