



## **Bosch presents the history of the car key**

May 2019

PI 10926 BBM Fi/af

### **First rotary switches in 1900**

Turn the key and drive away? Not in 1900. Starting a vehicle back then was a complex process comprising around ten different steps that only a well-trained chauffeur could master. Activating the ignition with a rotary switch was just one of them. So car thieves needed to be pretty determined. (press photo: #1844203)

### **The birth of the car key**

The year 1910 marked the birth of the car key in the broadest sense – and the start of a long history of preventing auto theft. The keys were used to lock the electric circuit for the ignition, but car drivers still needed to crank up the engine. (press photo: #1844204)

### **High-tech, 1920-style**

In the 1920s, people started locking their car doors, but they needed a separate key to do so. The ignition start switch also gradually became the norm. It not only locked the electric circuit, but also ignited the starter. Once the key was removed, the steering wheel could be locked. A matter of course today, but high-tech back then. (press photo: #1844205)

### **Royal car key**

Extravagance never goes out of style. A personalized gold key was manufactured for Queen Soraya of Iran for her Mercedes-Benz 300 SL. (press photo: #1844206)

### **Two become one**

Well into the 1960s, a number of cars had two different keys: one to unlock the door and another for the ignition. Then, a single key for door lock and ignition slowly became the norm. (press photo: #1844207)

### **A familiar shape emerges**

Around the 1960s, car keys gradually began to get their familiar look – retaining it into the 1980s and even beyond. (press photo: #1844197)

### **Central locking sees the light of day**

Familiar design, new functions: In the mid-1990s, central locking systems began their triumphant advance. Since then, drivers have no longer needed to walk around the vehicle locking each door separately. (press photo: #1844198)

### **Pricey artwork**

A fancy car needs a fancy key. The Berlin-based company Noblekey, a specialist manufacturer of luxury keys, is a past master of this art. Pictured here: an exotic gold key encrusted with precious and semi-precious gems. (press photo: #1844199)

### **Ever more convenient car keys**

The first wireless remote control keys made (un)locking a car even easier. One click and all the doors are open. If car drivers can't recall exactly where they parked their car, a wireless remote control helps them find it – a flash of the indicators when the doors are unlocked shows exactly where it is. (press photos: #1844200, #1844201)

### **Keyless entry systems**

Progress certainly didn't stop with the wireless remote control. Keyless locking systems, which debuted in production cars in 1999, allow car drivers not only to lock and unlock the car doors, but also to start the engine at the push of a button. No more ignition key – and no more ignition lock. (press photo: #1844202)

### **Watch out, there's a thief about**

With conventional keyless entry systems, the car key still needs to be carried in a jacket or suit pocket, for example. To open the door and start the engine, it communicates with the car using a radio signal in the low frequency (LF) or ultra-high frequency (UHF) range. In the fight against theft, the automotive industry is constantly refining existing systems. It's like a marathon. (press photo: #1844208)

### **Smartphones become car keys**

The Bosch keyless entry system for cars works with a virtual key stored on a smartphone. Sensors installed in the car recognize the owner's smartphone as securely as a fingerprint and open the vehicle only for them. Digital key management links the app and the vehicle via the cloud. (press photo: #1847983)

**Press photos:** #1844203, #1844204, #1844205, #1844206, #1844207,  
#1844197, #1844198, #1844199, #1844200, #1844201, #1844202, #1844208,  
#1847983

**Contact person for press inquiries:**

Annett Fischer,  
phone: +49 711 811-6286  
Twitter: @Annett\_\_Fischer

*Mobility Solutions is the largest Bosch Group business sector. In 2018, its sales came to 47.6 billion euros, or 61 percent of total group sales. This makes the Bosch Group one of the leading automotive suppliers. The Mobility Solutions business sector pursues a vision of mobility that is accident-free, emissions-free, and fascinating, and combines the group's expertise in the domains of automation, electrification, and connectivity. For its customers, the outcome is integrated mobility solutions. The business sector's main areas of activity are injection technology and powertrain peripherals for internal-combustion engines, diverse solutions for powertrain electrification, vehicle safety systems, driver-assistance and automated functions, technology for user-friendly infotainment as well as vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure communication, repair-shop concepts, and technology and services for the automotive aftermarket. Bosch is synonymous with important automotive innovations, such as electronic engine management, the ESP anti-skid system, and common-rail diesel technology.*

*The Bosch Group is a leading global supplier of technology and services. It employs roughly 410,000 associates worldwide (as of December 31, 2018). The company generated sales of 78.5 billion euros in 2018. Its operations are divided into four business sectors: Mobility Solutions, Industrial Technology, Consumer Goods, and Energy and Building Technology. As a leading IoT company, Bosch offers innovative solutions for smart homes, smart cities, connected mobility, and connected manufacturing. It uses its expertise in sensor technology, software, and services, as well as its own IoT cloud, to offer its customers connected, cross-domain solutions from a single source. The Bosch Group's strategic objective is to deliver innovations for a connected life. Bosch improves quality of life worldwide with products and services that are innovative and spark enthusiasm. In short, Bosch creates technology that is "Invented for life." The Bosch Group comprises Robert Bosch GmbH and its roughly 460 subsidiary and regional companies in over 60 countries. Including sales and service partners, Bosch's global manufacturing, engineering, and sales network covers nearly every country in the world. The basis for the company's future growth is its innovative strength. At nearly 130 locations across the globe, Bosch employs some 68,700 associates in research and development.*

Additional information is available online at [www.bosch.com](http://www.bosch.com), [iot.bosch.com](http://iot.bosch.com), [www.bosch-press.com](http://www.bosch-press.com), [twitter.com/BoschPress](https://twitter.com/BoschPress)