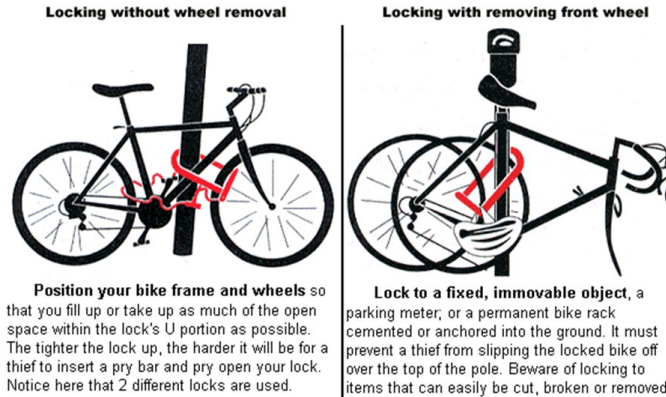


- Ask other cyclists and bike shop personnel where the high-risk areas in town are, so you won't make the mistake of parking your bike there.
- At home, store your bicycles inside. If kept in a garage, leave the door closed and store the two wheelers out of sight (consider locking them, too); because you never know who might cruise your neighborhood looking for valuables.
- When stopped, if you can't take your bicycle inside, always use your lock. If you don't have a lock and you have to go inside without your bicycle, park it near the window so you can see it. But also make it impossible to ride by removing the front wheel and bringing that in with you. Or, keep a strong elastic (rubber band) wrapped around your handlebar and pull it out and over your brake lever to lock on your front brake. Or, if you have a derailleur drive train, lift the chain off the chaining. Or run your helmet strap through the rear wheel and frame and buckle it. If a thief tries to grab your disabled bike, hop on, and ride it, he'll crash and you can grab your bike.
- Always lock your bicycle in a safe area and to an unbreakable and immovable object being certain to secure the frame and both wheels. If you must park in a high risk area, use two good locks, but different types, such as a U-lock (called a D-lock in some countries) and a quality chain-type lock like Kryptonite's impenetrable Fahgettaboudit lock shown at the top of this page, or their New York Chain lock. This arrangement thwarts thieves prepared to only attack U-locks. See the diagrams for instructions on locking with and without front wheel removal.
- Take with you any easily-removed accessories and components such as pumps, cycle computers, lights, seat bags, quick-release seat and seat post, etc. You can also purchase locking quick releases to safeguard your wheels, such as Delta Cycle's [Hublox Security Skewers](#) which require a unique key that only comes with the skewers.
- To reduce the risk of becoming a target, never tempt thieves by leaving your bicycle locked for long periods such as overnight, or securing it in a predictable fashion, such as putting it in the same bicycle rack every day.
- Mark your bicycle so that you can easily prove it's yours. Some fire station or police departments sell bicycle licenses, which is one way to label your bicycle. There are links to online registries. You can also simply write your name on a piece of paper and slip it inside the handlebars. Or write your name underneath your seat with an indelible marker.



These graphics are courtesy of Kryptonite - [www.kryptonite.com](http://www.kryptonite.com)

### Mission Police Station Investigations

Emergency  
911

If you are in need of police assistance and it is not

an emergency dial  
(415) 553-0123

Mission Police Station  
(415) 588-5400

Prepared by Insp Steven Pomatto

Mission Police Station SIT

San Francisco Police Department

630 Valencia Street

San Francisco, CA 94110

415-588-5427

[www.sfpd.org](http://www.sfpd.org)

Information provided by

SFSU Crime prevention Unit

San Francisco Police Department

# PREVENTING BICYCLE THEFT



Mission Police Station Investigations

San Francisco Police Department

630 Valencia Street

San Francisco, CA 94110

415-588-5400

A bicycle worth riding is worth keeping! You can protect your bike from theft and discourage a thief with the proper precautions.

## CHOOSING A LOCK

Do not be fooled by a manufacturer's claims of a "burglar proof lock." There is no lock that will withstand a forceful attack for any length of time. Be leery of cheap locks. Remember, you get what you pay for, so take your time and shop around. You may have to pay a few dollars more, but it is worth it.

Use the suggestions below to help make your selection.

1. Never forget, the most ingenious locking device is still only a deterrent. Resistance to cutting or forcing is directly proportional to the thickness of the padlock shackle, cable, or chain. Buy the best lock that you can afford.
2. A good padlock should have at least a 9/32 inch hardened alloy steel shackle. If the steel is hardened, the word "hardened" will be stamped on the shackle. If more security is desired, a padlock with a larger shackle should be purchased.
3. The shackle of the lock should be secured at both the "heel and toe." To find out if it is, look at each side of the shackle. If the double locking system is employed, you will find an indentation on each of the shackles.
4. Ensure the locking mechanism in the padlock is of "pin-tumbler" construction.

## CHOOSING A CABLE OR CHAIN

Either one will give you the ability to secure the bike frame as well as both wheels simultaneously and the reach you need to anchor your bike to a wide range of immovable objects. They also save money by allowing you to lock up two bikes with a single set. However, neither will give adequate protection if lacking in strength.

1. If you chose a chain, obtain the heaviest you can comfortably carry. Remember the thicker the steel, the more protection it affords. A chain using 3/8 inch or greater alloy steel is the best.

2. Chains should be constructed of "hardened alloy steel" and be long enough to thread through the front wheel (threading through both wheels is preferable), the frame of the bicycle and around a fixed object. Hardening makes the chain resistant to sawing or cutting with bolt cutters.
3. Examine the chain for welding link construction. A non-welded or twist link chain can be easily defeated by opening a link with a spreading tool.
4. For maximum security, buy a chain that is not hardened all the way through. Sometimes it is possible to break a 100% hardened chain with a hammer blow. With a non-hardened inner core, breaking the chain with a hammer or cutting it with bolt cutters is made difficult; however, the hardened outer jacket still protects the chain from the hacksaw.
5. If you select a cable, inspect it closely. Some manufacturers try to cut costs by giving you less steel and hiding the fact with a thicker vinyl coating. The coating "magnifies" the inner core, making it appear larger than it really is.
6. Also check the cable to ensure that the loop clamps are not crimped around the vinyl coating. The clamps should be crimped to bare cables. If not, the clamp could be heated causing the vinyl beneath to melt. The clamp could then become loose, and the loop could be opened.
7. Cables of 7/16 inch diameter or greater provide excellent protection. Cables smaller than this could be defeated easily with ordinary wire cutters.

## CHOOSING A HIGH ALLOY STEEL LOCK

Fortunately there are new types of locks, shaped like huge padlocks, designed to stop tools used by thieves. The U-shaped locks are made with 1/2" thru-hardened alloy steel to prevent cutting, sawing, or smashing.

1. A hardened chain or cable with the same size padlock can provide a degree of security for an inexpensive bike used in a low crime area. An expensive bike, however, needs the protection of a high security lock, regardless of where it is parked. As a general rule, you should always consider the value of your bike when purchasing any type of lock.

## HOW TO LOCK YOUR BIKE

For the greatest protection, remember that the following steps are as important as the locking device that you buy.

1. Most thefts are crimes of opportunity; reduce this opportunity and you reduce crime. Remember, a thief does not like crowds, so park your bicycle where there is a high degree of pedestrian traffic. If someone does try to rip you off, chances are he/she will be seen by a passers-by.
2. If you must ride at night, park your bike in a well lit and well traveled area.
3. Always attach your bike to an immovable bike rack to prevent thieves from carrying it off. Make sure that the bike cannot be taken merely by lifting the chain or cable over the fixed rack. Do not lock your bike to a sign pole that can be lifted. Always check that poles are secured to the ground or concrete sidewalks.
4. Position the lock as high off the ground as you can so it is difficult to gain leverage by bracing on leg of a bolt cult against the ground. This will also reduce the likelihood of anyone trying to smash the lock open or pry it open. If possible, keep the lock high on the bike closing the shackle around some portion of the bike, such as the handlebar or seat support.
5. Always try to anchor both wheels as well as the frame with your chain or cable. Thieves will willingly steal part of your bike as well as the whole thing.
6. If you do not lock your bike do not leave it. Turning your back on an unlocked bike is an open invitation to lose it. It only takes a second to take a bike!

## INSURANCE

The best locking devices are not an absolute guarantee against the determined, tool-equipped thief. While care in locking gives a high degree of protection, insurance is still a sound investment when you own a highly priced bicycle.