

# 2025 BIKE THEFT REPORT

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Bicycle theft has evolved from joyride thefts to organized crime.

*Birgitte Furebotten*

Chief Executive Officer

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 01

#### A. Perspective

Bike theft continues to be one of the most widespread and underreported property crimes across Europe. With urbanization, increased bicycle usage, and growth in e-bike adoption, theft cases have remained high. Yet the ability to recover bikes has dramatically improved where reliable tracking technology is used.

BikeFinder reports an 80% recovery success rate for bikes equipped with its multi-signal bike tracker. At BikeFinder, our customer service team tracks bike theft every day, registering incidents, guiding riders through the recovery journey, and documenting their stories. With BikeFinder trackers deployed in 45 countries, we've gained unique

insight into theft trends, recovery success rates, and shifts in rider behavior. While our data spans multiple regions, this report focuses primarily on Europe, where the majority of BikeFinder customers are located.

#### B. Snapshot

The BikeFinder Bike Theft Report 2025 combines internal data, customer insights from cyclists and retailers, and publicly available statistics to paint a complete picture of bike theft activity. This report highlights trends, theft hotspots, bicycle categories most at risk, and recommendations for riders and actors of the bike industry.

# ABOUT US

## Company Overview

Established in **2015**, BikeFinder is the world's first tracker made especially for bikes.

### Our history

Founded in 2015, BikeFinder's roots began in the heart of Stavanger, Norway's entrepreneurial and innovative tech start-up community. After the founding team had their bikes stolen, a vision for bike security was born. BikeFinder spent 4 years perfecting the world's first tracker made especially for bikes. They combine multiple communication technologies with bike-optimized hardware design and cutting-edge IoT software development.

Over the years, BikeFinder has evolved into a technology forerunner in bike IoT, trusted by riders, retailers, and manufacturers in over 45 countries.

### Our Mission

BikeFinder aims to make cycling safer, smarter, and more secure everywhere. Through close partnerships with insurers, retailers, and manufacturers, BikeFinder is building a connected ecosystem that deters theft, simplifies recovery, and strengthens the cycling community.

Driven by the belief that technology should protect freedom, BikeFinder envisions a future where every stolen bike has a way home.



## 2025 AT A GLANCE

# 70%

of reported BikeFinder thefts occurred at the customer's home.

# 80%

of stolen bikes with an active BikeFinder tracker were recovered.

# 70%

of bikes were recovered within 5 days, on average, within the next day.

# 64%

of BikeFinder customers with a tracker have bike theft insurance through BikeFinders' partner insurance, in eligible countries.

# BIKE THEFT AT-A-GLANCE 02

**1,3M** bicycles reported stolen each year in the EU

According to the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF), around **1.3 million bicycles are reported stolen each year in the EU**, though the true figure is believed to be significantly higher due to underreporting.

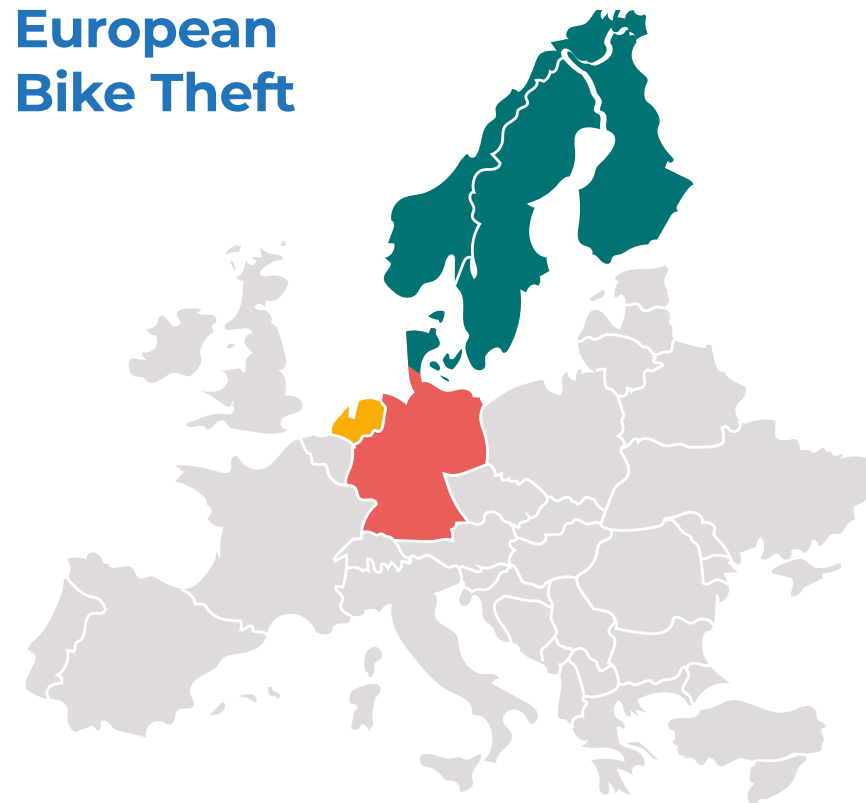
While there are no definitive European figures for bike theft in 2025 yet, due to data limitations and differences in national reporting systems, all available indicators point to a continued rise in bike theft incidents across Europe. This trend is driven in particular by the growing value and popularity of e-bikes, as well as the increasing involvement of organized theft networks.

**5 to 10%** of stolen bicycles are recovered by law enforcement

Comparing bicycle theft rates across Europe remains extremely challenging. Each country, and often each city, uses different definitions of bike theft, varies in how incidents are recorded, and shows wide differences in reporting behavior among victims. Some regions include attempted thefts, others do not; some have strong incentives to report theft (such as insurance requirements or bike registration systems), while in other areas, most thefts go unreported. As a result, countries and **cities frequently cited as having the highest recorded theft rates, such as the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, France, Germany, and cities like Amsterdam or Paris**, often appear at the top because they maintain more comprehensive reporting systems or have higher cycling volumes, rather than necessarily higher actual theft rates.

**8%** increase of bike theft rates from the previous year

## European Bike Theft



**Netherlands:** ~500,000 bikes stolen annually (approximately one per minute).

**Germany:** ~260,000 reported cases per year, with many more believed to be unreported.

**Nordics:** Cities such as Oslo, Copenhagen, and Stockholm show rising theft levels, closely linked to the increasing value of e-bikes.

**Europe-wide bike theft data is limited and fragmented.**

### Theft recovery rates

Across the EU, overall estimates suggest that **only around 5–10% of stolen bicycles are recovered by law enforcement**. In contrast, the majority of successful recoveries in many cases are achieved through the use of tracking technology.

Against this backdrop, BikeFinder's own data provides further insight. Among BikeFinder customers, **theft rates increased by 8% from 2024 to 2025**. The UK recorded the highest theft rate in the final quarter of 2025 relative to BikeFinder's customer base by country. Yet it also achieved the strongest recovery rate, demonstrating the effectiveness of bike tracking even in high-risk markets.

In addition, **the average value of stolen bikes was highest in**

**Germany and Norway**, reflecting the higher prevalence of premium e-bikes and large cargo bikes among BikeFinder customers in these markets.

**The majority of successful recoveries in many cases are achieved through the use of tracking technology.**

### Fighting bike theft

Given the difficulty of measuring the true scale of bike theft, the real problem is almost certainly larger than official statistics indicate. **Nevertheless, at BikeFinder,**

**we remain focused on what drives us: fighting bike theft with reliable tracking technology.** We work toward this every day by empowering riders to feel safe, enabling fast recoveries, and collaborating closely with partners who share our commitment to protecting bikes.

### Recovery rates

Typically below 10%, due to limited security measures, delays in reporting, and constrained police resources.



# 03 TRENDS IN BIKE THEFT

## Thieves pattern

The shift to expensive bikes and organized crime with theft lists is a core 2025 theme. It has been on the rise since post-covid, but with this low recovery rates and increasing bike value, the incentive is bigger for thieves to make a whole business out of it.

After organized crime thefts, bikes are professionally packed, stored for 1-5 days and taken abroad through rail and road transportation to Eastern European countries where they are either sold in parts or as a whole.

- + Many bikes are transported by **van within the first hour.**
- + Bikes are often moved to **indoor garages or storage units.**
- + Hiding bikes in **public bike parking** for 24 hours is common (to see if tracker responds).

Bike thefts occur year-round

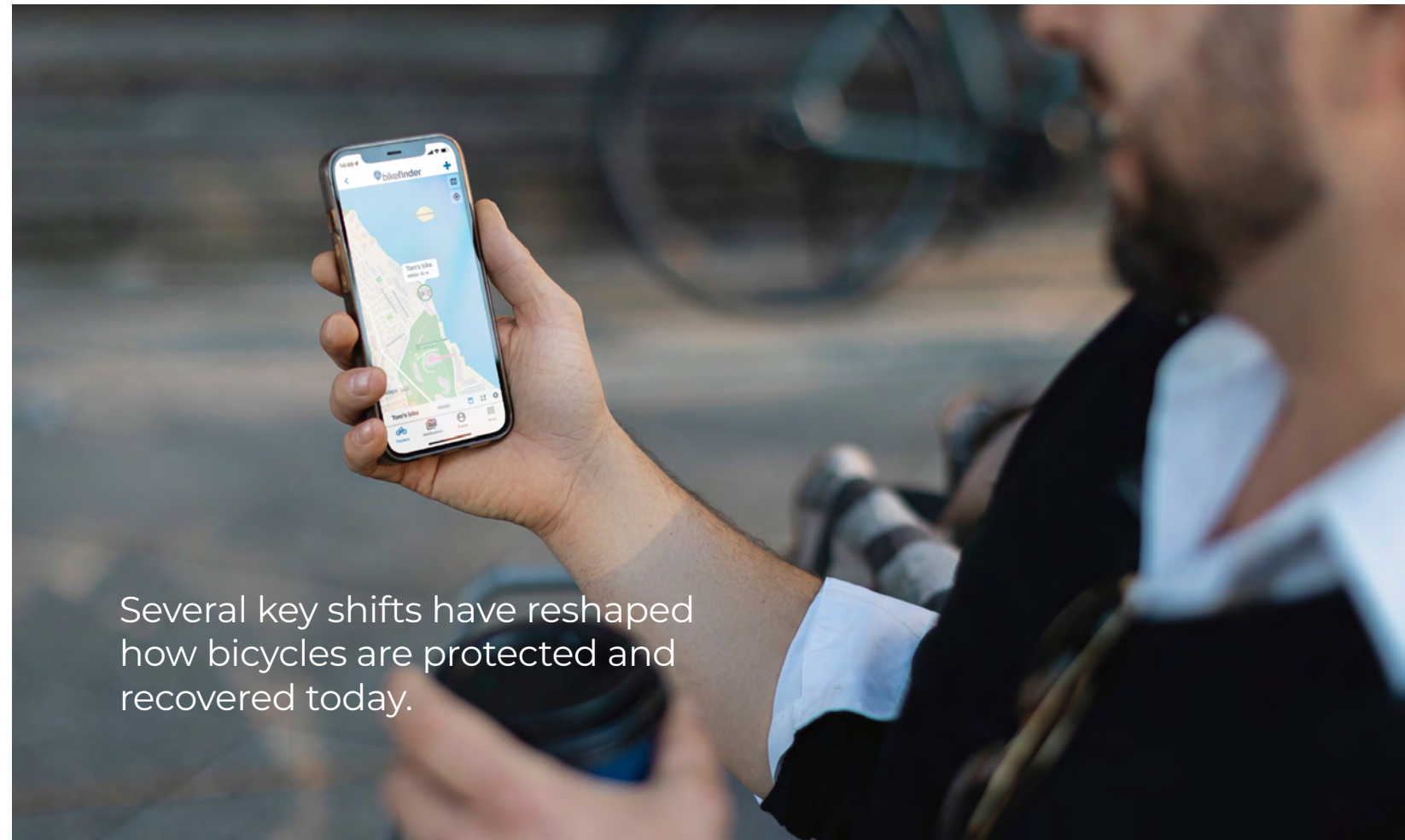


Summer 40% Spring 25% Autumn 20% Winter 15%

## Seasonal pattern

<h3 style="margin: 0;">MAY - SEP</h3> <p style="margin: 0;">Peak bicycle theft season consistently runs from May through September each year.</p>	<h3 style="margin: 0;">JUL - AUG</h3> <p style="margin: 0;">In the past five years, most bicycles have been stolen in summer.</p>	<h3 style="margin: 0;">NIGHT</h3> <p style="margin: 0;">Most bikes are stolen during the night.</p>
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Bicycle theft consistently follows a seasonal pattern driven by environmental and behavioral factors. At BikeFinder, we observe a significantly higher theft risk during the summer months, particularly in July, when many riders are on holiday and away from their bikes, and in August, when riders return from holiday. February records the lowest theft rate, at approximately one quarter of the theft rate seen in August. Despite these seasonal variations, bicycle theft occurs year-round.



Several key shifts have reshaped how bicycles are protected and recovered today.

## Stakeholder shifts



- + Authorities increasingly collaborate with real-time IoT systems. Active tracking increases police likelihood to engage.
- + Insurance companies recognize trackers as a cost-saving recovery tool.
- + Owners expect digital assistance instead of passive records, seeking direct control of their bike through real-time location data and instant in-app alerts when movement is detected.

# 04

## WHERE BIKES ARE STOLEN

### Residential Areas

High-density urban areas with limited storage space see more bike thefts.

### City Centers

High population density and long periods of unattended bikes during busy hours make city centers hot spots.

### Trains & Bus Stations

Commuters leaving bikes for extended times are frequent victims.

### Bike Racks, lockers & bike hotels

Often falsely perceived as safe, these areas can attract thieves due to the assumption of security and a multitude of bikes to choose from.

At BikeFinder, we combat bike theft daily, with **70%** of reported BikeFinder **thefts** occurring at the customers **home**.

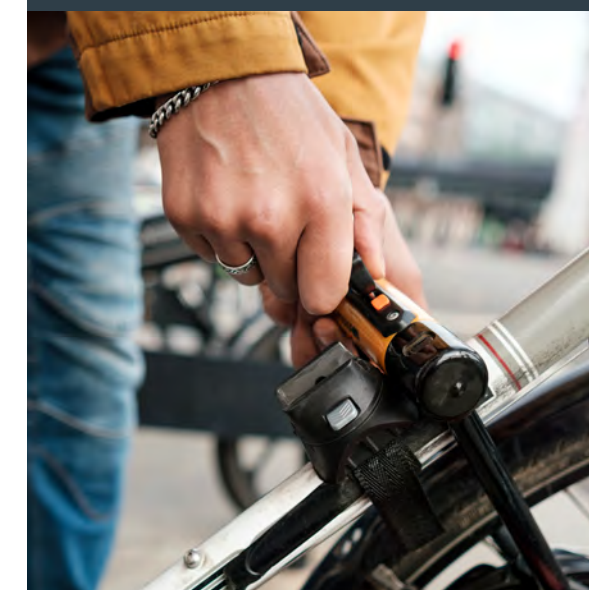
- Lise Bull-Gjersten,  
BikeFinder Operations Manager

## Why are homes the number one bike theft areas?

- + Predictable storage habits:** thieves watch for patterns. If you always store your bike in the same place, they know exactly where to strike when you're not home or during the night.
- + Exploiting structural weaknesses:** garages and sheds without robust locks or security systems are easy targets. Wooden sheds and garage doors are often vulnerable to being pried open with crowbars. Some thieves even remove door panels or unscrew hinges. Windows without reinforced glass or locks also provide easy entry points.
- + Lack of surveillance & alarm systems:** storage areas without security cameras, motion sensors or alarms make it easier for thieves to operate unnoticed. They target locations with poor lighting, where no one is watching and escape routes are easy. Dimly lit garages, sheds and backyards provide the perfect cover for thieves.
- + Picking door locks:** skilled and organized thieves can manipulate standard locks, especially those of lower quality, to gain access without leaving obvious signs of forced entry.
- + Cutting bike locks:** some thieves use advanced tools like bolt cutters, hacksaws or angle grinders to sever bike locks.
- + False sense of security in private places:** taking advantage of unlocked or poorly secured bikes, especially those left unattended for short periods on private property, where owners assume they are safe because it's private property.

Thieves are becoming more adept at bypassing security.

I locked it in my building's bike room" or "my shed was locked" yet thieves still got in.



# 05 WHICH BIKES ARE STOLEN

## Urban & Commuter Bikes

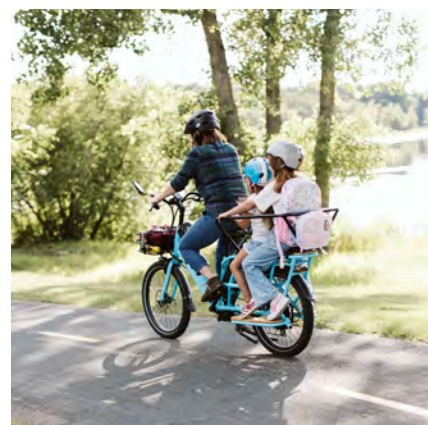
City/commuter bikes are number one stolen bikes under BikeFinder customers. They are everywhere and that makes them easy prey for thieves. They're often locked up outside all day during work hours, used daily and rarely stored securely indoors. As more riders invest in higher-quality, more comfortable bikes for everyday use, their value has been rising, making them an even bigger target.

## Cargo Bikes

Because cargo bikes are large and hard to store indoors, many owners are forced to park them outside, where they are vulnerable. Add in the growing market for stolen e-cargo bike batteries and parts, and cargo bikes become a favorite for quick, profitable theft. It is to say that cargo bikes are overrepresented amongst BikeFinder customers, because cargo bike owners see the vulnerability of their bike and thus seek more protection.

**As the value of bikes increase, they become an even bigger target for theft.**

## The most stolen bike brands in 2025 amongst BikeFinder customers

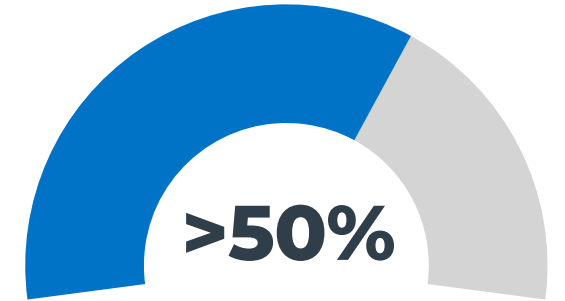


- + Riese & Müller
- + Momas
- + Specialized
- + Scott
- + Cannondale

# IMPACT OF BIKE THEFT 06

## Mobility

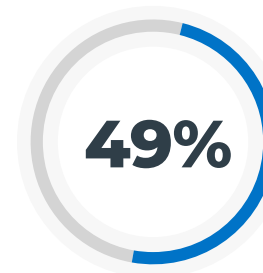
More than **50%** of BikeFinder customers rely on their bike for daily commutes, either to work or other.



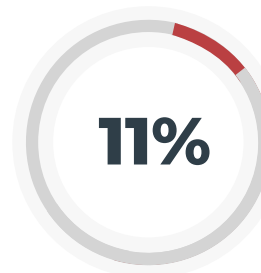
BikeFinder bikers commute

## Bike replacement

>1 Month to replace



No replacement



Almost half (49%) of all bike theft victims report that replacing a stolen bike would take over a month, about one third bought a cheaper bike than the one stolen. 11% say they wouldn't buy another bike at all and stop cycling after a theft. [\(Source: Bicycle Retailer\)](#)

For the industry, that means lost sales of higher-value bikes and accessories, plus a drag on cycling modal share in cities that are otherwise investing heavily in infrastructure.



## Retailer insights into purchasing decisions

Concerns about theft heavily influence consumer behavior, particularly for cargo and urban bikes. Owners often depend on them for daily commutes and often park them in public spaces where secure parking is limited, especially for larger models. This lack of infrastructure heightens security concerns.

### + Reluctance to invest:

Many potential buyers hesitate to spend on high-end cargo or urban bikes due to the risk of theft, leading them to delay their purchase.

### + Compromised choices:

Instead of selecting the “ideal bike” for their needs, buyers may settle for less expensive models and lower-quality options to minimize their financial risk or even forgo the purchase entirely.

### + Increased demand for security features:

More consumers specifically seek bikes with built-in security features or invest in expensive locks, tracking devices or insurance to mitigate the risk.

## Emotional costs & personal investment

At BikeFinder, we see firsthand how deeply bike theft affects people, not just financially, but emotionally. Many of our customers describe feeling wronged, violated, and frustrated that someone would take something so personal from them. Through the many anecdotal stories we receive when recovering bikes, we hear about the grief of losing their bike they've relied on for years, the anxiety of suddenly having to walk or run for transportation, and the added safety concerns that come with it.

People often share memories tied to their bike, daily routines, long rides, or milestones, making the loss feel far more personal than a missing object. For some riders, the impact is even greater because they've invested significant time and care into customizing their bike. They've spent hours selecting each component, fine-tuning details, and shaping it to fit their needs perfectly. This level of personal investment builds a strong sense of ownership, which makes the loss hit even harder when their bike is stolen.



Bike theft affects people, not just financially, but emotionally.

## Do bike trackers really work?

80%

Percentage of stolen bikes are found when using an active BikeFinder tracker.

# 07

## EFFICIENCY OF BIKE TRACKERS

### Highly effective

Bike trackers have proven to be highly effective in recovering stolen bicycles. Among BikeFinder customers with an active tracker, the **overall recovery rate is 80%**, provided that the tracker is properly installed and sufficiently charged at the time of theft.

Recovery rates are consistent across countries, with no significant differences internationally. In the last quarter of 2025, the **UK stood out in particular, achieving a recovery rate of 91%**.

### Law enforcement

Cooperation with law enforcement significantly contributes to this success. Feedback from BikeFinder customers shows that the **police are significantly more likely to take action when a tracker is installed**. Authorities are aware that the chances of successful recovery are much higher in these cases, and this collaboration plays a key role in our high recovery rates.

### Insurance and Recovery

Many insurance providers recognize the added value of bike trackers and therefore offer **more favorable premiums or conditions** to customers who have one installed. From an insurer's perspective, **a tracked bicycle has a significantly higher likelihood of being recovered**, which directly reduces both the frequency and cost of claims. This improved risk

profile allows insurance companies to price their products more competitively for customers who use a bike tracker.

BikeFinder, for example, works with insurance partners to offer combined package pricing for both the tracking device and insurance coverage, and also enables insurers to include BikeFinder directly as part of their own insurance products. This provides cyclists with additional peace of mind and protection in cases of damage following theft or partial theft of components.

As a result, riders benefit not only from enhanced security but also from lower insurance costs, creating a clear win-win situation for both cyclists and insurers.



### Recovery rates:

# 80%

+ 80% of BikeFinder customers recovered their stolen bicycle.

# 91%

+ UK stood out with a recovery rate of 91%.



# 08

## HOW TO PROTECT YOUR BIKE FROM THEFT

A tracker is the **highest chance** to **recover** your bike once stolen.

The sad reality is that your bike is never 100% safe, especially not at home. The best thing you can do is assume that thieves are always looking for opportunities and take proactive steps to outsmart bike owners.

- + **Secure storage areas:** restrict access to storage areas. Ensure that garages, sheds, basements and other storage spaces are equipped with sturdy locks. Regularly inspect doors, locks, and windows for weak spots. Avoid storing your bike in common or shared storage areas. These spaces are easily accessible to strangers and often lack proper visibility or oversight.
- + **Increase security measures:** whenever possible, enhance security with alarm systems and surveillance cameras.
- + **Always lock your bike:** even when stored inside, lock your bike to an immovable object or install wall or floor anchors for added security. Lock the frame and wheels to a solid object.
- + **Use high quality locks:** invest in robust, high-security locks to deter opportunistic theft. For extra protection, use two locks.
- + **Keep proof of ownership:** Keep important bike documents safe and accessible in case of theft. With the BikeFinder app, you can store your bike's receipt, serial number, and key details digitally.

+ **Use a tracker on your bike:** in case all these measures are surpassed, **a tracker is your highest chance to recover your bike once it's stolen.**

### Not all bike trackers are equal

Bike trackers differ in range, accuracy, independence, features, design, and support. Some rely on crowd networks, others work independently, typically with a subscription. Like a bike, a tracker is an investment. Customers shouldn't expect strong theft protection at a minimal price.



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