

Uber Kidnappings

We love Uber! And what would all our year end functions be without our trusted chauffeurs patiently driving us back to wherever we came from, diplomatically ignoring our tequila breath and hoarse voices, whilst our abandoned dancing shoes muddy the immaculate interiors of their vehicles?

But whilst for the vast majority of us, having access to Uber has simplified and brought safety to our lives (albeit with an occasional protest from our livers), there are a few tragic instances where this was not the case. Whilst we definitely don't want to stop the party, as South Africa's No 1 Kidnap & Ransom Insurance specialist, we have highlighted the circumstances surrounding two of these noteworthy events along with a few safety tips to help you navigate your way safely through this Silly Season.

Please distribute to your staff.

NIGHTMARE IN UBER

Earlier this year, News24 reported that a couple was attacked after ordering an Uber ride home from the **Movida nightclub in Sunninghill**.

Despite the couple having reportedly verified the vehicle's and driver's details against the information on the app, shortly after departing, two men who were hiding in the boot pushed the rear seats forward and climbed into the front of the car,



stabbing the man and bundling his girlfriend into the boot before sexually assaulting her.

Initially the lieutenant working on the case dismissed an Uber connection, but has subsequently **confirmed that the attacks did indeed involve an Uber** vehicle. Two suspects, one of which is a former Uber employee, have since been arrested.



MONTECASINO HORROR

In another incident, News24 reported that a woman was kidnapped after **mistakenly entering a vehicle which she believed was the Uber taxi she had summoned** via the app from Montecasino in Fourways. Two men, who were allegedly lying down in the back of the car, tied her up, locked her in the boot, and drove the car to an ATM where she was forced to withdraw cash for the perpetrators, after which they sexually assaulted her.

Uber spokesperson Samantha Allenberg said the company had been in contact with the victim and her family, adding that "This is a despicable crime and first and foremost our thoughts are with the victim and her family. We are in open dialogue with the family and have offered our full support. We stand ready to assist law enforcement in any way we can to bring this crime to justice".

The tragedy of the above highlights the need to always be alert and proactive even when letting your hair down. The following 4 safety tips are recommended by the safety officials whenever using Uber:

Verify the identity of the driver and their car before you get in

The Uber app provides riders with their driver's first name, photo, license plate number and a picture of the vehicle and their driver's rating. This information is intended to prevent riders from getting in a car with a fake driver.

Wait inside for your ride to come

Riders will receive a message when their driver has arrived, so they do not need to wait in a potentially unsafe area before their driver comes.

Keep in touch with friends or family

While the app gives riders the information they need to verify their driver's identity, riders are also able to notify their own contacts about their whereabouts in case of emergency. A rider can share their trip details, including the estimated time of arrival and specific route. A family member or a friend who received the link from the rider can actually see the car moving along the distance, and they can see when that person arrives.

Take note of the driver's rating on the app

Another feature of the app is a rating system that allows riders and drivers to rate each other, in order to discourage any problem behaviours.

Courtesy of <http://college.usatoday.com/2015/10/26/uber-safety-tips/>

Extracts from New 24:

To see more, go to

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