

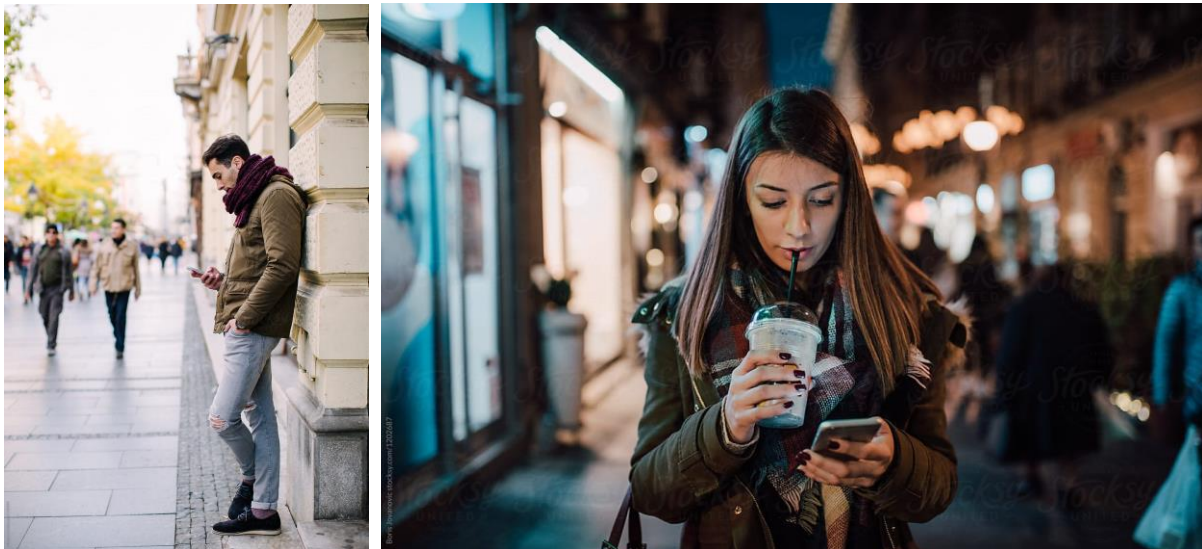
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SECURITY ALERT

15 January, 2020

CELL PHONE THEFT

It's well known that robbery, particularly the theft of cell phones, is rife in Johannesburg and numerous videos on social media show how quick and easy it is to have a cell phone stolen when you're sitting at a restaurant. Here are a few tips from our Security department on how to avoid becoming a victim of cell phone theft and what to do if your cell phone is stolen. Please share these with your staff.



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One of the most common methods of cell phone theft is 'snatch and run' – the thief spots someone busy on their cell phone in a public place, they pretend to be walking past and then they suddenly snatch the phone out of the user's hand, run to an awaiting vehicle, get in and drive away. This happens very quickly, making it difficult to combat.

A lot of cell phone robberies happen when the user is so engrossed on a call, tracking their Uber driver, checking for messages or reading the latest tweet while standing next to a busy road or seated outside at a restaurant. They don't notice when a thief is about to commit a crime because they're too busy staring down at their phone.

- **Take cover inside**

While outside, try to get in a store (building or shopping centre) closest to you to use your phone safely. If you find yourself in the middle of nowhere with no cover nearby, look around to see if there is anything or anybody suspicious before taking your device out. Avoid handling your phone in the open if possible.

- **Be aware of your surroundings**

This is a must in order to avoid situations. Always be aware of your surroundings. That way, you will be able to react to any suspicious activity going on around you that might put your phone and other possessions (and you) in danger.

- **Use a hands-free unit**

This minimises the opportunity of having your phone snatched.

- **Don't leave your phone unattended**

Never leave your phone on a restaurant table or bar counter, or even on the seat of your car where it is only a broken window away from thieves.

- **Do not text and walk at the same time**

People do this often. It is true that it is almost impossible to not react to your phone's 'ping' no matter where you are but taking it out to check and answer that message will put you in a very vulnerable position.

- **Hide your phone away when you are not using it**

Again, it follows the simple principle of avoiding showcasing your phone. When you keep it in places that are easy to access, you make it easy for criminals to steal your phone. You should never keep your phone in:

- The back pocket of your jeans or pants
- The front pocket of your jacket
- The outer pocket of your backpack, etc.

- **Do not to keep any personal information in your phone**

Phones are being used all the time for every and any activity therefore they tend to store our personal information. This includes e-mails, contacts' info, Facebook and Twitter accounts, passwords, photos and sometimes even banking information.

Once your phone is stolen, you can become a target for different types of scams and even blackmail. If you do have important personal information stored in your phone, always back it up. There are a lot of free and paid cloud services (such as Dropbox, iCloud and Google Drive) that can sync your phone information automatically and very easily.

- **Password protect your device**

If your phone lands up in the hands of immoral people, having your phone password protected is the first thing that can stop them from accessing your basic information.

- **Use an anti-theft software**

This can help as a pre-emptive measure. Once your phone is lost or stolen, you can report your device as lost and the software will run its magic by sending you reports of its whereabouts and take pictures of its surroundings once it connects to the internet.

FIVE STEPS TO PROTECT YOUR SMART PHONE FROM THEFT OR LOSS

Step 1: Use a strong screen lock

Step 2: Use a Find My Phone app

Step 3: Attach a note

Step 4: Back up your photos and videos

Step 5: Record your phone's unique ID number

Once lost... The sooner you act, the better your chances of recovering it. Here are four key actions to take:

Seek and destroy

As soon as possible, log on to your Find My Phone service from a secure device. Try to locate the phone on a map. If it's nearby, have the phone ring. If it's not close enough for you to reach within the next few minutes, push the erase button. Hopefully an honest person will come across your device and notify you via the contact info you taped to your phone.

Change your important passwords

As soon as you realize your phone is no longer in your possession and not quickly recoverable, go to the nearest secure computer, log into every account you had on your phone (banking, shopping, e-mail, etc) and change your passwords. Start with the financial and shopping accounts that have your credit card on file and quickly move on to e-mail and social networks.

Call your bank and stores where you have accounts

Inform your bank and credit card companies that you've lost your phone to alert them to possible fraudulent charges. The sooner they know, the easier it will be to dispute unauthorised account activities.

Report the loss to the police

Notifying the police not only launches an official recovery attempt but is also required for a credit freeze. You may also need the police report to dispute any fraudulent charges made on your credit cards.

IF YOU RECOVER YOUR PHONE

Wipe it anyway. You never know what malicious app or spyware someone may have installed while the phone was out of your hands. To be on the safe side, reset the phone to factory settings. If you see an option to 'Delete Everything', make sure you select it. (Before doing that, though, check the backups on your computer or cloud service to make sure you have copies of all the irreplaceable photos and videos on your phone.) Some phones give you the option of resetting their settings without erasing everything. Make sure you check the Reset Everything option.