



TRAINING ACADEMY

CK2001/036415/23

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HIJACK PREVENTION GUIDELINES:

Introduction:

It has become increasingly difficult to steal motor vehicles with all the anti-theft devices, such as immobilisers, gear-locks, etc. These steps have resulted in a dramatic increase in vehicle hijackings. The hijacker has the element of surprise and this is a concern. The increasing retrenchment and the high unemployment figures are also factors. This is easy earned money and the already well-established syndicates will buy these vehicles from the hijacker. Vehicle hijacking is an organised business, run according to business principles and based on thorough planning. Specific vehicles with specific characteristics are ordered beforehand and efforts must be made to meet the requirements of such orders. These vehicles will then be resold to the already predetermined buyer.

The hijacked vehicles that are not sold to buyers in South Africa, will be smuggled out of the country. These vehicles will be sold in our neighboring countries or trade, exchanged for drugs.

The large number of stolen and unlicensed firearms is also a concern. Most of these firearms are bought or supplied to the robbers by the syndicates. This easy access to firearms makes the robbery of a vehicle the easiest crime to commit and by far the quickest way of earning a few thousand rand.

It is obvious that vehicle hijackers are motivated by greed and an insatiable need for more and more comfort, rather than need. An insatiable hunger for power is another theme emerging in robbers. The powerbase for the latter is presented by the access to firearms. Possession of a firearm forces everybody to obey or else face the consequences.

Definition:

Vehicle hijacking forms one of the sub-categories of armed robbery and does not constitute a different crime from armed robbery. Perpetrators would consequently be charged with “**robbery with aggravating circumstances**” in court, and not with “**vehicle hijacking**”. Robbery with aggravating circumstances can be defined as the unlawful, intentional and violent removal and appropriation of movable corporeal property belonging to another. The victim’s resistance must be overcome and the property obtained using violence against the victim’s person.

If the victim is first injured by the perpetrator and then dispossessed of property while being physically incapacitated, armed robbery is likewise committed. However, the victim needs not necessarily be physically incapacitated. In the absence of actual physical violence, a threat to commit violence against the victim is sufficient. The threat of violence may be of an express or implied nature. Vehicle hijacking neatly fits the above definition, with the property involved being specifically a motor vehicle of some kind.

Your life is worth more than your vehicle.



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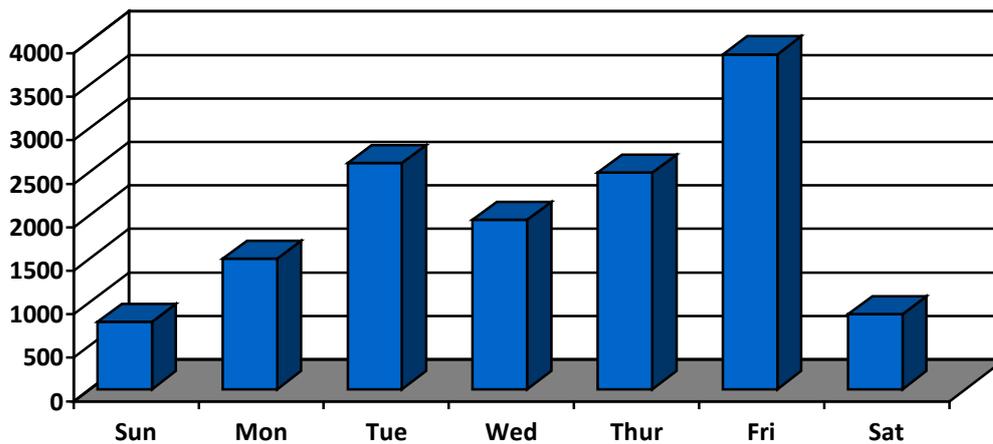
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DAYS OF THE WEEK ON WHICH HIJACKINGS OCCURRED:

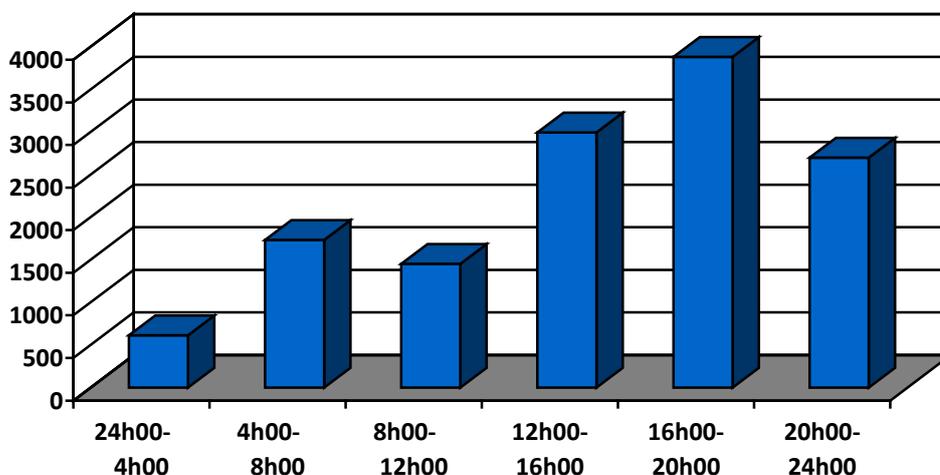
National (compiled over 12-month period)



The analysis indicated that hijackings occur every day of the week, **reaching a high on Fridays**, due to motorists being more relaxed, higher volume of vehicles on the road and traffic increasing earlier on a Friday. Weekends show a lower hijacking rate due to fewer vehicles on the road and motorists also travel at irregular times.

TIME OF THE DAY:

National (compiled over 12-month period)



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Hijacking of vehicles reached its lowest point at 02h00 in the morning. Hijackings are low during the night and very early hours of the morning, and start increasing at 06h00 due to motorists leaving home for work. More hijackings occurred from 12h00 midday and reaches a high between 16h00 and 20h00 in the evening.

Vehicles hijacked during this peak (16h00 – 20h00), may be explained by the fact that people returning from work are often tired, frustrated and not alert to potentially threatening circumstances.

Another explanation for this peak is that highways are congested with traffic, which makes it almost impossible to catch hijackers involved without air support once they have disappeared into traffic.

Weapons used during hijackings:

As it was earlier indicated, in many vehicle hijackings, firearms were used to commit the crime. Gauteng and Kwa-Zulu Natal reported the highest incidence of vehicle hijacking. The circulation of illegal firearms in South Africa is disturbing and must have a direct influence on the increase of vehicle hijackings and violent crime in general in South Africa.

The trade in stolen firearms is a lucrative industry in South Africa and the rewards seem to justify the risk of apprehension for the criminals involved. The punishment of crimes does not seem to have a deterrent effect on potential criminals anymore.

The analysis indicates that firearms most used are pistols and revolvers. A very small percentage of vehicle hijackings are committed using knives, hands, high caliber guns and shotguns.

When to Shoot:

It is noticed with great concern that there is general confusion over the issue of the public shooting and killing or wounding another person under differing circumstances. People have a responsibility to protect themselves in a situation where they need to discharge a firearm in the process of self-protection.

What exactly are the legal requirements of self-defense? The following points are important:

- The attack must be unlawful.
- The attack must be imminent or have commenced.
- The attack must not have been completed. One cannot act on grounds of self-defense for an attack committed an hour earlier.
- The defensive action must be directed against the attacker.
- The defensive action must be proportionate to the circumstances. The value of property involved and the instrument used for attack are important considerations.

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The test used by the court to determine the lawfulness of the defensive action is that of a reasonable man. The question to be asked is whether a reasonable man in the same position would have done the same thing.

In all cases where a person is killed, the matter is investigated to establish if anyone was responsible for the death. This is the point when people perceive they are being charged with murder by the SAPS and believe they cannot defend themselves against an unlawful attack without being charged. If your action is within the principles of self-defense, there is nothing to worry about.

Types of hijackings:

Freight Hijacking – A commercial vehicle is hijacked not only to secure the vehicle but also its cargo, which can be of substantial value. Frequently, the cargo is of more interest to the hijacker than the truck.

Transport Hijacking – The vehicle is taken for the express purpose of using it as transport during other crimes such as drug dealing, burglaries, bank robberies and gun running. The vehicles are probably later cannibalised for spare parts or simply dumped.

Showmanship Hijacking – A gang operates out of egotistical bravado, acting on the “this is a cool thing to be doing” rationale. Peer group pressure is very high and individuals may be coerced into more dangerous and daredevil approaches; being labeled a “sissy” if they don’t. Thus intimidation, violence and vandalism are associated with the crime. Drugs and alcohol may also be a motive as theft of the victim’s personal belongings is commonplace.

Operational Hijacking – A group formally work together in a more structured way. They usually have experience in car theft and have established contacts within the motorcar underworld that will receive and pay cash for stolen vehicles or spare parts.

Syndicate Hijacking – The most organised of all and often has international connections. A network of hijacking groups is established with the overall coordinator, syndicating out work so that he remains out of view in the same way as the drug baron uses pushers. This makes identifying and arresting the ultimate boss very difficult. Additionally, a syndicate is often backed by a lot of money, especially if there are international links and makes full use of any potential to bribe the authorities to protect their operations.

Modus Operandi used by the hijackers:

- Most hijackings take place in the driveways of residential areas. These hijackers prefer areas with accessible escape routes.
- Hijackings take place while stationed at any traffic sign or intersection.
- Hijackings take place while stationary next to the road, e.g. to answer cell phone.

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- Hijackings also occur at parking areas, or you may be followed leaving the filling station with the objective to hijack your vehicle where it is quiet.
- The hijackers sometimes use a vehicle to force the victim off the road.
- Hijackings take place at schools when dropping off / picking up children.
- Hijackings take place while the vehicle is idling when off-loading / loading passengers.
- Hijackings take place when advertising your vehicle for sale (Test drive method).
- Bogus Police or Traffic Officers also conduct hijackings (Blue light scenario).

HOW TO AVOID A HIJACK SITUATION:

Approaching and entering your driveway:

- **2km from your house strategy.** Be extra alert. Switch off the car radio and concentrate on your surroundings. If you have noticed any vehicle behind you, use the techniques you have learned during the **hijack prevention & survival course** to determine whether you are being followed.
- Remember to stop your vehicle just on the inside of the gate and select reverse whilst waiting for the gate to close. This creates confusion and may buy you a few seconds for the gate to close completely behind you.
- Check your driveway and street before you leave or enter your premises.
- Make sure your driveway is well lit and clear from shrubbery where perpetrators can hide.
- Be aware of unknown pedestrians close to your residential address – do not turn into your driveway – pass and go back later.
- Liaise with your neighbours – know them.
- Be aware of vehicles parked close to your address with occupants inside. It might be perpetrators observing the area.
- Be alert if your animals do not greet you at the gate as usual. It might be that the perpetrators over-powered them.
- Phone your home and ask for someone to make sure your driveway is safe and to open and close the gate for you.
- When returning home after dark, ensure that an outside light is on, or have someone meet you at the gate. Check with your armed response company if they are rendering rendezvous services.
- If at any time you must open the gate yourself, make sure there is nobody suspicious around and the road is clear. Stop right in front of your gate. Do not switch off the vehicle, leave the key in the ignition, get out and close the door (not creating temptation). Then open the gate. Drive in and close the gate immediately behind you.
- If you have small children in the vehicle, take the key with you (**this is the only exception**). You need the key as a “negotiating tool”. The perpetrators want your vehicle and you want your children.
- If your children are older, it is advised that they exit the vehicle with you when opening the gate so that you are all separated from the vehicle should an attack occur.



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- Check rear-view mirror to ensure you are not being followed.
- When exiting your vehicle, be cautious and aware of surrounding obstructions and shrubbery that may be concealing a hijacker.
- Never sit in your parked vehicle without being conscious of your surroundings. Sleeping in a stationary vehicle is particularly dangerous.
- When approaching your driveway, be on the lookout for suspicious vehicles / persons. This is very important as most hijackers approach their victims in home driveways.

Whilst entering your vehicle and while driving, the following should be considered:

- Have your key ready, but not visible.
- Inspect the outside and inside of the vehicle before unlocking. Check underneath your vehicle for items placed under the wheels. Also make sure nobody is hiding on the passenger side before you enter your vehicle.
- Know your destination and directions to it; and be alert should you get lost.
- Always drive with your windows closed and doors locked.
- Make a mental note of any Police Stations in the vicinity.
- **When stopping behind another vehicle, leave half a vehicle length in front of your vehicle to make an emergency escape if necessary.**
- When dropping off a passenger, make sure they are safely in their own vehicle before departing.
- Avoid driving through high crime or unfamiliar areas.
- Avoid driving late at night / early hours of the morning when the roads are quiet.
- Drive in the center lane away from pedestrians where possible.
- If possible, never drive alone.
- NEVER, EVER pick up hitchhikers or strangers. **(VERY IMPORTANT)**

Parking areas / Remote jamming:

- When parking your vehicle in a parking area / at a shopping mall, make sure your valuables are already placed in the boot. This should not be performed in full view of the public.
- Lock your vehicle and make sure the doors have locked by listening / checking the door handle, as perpetrators could have jammed your remote signal. Their objective is to steal from the vehicle once you have walked away.
- Also, upon returning to your vehicle, be aware of your surroundings. As soon as you have entered your vehicle, rather lock the vehicle yourself and don't rely on the vehicle doing it for you. Perpetrators may also jam your remote signal in this scenario, whereby they walk past your vehicle, open the boot to take your belongings.
- Most remote controls, including those for motor vehicles, gate and garage automation operate on a frequency of 433MHz.

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- When a remote-control button is pressed, it sends a message (command) on the allocated frequency to a receiver (in the vehicle) to perform an action: lock / unlock the vehicle.
- At the other end, the receiver is “listening” for a specific message that it can interpret to perform a required action.

Other situations:

- If approached by a stranger while in your vehicle, drive off if possible or use your hooter to attract attention.
- Lock your doors, close your windows and do not have bags or briefcases visible in the vehicle. Use the boot for this. Cell phone should also not be visible.
- There are times and days that these items are visible in the vehicle. It is recommended to have smash & grab film fitted to your vehicle. If you have left your stopping distance you may be able to escape.
- Be constantly on the lookout for suspicious looking characters or vehicles and do not hesitate to report them to the SAPS.
- Always be on the alert for potential danger and be on the lookout for possible escape routes and safe refuge along the way.
- **When approaching a red traffic light at night, slow down so that you only reach it when it turns green.**
- Do not take anything from people standing at traffic lights or places where they gather (job seekers on gathering points). Perpetrators are usually standing among these people.
- Make sure you are not followed. If you suspect you are being followed, drive to the nearest Police Station or any busy public area.
- If any person or vehicle in a high-risk area arouses your suspicions, treat it as hostile and take appropriate action, e.g. when approaching a red traffic light, slow down, check for oncoming traffic and if clear, drive through the intersection. A fine will be preferable to an attack. Treat stop streets in the same way. Thereafter call for assistance if necessary. Always report these incidents to the SAPS. **But remember, this is not an excuse to ignore the rules of the road. The onus will be on you to prove in a court of law that you had justifiable reason to act the way you did, and this is only in the case of real, life-threatening emergency.**
- Should a suspicious vehicle in fact be a (unmarked) SAPS vehicle, the Police must identify themselves by:
 - Use of a blue light, loudspeaker, or any other police equipment.
 - The flash of a badge through the window whilst driving is not enough.
 - The Police must go all out to let the public know who they are.
- Consider the following actions:
 - Switch on emergency lights and put your hand out the window (if possible), indicating that they should follow you. **Your intention must be very clear and understandable.**



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- By exceeding the speed limit, you are sending out a message of suspicion, e.g. stolen / hijacked vehicle, transporting stolen goods, under the influence.
- Drive to the nearest Police Station or when in doubt, the nearest busy public area.
- Always have your identity document and driver's license in your possession as well as a pen and notebook to take necessary notes.
- If possible, avoid driving in the dark. Hijackers may stage a minor accident, for e.g. If your vehicle is bumped from behind and you do not feel comfortable with the individual involved in the situation, indicate he / she must follow you and drive to the nearest Police Station or any busy public area for help.
- Never open your vehicle window or door for any stranger. If a suspicious person is near your unoccupied vehicle, do not approach the vehicle. Walk to the nearest public area and ask for assistance.
- If you encounter obstacles in the road, e.g. rocks, tyres, do not get out of your vehicle to remove them. Reverse and drive away in the opposite direction.
- Do not stop to eat or rest on deserted roads.
- Do not leave your vehicle unattended at a filling station.
- Cell phones should be carried on the body. Perpetrators will not allow you to remove your cell phone and valuables from the vehicle during an attack.

WHAT IS VEHICLE CLONING:

Cloning a car is the equivalent of identity theft. It simply entails stealing a legitimately owned vehicle's identity. Cloning refers to the exact duplication or copy of a car which was legally bought and registered. According to the SAICB, a cloned vehicle, as a term, is used to describe a car that has had its identity changed, usually because it is a stolen or hijacked vehicle.

Vehicle Cloning – How is it done?

Criminals have become experts in getting rid of a vehicle's original identity number and information simply by cloning it. The cloning of vehicles happens when criminals transfer the stamped VIN number, the printed VIN sticker and the stamped engine numbers from legally owned vehicles to illegally obtained vehicles of the same make, model and colour, to legitimise the stolen vehicle. As a result, there are suddenly two or more cars that look exactly the same regarding their identity and vehicle identification.

Basically, the criminal steals the identity of a vehicle which is authorised in the system to authenticate the stolen vehicle. A whole network of role-players is required for vehicle cloning, from the person who steals or hijacks the vehicle to the corrupt official at the licensing offices. The criminals involved in the cloning of vehicles are usually part of a syndicate that specialises in vehicle crime and that sells these cloned vehicles to consumers who do not suspect any wrongdoing.

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Vehicle Cloning – Methods used:

Criminal syndicates apply various methods in obtaining the identity of vehicles to clone:

Purchasing wrecked vehicles – The particulars of the wrecked vehicle are taken and transferred onto a stolen or hijacked vehicle. It seems that vehicle cloning has been made easier by the fact that vehicle salvage is more readily available to the public, mainly via auctions where syndicates purchase these wrecked vehicles and then transfer the particulars of the wrecked vehicle onto a stolen or hijacked vehicle. However, according to the SAICB, this method is costly and leaves a paper trail through receipts that could be traced back to the purchaser of the wrecked vehicle.

Using dormant records on the eNatis system – Dormant files can be records of vehicles that were built by manufacturers in South Africa, registered, and then exported out of the country. The Manufacture Import Build (MIB) record remains and makes it easy for corrupt officials to obtain a new identity for a stolen vehicle. It can also happen when a foreigner buys a second-hand car and takes it out of the country. Although the vehicle has left the country, the record remains on eNatis. The SAICB notes that this method of cloning is very efficient as the vehicle identity used for the cloning is no longer in the country and is, therefore, harder to track.

Using the records of wrecked vehicles – When insurance companies want to dispose of their wrecked vehicles, they sometimes find that the vehicle is no longer registered in the company's name. This results in a headache for insurance companies as the disposal of their wrecked vehicle becomes almost impossible.

Using live records of vehicles – This happens when criminals “hijack” the live records and registration details of vehicles that are financed. When the registered owners want to renew their vehicle's licence, the owner makes a shocking finding, namely that the vehicle is no longer registered in his/her name.

Vehicle Cloning – Anybody can be a victim:

After the 'marriage' between the fraudulent papers and the vehicle has taken place, the stolen vehicle has obtained its new identity. A middleman can now take the vehicle either to a dealer or to the innocent second-hand buyer. Vehicle cloning results in innocent people becoming victims of vehicle fraud, because they may buy cars without knowing that they are cloned and end up as fraud suspects. Unfortunately, the victims of vehicle cloning are usually the ones who end up paying for this highly lucrative crime.

Once a cloned vehicle has been identified in a victim's possession, the insurance cover that has been taken for the vehicle becomes null and void. The authorities also confiscate the car, and there is no possibility of retrieving the money that the victim has already paid for it. Although the victim is not the rightful owner of the vehicle, he / she has to continue paying the instalments despite having lost the vehicle. The victim also forfeits any deposit or additional payments made. The process of identifying the legitimate vehicle and the record is an inconvenience to the innocent owner, who cannot sell such a vehicle until the investigation has been finalised, and at times, the vehicle is held until ownership is proved.



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How do you know whether your vehicle has been cloned?

One of the first signs that vehicle has been cloned is when the vehicle owner begins to receive fines, speeding tickets and other documentation for offences he / she did not commit. For example, you may receive parking or speeding fines for incidents that occurred in areas that you have never visited.

How to protect yourself from Vehicle Cloning:

These precautions include:

- Buy only from reputable dealers and take practical steps to verify the identification of the car before purchasing it.
- Be careful when buying a used vehicle online or from a newspaper classified advertisement where only a cell phone number is given as a contact.
- When purchasing a used car, ask for the service book/owner's manual, which should accompany the vehicle at all times.

Always check the history of the vehicle and make sure that you view it at the registered keeper's address (as shown on the V5/logbook). Buyers should ensure that the VIN / chassis numbers on vehicles match each other.

*** **Source – Vehicle Cloning : The South African Insurance Crime Bureau (SAICB)**

Information you should know:

If your vehicle is hijacked or stolen, promptly report it to the SAPS. Make sure you have the vehicle details: model, color, vehicle identification and registration numbers available to assist with the recovery of the vehicle. Also inform the SAPS whether the vehicle has a tracking system and if possible, how much fuel is in the vehicle.

When forced to drive with a hijacker, be observant without making direct eye contact and try to memorise as many details as possible.

It is important to describe the hijacker as accurately as possible. When observing a hijacker, take note of his head and face – the shape of the eyes, mouth, nose and ears. Take note of possible irregularities. Look at the hair, skin color, complexion and possible scars and tattoos. Observe the build, sex, body movement, clothing and any conversation that may take place.

- Remember the direction from which they came and fled, as well as the time and place the incident happened.
- Remember to make mental and physical notes immediately after the incident to ensure accurate and detailed information for the Police investigation.
- **Taken hostage** - It can be helpful to have a survival plan in the back of your mind should such an incident occur. It is difficult not to become paranoid about being taken hostage. However, it is just as easy to become complacent.



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One very important fact to remember when being hijacked:

Should the conclusion of the drama be by way of armed intervention, and escape is not possible, immediately drop to the ground, remain still and obey the orders of the leader.

If confronted:

- Do not lose your temper, threaten or challenge the hijacker.
- **DO EXACTLY AS TOLD BY THE HIJACKERS!**
- Do not resist, especially if the hijacker has a weapon. Surrender your vehicle and move away. Try to put as much distance between yourself and the hijacker(s) as speedily as possible.
- Do not reach for your purse or valuables. Leave everything in the vehicle.
- Always try to remain calm and do not show signs of aggression.
- Be compliant to all demands set by the perpetrator.
- Do not make eye contact with the hijacker. He may perceive this behavior as a threat and retaliate aggressively.
- Keep your hands still and visible to the hijacker, to give him assurance of your passive content.
- Do not speak too fast (if you are able to talk) and do not make sudden movements.
- Gather as much information as possible without posing a threat.
 - How many people?
 - How many firearms and description thereof?
 - What were the perpetrators wearing (clothing)?
 - To which direction did they drive off?
 - Take note of the language they use (the accent).
- First phone the SA Police Service on **10111**. They will dispatch the medical services if needed.
- Cellphone emergency numbers you could phone are **112** on ANY Network (Vodacom & MTN & Cell C) or **147** Vodacom ONLY.
- ER24 : **084 124**
- Netcare 911 : **082 911**
- Activate the vehicle-tracking device if the vehicle is fitted with one.

The Effects of Trauma:

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

This is the term given to a particular range and combination of reactions following trauma.

Reactions following trauma can be divided into three main groups:

- **Re-experiencing the event** – a feeling that you are experiencing the original event all over again, through memories intruding into your waking or sleeping life.

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- **Arousal reactions** – you feel persistently aroused, nervous, agitated sense, anxious, tense, unable to settle or concentrate, over-reacting very sharply to small things and especially, having trouble sleeping.
- **Avoidance reactions** – you make frantic efforts to avoid anything that could remind you of the trauma or cause you to think or talk about it in any way. You may shut down your feelings about other people and things you normally care about and keep to yourself. You may feel unusually withdrawn and emotionally numb.

Five stages of trauma / loss:

- Denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance

The following is some general advice to help you cope with trauma in general and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in particular:

Do:

- Express your emotions.
- Talk about what has happened as often as you need to. Seek trauma counseling.
- Try to keep your life as normal as possible by following daily routines.
- Find opportunities to review the experience.
- Look to friends and colleagues for support.

Do not:

- Use alcohol, nicotine or other drugs to hide your feelings.
- Simply stay away from work or isolate yourself. Seek help and support instead (counseling).
- Allow anger and irritability to mask your feelings.
- Hide your feelings and be afraid to ask for help.
- Think your feelings are a sign of weakness.

For more information on the [Hijack Prevention & Security Awareness Course](#), please contact our offices:

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