



## Anti-hijacking Tips

Hijacking is a very real and dangerous possibility in South Africa – it is no longer limited to specific areas or times of the day. Motorists must be extra vigilant - no matter what your age or what vehicle you drive, you need to remain alert and mindful of your surroundings.

→ **Stay alert** – It sounds like a cliché, but the worst thing any driver can do is let themselves be distracted while driving. Take note of vehicles around and behind you – hijackers often follow their victims – so you want to be able to pick up if a vehicle is following you. If you're unsure, do not stop, but rather drive to the nearest public place or a police station.

→ **Install a panic button** - Many anti-theft and vehicle tracking systems come with a panic button (or even automatic alert) that immediately notifies relevant parties that you're in trouble.

→ **Know when you're most at risk** - Most of us have the idea that hijackings happen 'out there' when in fact, you are most at risk near your home or workplace. Criminals know this is where people feel safe and tend to be less on guard and, therefore, easier targets.

→ **Train your kids** - One of the most terrifying situations anyone can face is a hijack situation with their children in the car. If you have young children, the best advice is to do a reputable hijack prevention course, as it teaches you how to prepare yourself and your children if you ever face the situation. The critical point to remember is that they're after the car. If you stay calm, you and your children stand a much better chance of getting away without injury, as most hijackers simply want to get away with the vehicle as soon as possible.

→ **Give them the car** - This may sound controversial, but our first instinct when someone tries to take away a car that probably cost a small fortune is to argue or resist. But it's not worth it. If you ever find yourself in this situation, surrender your vehicle and keys immediately and then try to distance yourself and the vehicle as much as possible. If they have to choose between going after the vehicle or you, they will choose the vehicle; it's what they came for.

→ **Don't stop for obstacles in the road** - Many hijackers employ a tried-and-true trick: littering deserted roads with bricks, rocks or other obstacles. If you hit one of these, don't stop if your car is still in driving condition. Make your way to a safe and populated area before checking your vehicle. Many people also get caught out doing the 'right thing' by stopping to remove these dangerous objects from the road.

→ **Take it slow** - If you're driving late at night or along quiet roads, avoid standing still at red lights, as this is the perfect opportunity for hijackers to attack. The best solution is to start slowing down long before you reach the traffic lights, giving them a chance to turn green before you must come to a complete standstill.

→ **Mind the gap** - Hijackings occur everywhere, even in the middle of traffic during the day. When you stop behind a car at a traffic light, leave room for escape. Hijackers often use traffic as an opportunity because they know you're boxed in. By leaving space behind the car in front of you, you at least have some wiggle room to escape.

