

**For Immediate Release**

**Auto thefts down, organized crime involvement up: List of top ten stolen vehicles highlights need for renewed efforts to combat auto theft and export of stolen vehicles**

Toronto, ON – December 9, 2009 – Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC) released its annual list of the most frequently stolen vehicles today. While a Honda Civic held on to the top spot, the appearance of high-end models like the Cadillac Escalade on the list reflects the increasing involvement of organized crime in auto theft.

The top ten stolen vehicles are:

1. 2000 Honda Civic SiR 2-door
2. 2003 Cadillac Escalade ESV 4-door AWD
3. 1999 Honda Civic SiR 2-door
4. 2006 Chevrolet/GMC Trailblazer SS 4-door 4WD
5. 2002 Cadillac Escalade EXT 4-door AWD
6. 2005 Cadillac Escalade ESV 4-door AWD
7. 1997 Mitsubishi Eclipse Spyder 2-door
8. 2000 Audi S4 Quattro 4-door
9. 2006 Hummer H2 4-door AWD
10. 2005 Cadillac Escalade 4-door 4WD

"We're seeing two very different forms of auto theft," said Rick Dubin, Vice-President, Investigations, IBC. "One type of thief is just looking for a car that's easy to steal, with no approved anti-theft electronic immobilizer, which can be used for transportation, stripped for parts or used to commit other crimes. The other type of thief goes after newer, high-end vehicles. Although these are harder to steal, sophisticated organized crime rings can make a strong profit by shipping them overseas, chopping them for parts, or changing their vehicle identification numbers (VINs) and selling them to unsuspecting consumers."

Although many high-end four-wheel drive vehicles like the BMW X6, Toyota RAV4 and Lexus RX350 don't appear in the top ten, thieves are stealing them in greater numbers than ever before. There is a demand for vehicles like these in Ghana, Nigeria, Dubai, Lebanon, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Organized criminals are shipping the vehicles overseas, and as a result, the recovery rate for stolen vehicles in Canada continues to decline, even though there are fewer thefts in total.

Auto theft by the numbers:

- In 2008, auto theft cost Canadian insurers \$465 million, which averages out to about \$30 per auto insurance policy.
- According to Statistics Canada, 125,271 vehicles were stolen in Canada in 2008, a drop of 15% from 2007.
- In 2009, IBC investigators working in partnership with law enforcement stopped 300 stolen vehicles from leaving Canadian ports and repatriated 72 vehicles from abroad, with a total value of approximately \$11 million.

"While it's encouraging that we're seeing fewer thefts, today the impact of auto theft goes far beyond stolen cars," said Dubin. "Auto theft kills and injures innocent Canadians every year. It threatens our safety and security because auto theft funds organized crime and possibly terrorism. Fortunately, there is legislation before the Senate that will take much-needed steps to curb this growing threat."

Bill C-26 recognizes motor vehicle theft as a distinct and serious offence under the Criminal Code, rather than as a simple property crime. It targets auto theft re-offenders who are involved in organized crime and engage in this dangerous activity purely for profit. The bill is comprehensive in addressing the common activities involved with organized auto theft, including property obtained by crime and possession for the purpose of trafficking, the export of stolen vehicles and tampering with vehicle identification numbers. It also provides Canada Border Services Agency with the necessary authority to identify and seize stolen vehicles or stolen vehicle parts intended for export.

"Bill C-26 received all-party support in the House of Commons, and we hope the Senate moves quickly to pass the bill so that law enforcement has the tools it needs to combat auto theft," said Dubin.

The above data regarding stolen vehicles is based on actual insurance claims information collected from companies that write almost 100% of all automobile insurance in Canada. This data can be found in the 2009 release of IBC's "How Cars Measure Up," which compares the insurance claims records of the most popular vehicle models across the country. It also lists the best and worst models according to claims made for collisions and theft. Consumers can look up the information they need before they buy a new or used car. "How Cars Measure Up" is designed to help consumers understand how theft, collision and other claims costs affect insurance premiums. For more information, visit IBC's website at [www.ibc.ca](http://www.ibc.ca) and click on "How Cars Measure Up" under Quick Links.

Insurance Bureau of Canada is the national industry association representing Canada's private home, car and business insurers. Its member companies represent nearly 95% of the property and casualty (P&C) insurance market in Canada. The P&C insurance industry employs over 110,000 Canadians, pays more than \$6 billion in taxes to the federal, provincial and municipal governments, and has a total premium base of \$39 billion.

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