

# **Kia and Hyundai owners in greater New Bedford falling victim to the “Kia Tik Tok Challenge”**

Although Hyundai and Kia agreed to a \$200 million dollar settlement stemming from a lawsuit related to car thefts inspired by a viral “Tik Tok Challenge”. South Coast residents are still falling victim to this trend. The thieves will break the ignition and jam a USB cable inside to steal the vehicle.

According to New Bedford Police, a disproportionate number of Kia/Hyundai vehicles have either been stolen or have been the victims of theft attempts. On Tuesday, August 15th in New Bedford, two teens were taken into custody after fleeing police in a stolen Kia, crashing, and then attempting to escape on foot. Upon further investigation, the vehicle was found to have been reported stolen earlier that day. The ignition was broken and there was a USB cable sticking out of it.

The male juvenile was previously charged for attempting to break into a “Kia” last month. He was also charged in both June and January of this year for receiving stolen vehicles, one of which was also a “Kia”.

The primary target of this trend are Kia and Hyundai vehicles built in 2015-2019. New Bedford is not alone as this is an issue most cities in America are facing, here is a chart showing the rapid rise in stolen Kia and Hyundai vehicles in Chicago last summer.

# The Kia Challenge spread to Chicago by summer 2022

■ Kia and Hyundai thefts    ■ All other vehicle thefts



Chart: Sara Morrison • Source: Chicago Police Department via USAFacts



*City of New Bedford Police Department photo.*

Although Hyundai and Kia have released software updates which apparently helps fight this phenomenon, it appears the best thing you can do as an owner is to buy a steering wheel lock, lock your doors, and park in a well lit area or garage.