

Staying safe on the road: 5 essential tips to help prevent car hijacking

By [Wynand van Vuuren](#)

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According to the latest crime stats from the SA Police Service (SAPS), hi-jacking in SA is trending down slightly, but more than 5,488 vehicles were hijacked between 1 April and 30 June 2023. That's 60 vehicles a day.



Source: [Pexels](#)

How do you reduce your chances of becoming the latest statistic? Here are five tips:

1. Check whether you're being followed

If you think you're being followed, don't turn into your driveway – rather keep driving. If the car stays behind you, drive straight to the nearest police station or call your armed response company. And even if there's no one around you, don't turn into your driveway while your gate is opening.

If you can, stay on the road so that you can drive away quickly if you see a suspicious vehicle approaching.

2. Don't stop unless it's absolutely necessary

Hi-jackers are known to stop their cars suddenly, to force you to stop as well. They may also bump into your car from behind and will take your car at gunpoint if you stop or pull over. If you feel threatened, and your car is still driveable, don't stop. Don't get out. Drive straight to the nearest police station and report the incident.

3. Be aware of your surroundings

When stopped at intersections, don't check your messages or fiddle with your sound system. Stay alert to what's happening around you, and watch out for any potential threats.

Keep your windows closed and your doors locked, and leave enough room around you to pull away quickly if you need to.

4. Drive a low-risk car

King Price data shows that the Ford Fiesta and Figo, Hyundai Creta, Suzuki Almera, Audi Q3 and Chery Tiggo are among the least hi-jacked cars. Driving one of these low-risk cars could be the best safety decision you can make.

5. Avoid hi-jack hotspots

According to the SAPS data, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape see the most hi-jackings, with Olivenhoutbosch, Umlazi and Harare respectively being the hotspots in these provinces.

Data from King Price, which combines theft and hijacking, shows that the risk of your car being stolen is highest in the early evening between 6pm and 9pm, and almost double on a Saturday compared to a Monday. Avoid driving in these areas and at these times, if you can.

If a hi-jack happens, don't try to be a hero. Just give up your car and your possessions. Move slowly. Keep your hands visible, and don't look directly at the hi-jackers. If you have children in the car, tell the hi-jackers that you're going to take a few seconds to get them out. Don't get involved in verbal or physical altercations. Your life is worth more than your possessions.

And finally, make sure that your car insurance is up to date, and that you're covered for theft and hi-jack in addition to having cover for accidental damage and your liability to third parties. Check whether your policy includes emergency assistance, in case anything happens, and make sure that you've saved the number on your phone.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Client experience partner at King Price.

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