

# How fleet managers can keep their trucks and cargo safe on SA roads

By [Justin Manson](#)

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Truck hijackings in South Africa continue to affect the country's economy. These crimes have been on the rise for some years now, with Police Minister Bheki Cele reporting one of the most considerable increases (31.7%) in truck hijackings just over a year ago.



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Arrive Alive outlines several factors to help reduce the risk of hijackings, including the importance of drivers communicating with the control room and exercising caution when making unscheduled stops.

Here are some additional measures that fleet managers can implement to improve the security of their trucks and cargo.

## Protect high-risk cargo

Cargo is at its most vulnerable when it's in transit on the road because of the countless unsafe parking spots along its route and the time it takes to get it from one point to another. As a result, crime syndicates may attempt to steal it from a stationary or moving vehicle or hijack the truck carrying it.

Although cargo theft can occur at any point in the supply chain, criminals usually target goods in transit. The most considerable risk is at unsecured parking locations, where the driver and the load are easy targets.

To reduce the risk of cargo theft, drivers must lock all doors before taking breaks. In addition, they must be aware of all the vehicle's security features and devices, including the panic button, telematics, and tracking devices.

As an added safety measure, fleet managers need to encourage any drivers on the road who suspect that criminals are targeting them to immediately contact the police and remain in the cabin with the engine running.

## **Prevent stowaways from gaining access**

There have been countless cases of stowaways attempting to board trucks undetected when entering countries illegally. This often happens close to border crossings but is less likely to occur en route.

In most instances, perpetrators aren't violent, so long as they remain undiscovered. However, they may cause a diversion to attempt to board the truck, such as placing a barrier on the road to stop the vehicle, resulting in injuries and truck damage.

Because most perpetrators try to board trucks close to border crossings, drivers should park their vehicles in a secure space, ensuring everything is locked while waiting to clear customs.

## **Keeping trucks and cargo safe with geofencing**

Keeping track of when drivers arrive at specific locations is one of the best ways fleet managers can keep their trucks and cargo safe on the road. Geofencing allows them to do this by providing a location-based service that defines a virtual perimeter via GPS.

Geofencing allows fleet managers to track their drivers' movements and identify certain events, like when they arrive at a location or travel in the wrong direction. The software also delivers automatic notifications when drivers leave or enter a designated geofence area, such as a high-risk crime area.

Fleet managers can also define secure zones for trucks to drive through or park using geofencing and map out specific routing. Most importantly, this software is crucial in preventing truck hijackings, helping drivers stay on track, and manage their time efficiently.

Best of all, fleet managers can create geofences when they know assets will be in specific areas. Then, once a vehicle is outside of that defined area, they'll get instantly notified and can take immediate action. This saves them the cost of replacing a stolen truck or cargo.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Justin Manson, Sales Director at Webfleet Solutions.

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