



December 15, 2022

Ms. Susan Wojcicki
Chief Executive Officer
YouTube, Inc.
901 Cherry Avenue
San Bruno CA 94066

Dear Ms. Wojcicki:

We are writing today to express our collective concern over the ongoing misuse of your social media platform by individuals and groups encouraging the performance of illegal acts to the detriment of individual car owners and society at large.

A pair of masked young men recently posted a video on TikTok describing in detail instructions regarding how to start Kia and Hyundai vehicles without a key – a genuine “how to” video manual for stealing these cars. Similar additional videos have since surfaced on both TikTok and YouTube.

Meanwhile, thefts of Kia and Hyundai automobiles have exploded across the United States. In Chicago, 601 Kia and Hyundai vehicles were reported stolen in August, compared with 58 in August 2021, according to data from the Cook County Sheriff’s office.¹ In St. Petersburg, Florida, police reported more than a third of all car thefts there since mid-July are linked to online “challenges.” Los Angeles officials say the viral trend has led to an 85% increase in car theft of Hyundai and Kia vehicles compared with last year.² In St. Louis, 3,970 motor vehicles have been reported stolen this year through August, up from 3,784 for all of last year, according to the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department. Of the cars stolen this year, 48% were Kia or Hyundai automobiles, compared with 7% of the total in 2021.³ In Milwaukee, where the original video was shot and where the trending thefts started as far back as 2020, two thirds of the 5,144 vehicles stolen through July 2021 were made by Kia or Hyundai.⁴ The National Insurance Crime Bureau’s 2021 *Hot Wheels Report* indicated seven of the top 10 most stolen vehicles in Wisconsin were Kia and Hyundai cars.⁵

¹ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/police-car-owners-wrestle-with-growing-thefts-of-kias-hyundais-11662638401>

² <https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/08/tiktok-challenge-spurs-rise-in-thefts-of-kia-hyundai-cars.html>

³ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/police-car-owners-wrestle-with-growing-thefts-of-kias-hyundais-11662638401>

⁴ <https://urbanmilwaukee.com/2021/07/24/two-thirds-of-all-milwaukee-auto-thefts-are-kia-and-hyundai-vehicles/>

⁵ 2021 NICB *Hot Wheels Report*, available at <https://www.nicb.org/news/news-releases/nicb-releases-annual-hot-wheels-report-americas-top-ten-most-stolen-vehicles>; *see also* <https://www.cbsnews.com/chicago/news/thefts-of-kias-and-hyundais-are-skyrocketing-up-767-this-summer-in-cook-county/>



The obvious victims of these crimes are the everyday consumers whose cars are being stolen and sometimes totaled. Often times there are other additional victims.

Although some videos have reportedly been taken down, YouTube continues to have related videos posted on its platform in violation of YouTube’s Terms of Service.⁶

As groups dedicated to fighting insurance crime and related fraud, we believe YouTube is not doing enough to quickly and effectively respond to this ongoing issue. Videos that encourage criminal activity have a direct impact on innocent victims and the safety of communities around the country. We understand the Attorneys General from Missouri, California, Florida, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Jersey, Tennessee, and Vermont are all investigating TikTok about how the platform boosts young user engagement, including through these videos.⁷ Nevertheless, YouTube has failed to remove many of these videos from its own platform.⁹

Accordingly, the undersigned organizations formally request YouTube immediately take down any videos which encourage or facilitate criminal activity, including posts providing audiences instructions on how to steal Kia or Hyundai vehicles, consistent with YouTube’s Terms of Service.


We respectfully request your response as to what specific steps YouTube will take to address this issue.

Respectfully,

David J. Glawe
President and Chief Executive Officer
National Insurance Crime Bureau



Matthew Smith
Executive Director
Coalition Against Insurance Fraud



Celeste Dodson
President
International Association of Special Investigation Units

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/static?template=terms>.

⁷ <https://ago.mo.gov/home/news/2022/03/02/attorney-general-schmitt-joins-nationwide-investigation-into-tiktok>

⁹ See, e.g., [Kia Boys Documentary \(A Story of Teenage Car Theft\) - YouTube](#);

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/pOZaRnaq2VI>;

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/22P4Cv3vgDk>; [https://www.youtube.com/shorts/5YDw-E2Lm-](https://www.youtube.com/shorts/5YDw-E2Lm-I)