

Governor Phil Murphy

ICYMI: AG Platkin Announces Settlement Requiring Key Anti-Theft Upgrade

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Bipartisan Multistate Coalition Secures Latest Anti-Theft Upgrade for Certain Models

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TRENTON – Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin today announced that New Jersey co-led a coalition of 35 other states in a settlement with automobile manufacturers Hyundai and Kia for their sale of millions of vehicles nationwide that lacked industry-standard, anti-theft technology.

Under the settlement, Hyundai and Kia have agreed to:

- Equip all future vehicles sold in the United States with industry-standard, engine immobilizer anti-theft technology;
- Offer free zinc-reinforced ignition cylinder protectors to owners or lessees of eligible vehicles, including vehicles that previously were only eligible for the companies' software updates, in order to prevent thieves from starting these cars without a key;
- Provide up to \$4.5 million in restitution to eligible consumers whose cars are damaged by thieves; and
- Pay \$4.5 million to the states to defray the costs of the investigation.

“For years, Hyundai and Kia deliberately failed to include industry-standard anti-theft technology in their vehicles, contributing to a nationwide spike in auto thefts. That ends now. Today’s settlement is a key step in our ongoing efforts to prevent auto thefts – and to hold carmakers accountable for their shameful failure to take appropriate action to prevent auto thefts,” **said Attorney General Platkin**. “The settlement announced today builds on the tireless work of law enforcement leaders across the state to combat auto theft and keep our communities safe – work that has resulted in dramatic reductions in auto thefts statewide.”

Hyundai and Kia chose not to include anti-theft “engine immobilizer” technology in millions of their vehicles sold throughout the United States. An engine immobilizer prevents thieves from starting a vehicle’s engine without the vehicle’s “smart” key, which stores the vehicle’s electronic security code. According to one report, in 2015, only 26% of the vehicles Kia and Hyundai sold in the United States were equipped with engine immobilizers, compared to 96% of

the vehicles sold by other manufacturers.

Because many Hyundai and Kia vehicles did not have engine immobilizers, car thieves devised a quick and simple way to access these vehicles' ignition cylinder and start these cars without a key. This method quickly went viral in 2023, leading to a drastic increase in Kia and Hyundai vehicle thefts throughout the nation. Not only did the number of thefts explode, but many of the vehicles were used in connection with crimes and were involved in many traffic collisions. In fact, in 2023, although Hyundais and Kias made up about 6.5% of the vehicles on New Jersey roads, they accounted for roughly 19% of all auto thefts that year.

In response to the surge in thefts, Attorney General Platkin issued public consumer warnings regarding theft vulnerabilities affecting certain Hyundai and Kia vehicles and released an explainer video to educate New Jersey residents about the risk of auto theft, theft trends, and steps vehicle owners could take to protect their vehicles.

Hyundai and Kia were slow to respond to the crisis, waiting until 2023 to launch a service campaign to update the software on most of the affected vehicles. Hyundai and Kia also offered to install a zinc-reinforced ignition cylinder protector, but only for the roughly 20% of their vehicles that were ineligible for this software update. While the companies claimed that the software update was effective at preventing the viral theft method, the states alleged that the software update could be, and in fact was, easily bypassed by thieves.

As a result of the settlement, consumers with eligible vehicles can now have zinc-reinforced ignition cylinder protectors, which prevent thieves from accessing the ignition assembly, installed on their vehicle free of charge.

Eligible consumers will be notified by the companies that they will have one year from the date of the notice to make an appointment to have the zinc-reinforced ignition cylinder protector installed at their local Hyundai or Kia authorized dealerships. **Attorney General Platkin urges consumers to schedule the installation of the zinc-reinforce ignition cylinder protector as soon as possible.**

In addition, consumers who previously installed the software update on their vehicles (or were scheduled to do so) but nonetheless experienced a theft or attempted theft of their vehicle on or after April 29, 2025, are eligible to file a claim for restitution for certain theft and attempted-theft related expenses. For more information about eligibility and how to submit a claim for compensation, please visit the following:

- For Hyundai – Visit www.HKMultistateimmobilizerssettlement.com (<https://www.hkmultistateimmobilizerssettlement.com/>)
- For Kia – Visit <https://customercare.kiausa.com/SWLD> (<https://customercare.kiausa.com/SWLD>) or call (800) 333-4Kia(4542)

Connecticut, Minnesota, and New Hampshire led the multistate settlement, with New Jersey, California, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Nevada, and Washington as co-leads. The final settlement was also joined by Arizona, Colorado, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wisconsin.

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