



HIJACK ALERT

HIJACKING and the theft of commodities, ranging from fuel to food and high-end electrical goods, being transported between Durban and Gauteng are still at unacceptable levels with sophisticated syndicates targeting carefully identified goods to fill orders.

Gavin Kelly, technical and operations director for the Road Freight Association, said this week that as economic conditions deteriorated and the fuel price climbed, he expected the theft of fuel tankers to increase.

Truck hijacking rose nearly 15 percent last year and is expected to go up again this year. Organised business has voiced concern about the effect on the economy, writes Shirley le Guern

involving trucks stem from drivers falling asleep at the wheel.

Kelly said there had been some relief over the past two years following the formation of a special task team that included the South African Police Service. However, there remained a need for dedicated anti-hijacking units.

Hijackings are expected to

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If you have an order to fill and it

on any particular day,” he says.

Gauteng uses 65 percent of the fuel in the country. The bulk of this is either imported or refined by Engen or Sapref, two of the country's largest oil refineries. Most is transported by road.

Although Justicia investigates a wide variety of truck-related crimes and has come across

was blocked using an advanced jamming device and the truck was then driven to an off-loading point which, in this case, was on a farm in the Springs area. Here the diesel or petrol was pumped into large 30 000-litre containers.

Drivers were dropped off in rural areas. Polygraph tests performed during this investigation confirmed that they were not involved in the planning or execution of these hijacks.

He said horses and empty trailers were eventually found a few days after an incident. Owners of the ensembles, of which the horse alone was worth