



Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office

Sheriff, Jerry L. Clayton

Media Release

Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office Working to Reduce Vehicle Theft

Will Distribute Free Steering Wheel Locks as Part of Hyundai and Kia Class Action Lawsuit

11/10/2023

Hyundai Motor America and Kia America, Inc. announced earlier this year they would be partnering up as an agreement in a class action lawsuit that was brought against both manufacturers when it was discovered that 8.3 million cars were at risk for theft. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety showed these two manufacturers reported 2.7 stolen vehicle claims per 1,000 insured vehicles in the second half of 2021. This number was nearly double the theft claim frequency for ALL other vehicle makes (approximately 1.4 per 1,000 insured) in that same time.

A nationwide trend that started on social media in 2021 only increased the theft rates. The trend showed the "Kia Boyz" demonstrating how easy it is to use a USB cord to start Kias and Hyundais and drive away with them. To help prevent the theft of these cars, the manufacturers came to an agreement to push out new security measures. Part of this agreement is the distribution of steering wheel locks to customers who own specific years and models within those makes.

To reduce thefts of these vehicles, the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office reached out to both manufacturers and requested steering wheel locks to distribute to residents in the county and received a limited supply to distribute. Due to supply limits, steering wheel locks will be given on a first-come first-served basis. If a resident owns one of the vehicles listed below, they may go to their local WCSO station to collect their free steering wheel lock (addresses also listed below). The WCSO is asking owners to have their registration information and ID available at the time of pickup.

Below are the addresses for the stations with steering wheel locks available:

Station 2: 1501 S Huron St, Ypsilanti MI 48197
Station 3: 8140 Main St, Dexter MI 48130
Station 4: 912 City Street, Manchester MI 48158
Station 5: 11560 Stony Creek Rd, Milan MI 48160
Station 6: 3040 N Prospect, Ypsilanti MI 48198
Station 7: 1055 N Zeeb Rd, Ann Arbor MI 48103

These steering wheel locks are intended to reduce the likelihood of theft and attempted theft of these makes/models. A steering wheel lock gives a visual to the potential thieves showing even if they were to break in, the vehicle is immobilized. We also encourage owners to have the security updates installed.



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The steering wheel lock we are distributing is a bar construction that has a hook on each end that attaches to the steering wheel. Once in place, the user engages the lock so the steering wheel cannot be turned. To override a properly installed steering wheel lock, time would have to be taken to either pick the lock or tools would be necessary to cut through the bar to release the steering wheel. Both would take a significant amount of time and are a deterrent to potential thieves.

Vehicles included in the wheel lock program:

Hyundai

2018-2022 Accent
2011-2022 Elantra
2013-2020 Elantra GT
2018-2022 Kona
2013-2022 Santa Fe
2013-2018 Santa Fe Sport
2019 Santa Fe XL
2011-2019 Sonata
2011-2022 Tucson
2012-2017 Velostar
2019-2021 Velostar
2020-2021 Venue
2013-2014 Genesis Coupe
2020-2021 Palisade

KIA

2011-2020 Optima
2011-2022 Sorento
2011-2021 Forte
2020-2022 Soul
2012-2021 Rio
2011-2021 Sedona
2021-2022 Seltos
2021-2022 K5
2011-2022 Sportage

Both manufacturers have also pushed out security upgrades for the listed vehicles that can be installed free of charge at your local Hyundai or Kia dealerships. For additional information on resources available to owners, please visit the links below.

- [Hyundai Motor America and Kia America Resolve Consumer Litigation in Response to Vehicle Thefts - Hyundai Newsroom](#)
- <https://ksupport.kiausa.com/ConsumerAffairs/SWLD>
- [HyundaiAntiTheft.com](https://www.hyundai.com/usa/en/anti-theft)

Additional resources:

- https://www.iihs.org/media/0e14ba17-a3c2-4375-8e66-081df9101ed2/opm7QA/HLDI%20Research/Bulletins/hldi_bulletin_38-28.pdf

Media inquiries can be directed to Director Derrick Jackson – jacksond@washtenaw.org or 734-891-2243.