



COOK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Thomas J. Dart, Sheriff

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sheriff Dart Warns Public of Spike in Thefts of Kia & Hyundai Vehicles

COOK COUNTY, IL – Cook County Sheriff Thomas J. Dart is warning the public about a dramatic rise in thefts of certain models of Kia and Hyundai vehicles. He is urging owners to take additional precautions to reduce the risk of theft.

In the past few months, the number of such unoccupied vehicles stolen has skyrocketed in Cook County, mirroring increases reported in other cities across the country. Since July 1, there have been 642 reported thefts of Kia and Hyundai vehicles in Cook County, compared to 74 during the same period last year. This represents a 767% increase.

“This is an extremely concerning trend and the public needs to know so they can be vigilant in protecting themselves,” Sheriff Dart said. “The Sheriff’s Office will continue to work closely with other law enforcement agencies and engage automakers to reduce dangerous car thefts and carjackings in Cook County.”

The increases are believed to be connected to the sharing of videos on social media that demonstrate how to start these vehicles without a key. Thieves appear to be targeting unoccupied vehicles that require a physical key, not a starter button. For more detailed information about which vehicles may be susceptible to this type of theft, owners should contact the manufacturer directly.

The Sheriff’s Office is encouraging owners of Kia and Hyundai vehicles to consider taking steps to reduce the threat of motor vehicle theft. Such measures include the installation of aftermarket immobilization devices (otherwise known as kill switches that render the vehicle inoperable without a separate key), car alarms with motion detection, steering wheel locking devices, or vehicle tracking systems.

Owners are also encouraged to fill out a consent form offered on the [Sheriff's Office website](#) that enables law enforcement agencies to more quickly obtain the cooperation of vehicle manufacturers to track stolen automobiles. Vehicle owners who have signed this consent form can also obtain stickers to display on their vehicles notifying would-be thieves that the vehicle can be tracked by investigators. These stickers are available at all Cook County courthouses.

In addition to these measures, vehicle owners should remember to take precautions such as parking in a garage or in well-lit or high-traffic areas, if possible, to discourage thieves from targeting their automobiles.