

4 TIPS FOR PREVENTING BIKE THEFTS

Courtesy of SDPD Officer Larry Hesselgesser

1. Choose a lock based on your needs

Any bike lock can really only keep honest people honest. Just like car thieves, professional bike thieves have ways to get the bike they want. A small, lightweight cable lock is usually good enough for quick mid-ride stops at local coffee shops. If you're leaving your bike unattended all day while you're at work or school, you would be better off investing in a more heavy duty lock. U-Locks are a solid choice as they are not too big to carry but offer a decent amount of protection..



2. Lock your bike frame AND wheels to an immovable object

For maximum security, your cable lock or chain should be long enough to wrap around the bike's frame, both wheels, and whatever you are locking your bike to. If you can't include both wheels, then wrap the lock or U-Lock around the frame and the front wheel. Many opportunistic thieves will avoid removing the rear wheel. Using a U-lock and cable provides the most secure and versatile way to lock up every major part of your bike. Lock your bike to an enclosed object that won't let the lock be slipped off. Ideally, use a bike parking rack, if available. If you have to use a free-standing pole, such as a parking meter or sign post, be sure that it's high enough or bulky enough that your bike and lock can't just be lifted right over the top.

3. Choose a location that offers protection with visibility

Choosing a good location to leave your bike unattended can be a trade-off situation. If you choose a secluded, out-of-the way location, then it might be less likely to be noticed. However, a secluded location provides a thief a better place to work on taking your bike without being noticed by a passing law enforcement officer or Good Samaritan. Well lit (night) heavily travelled areas make for a good balance. Finally, use your lock even when your bike is parked in your own garage at home. Garage doors accidentally left open have offered opportunistic thieves an easy target.

4. Keep a record of your bike and the serial number

Find the serial number of your bicycle, and make a note of it in your records at home. Keep a picture of the bike with your records, too. The serial number of a bike is usually stamped on the underside of the bottom bracket shell--this is the part of the bike frame where the pedals connect.

There are several online resources available (some free and some paid) that let you register your bike's serial number, and report it as stolen if necessary. Check out the [National Bike Registry](#) or [BikeRegistry.com](#).

In the unfortunate event that your bike is ever stolen, the serial number can help get your bike back. Many law enforcement agencies have stolen recovered bicycles that have no record and must be auctioned off after a certain amount of time has passed, usually 90 days. If the police cannot prove the bike is yours they will have a difficult time retrieving it for you in the event you find it in someone else's possession. Online secondary sellers like Craigslist are a good place to post your stolen bike and to check if someone is trying to re-sell it.