

CRIME ALERT:

Impersonation of SAPS Officials, by Criminal Syndicates, claiming the false recovery of stolen vehicles:

Please be aware of the following scam, which has been active for approximately the past year, reported to the Insurance Crime Bureau by several member companies; recovery agents and tracking companies.

Following the actual theft of their vehicles, complainants are contacted by individuals **claiming to be** members of the South African Police Services.

This “police officer” will inform the owner or complainant of the “recovery” of the stolen vehicle in question, usually geographically far away from where the case has been reported.

For instance if the vehicle was reported at Sinoville police station the “SAPS member” will inform the complainant that the vehicle was recovered in Rustenburg, or even somewhere on the Botswana or Zimbabwe border line.

The “SAPS member” is in possession of the complainants, and vehicle owner’s personal detail, as well as detail of the stolen vehicle.

The “SAPS member” will then confirm that the vehicle is at a remote location and will request a “fee” from the owner in order to move it to the nearest police impound for collection, or in some cases delivery directly back to the owner.

The explanation by the “SAPS member” will be that this fee is for a break down service to transport the vehicle back to the owner, or to the nearest pound, or that the fee will be for him to drive the vehicle back to the owner instead of booking it into the closest pound.

The “SAPS member” will also reason that once the vehicle is booked into a police impound the owner will find it difficult to get the vehicle released, but by paying the agreed fee he will bring the vehicle to the owner instead, hence saving him a lot of trouble.

The fee requested by the criminal impersonating a member of SAPS, may vary from R 1000 to R 3000 and the request will be to transfer the agreed fee to either a specific account or via e wallet, PayPal, or other money transfer options.



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The general public is not familiar with police procedure, and they are not aware that the South African Police Service will not ask a fee following the recovery of a stolen vehicle.

Some of the individuals involved in this scam have been identified, and are in fact operating from within Prison, where they are serving time for other crimes.

The criminals involved in this scam are obtaining the personal information and details of the complainants and owners of stolen motor vehicles by randomly phoning police stations, and impersonating senior officers attached to Police Head Office.

They simply request information of all vehicles reported stolen to the station during the previous 24 hours.

The information received from within our industry regarding this scam is continuously being updated and forwarded to the South African Police Service, who have established a task team to address this situation.

It has however been suggested that the South African Police Service release a press statement to warn the public in general of this scam.

It is also suggested that the SAPS send out a circular through their internal structures to station level to caution their members not to divulge case information telephonically without verifying the identity of the caller.

We recommend, that where possible, we take the opportunity to advise our Policy Holders; Brokers and any other Stakeholders to try and protect innocent individuals from falling prey to this scheme.