

STATE OF ARIZONA  
ARIZONA AUTOMOBILE  
THEFT AUTHORITY  
WWW.AZWATCHYOURCAR.COM



**NEWS RELEASE**  
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## HOT WHEELS: VEHICLE THEFT CONTINUING TO DECLINE

**PHOENIX** – *Hot Wheels 2009*, the National Insurance Crime Bureau’s (NICB) companion study to its popular Hot Spots auto theft report, examines data reported to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and determines the vehicle make, model, and model year most reported stolen in 2008. See the full report at [www.nicb.org](http://www.nicb.org).

For 2008, the most stolen vehicles\* in Arizona were:

1	Dodge Ram Pickup	2004
2	Honda Accord	1994
3	Honda Civic	1995
4	Ford F150 Pickup	1997
5	Ford F250 Pickup	2003
6	Nissan Sentra	1994
7	Toyota Camry	1990
8	Ford F350 Pickup	2006
9	Chevrolet 4x2 Pickup	2000
10	Chevrolet Extended Cab 4x2 Pickup	2004

Certain models of older cars and trucks are popular with thieves because of the value of their parts. Frequently, the parts can be stripped from a car at a chop shop and sold for at least twice as much as the value of the vehicle on the used car market. Newer models are also more difficult, but not impossible to steal thanks to anti-theft technology incorporated by the manufacturers.

Although the final numbers have not yet been released, the preliminary 2008 FBI Uniform Crime Report (UCR) shows that vehicle theft across the U.S., is on pace to record a decrease of 13.1 percent from 2007 numbers. That would make 2008 the fifth consecutive year of declining vehicle thefts. Moreover, if the preliminary figures hold total thefts for 2008 would be below 1 million vehicles—the lowest annual total in over 20 years.

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“This is great news for vehicle owners, law enforcement and the insurance industry,” said Joe Wehrle, NICB’s president and chief executive officer. “It takes years of sustained effort to deliver the kinds of reductions that we are enjoying today. NICB joins with our member companies in acknowledging the great work performed by law enforcement and our investigators in the fight against vehicle theft.

“Comprehensive legislation, aggressive enforcement and rigorous prosecution are the three essential components to a winning crime control program. NICB is proud to contribute to each of those areas through our national legislative affairs program and our network of experienced investigators,” Wehrle said.

“As NICB’s *2009 Hot Wheels* Report reflects, older make and model vehicles and pickup trucks dominate Arizona’s most frequently stolen vehicles list and remains a costly drain on our economy as well as a tremendous hassle for victims,” stated Ann Armstrong, AZ. Automobile Theft Authority (AATA) Acting Executive Director.

The AATA reports Arizona experienced a 12.25% decrease in vehicle thefts in 2008; the sixth consecutive year for a drop in stolen vehicles. “Whether your vehicle appears on the *Hot Wheels* list or not, the AATA recommends all vehicle owners remain diligent in protecting their vehicles from theft and/or burglary,” Armstrong said.

The AATA encourages all Arizona residents to take extra precautions to secure their vehicles through a “layered approach” to protection. The more layers on your vehicle, the tougher it is to steal.

### **Layer #1 -- Common Sense**

- Lock your car & always take the keys with you
- Park in well-lit areas
- Never leave your vehicle running and unattended
- Do not leave valuables in plain view - lock merchandise in the trunk. If you do not have a trunk, keep packages covered and out of sight.
- Do not hide a spare set of keys in the car - the pros know where to look
- If you have a garage, use it

### **Layer #2 -- Visible & Audible Warning Devices**

The second layer of protection is any device that can be SEEN or HEARD and alerts thieves that your vehicle is protected. Some popular examples include:

- Audible alarms, steering wheel locks, brake locks
- The AATA’s FREE Watch Your Car Program
- Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) etching on vehicle windows – visit the AATA’s website ([www.azwatchyourcar.com](http://www.azwatchyourcar.com) – Events page) for a list of free events in the community.

### **Layer #3 -- Immobilizing Devices**

This third layer of protection is a device which prevents thieves from bypassing your ignition and hot-wiring the vehicle. Some popular devices include:

- Kill switches
- Starter, ignition and fuel disablers
- Smart keys
- High security locks & keys
- Fuse cut-offs

### **Layer #4 -- Tracking Devices**

The final layer of protection is a tracking device which emits a signal to a police or monitoring station when the vehicle is reported stolen. Tracking devices are very effective in helping authorities recover stolen vehicles.

For additional information about the Arizona Automobile Theft Authority and the Watch Your Car Program, call 1-888-668-4433 or visit the website at [www.azwatchyourcar.com](http://www.azwatchyourcar.com).

For complete information on the *Hot Wheels 2009*, please visit [www.nicb.org](http://www.nicb.org).

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