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How the colour of a car influences your premium

MOTORING STAFF

"ANY customer can have a car painted any colour that he wants, so long as it is black." Times have changed since Henry Ford made his famous statement back in 1909.

Today, the most popular car colour on South Africa's roads is white: 45% of the cars financed in South Africa are white, with silver coming in at nearly 25%. But while brighter colours, like pink and gold, may affect your ability to resell the car, does the colour of your car affect your insurance premium?

We asked King Price Insurance's client experience partner, Wynand van Vuuren. Colour does affect your premium – but not for the reason you think. You aren't charged extra for driving a candy-apple-green car, or for how common the colour is. It's all about how visible your car is on the road, and how that affects your chances of being in an accident.

Navy, black and darker vehicles are slightly more expensive to insure, because they're harder to see on the road, and therefore have a statistically higher chance of being in an accident.

"Our claims history has shown that 'less visible' cars have a higher chance of being in an accident. A charcoal or black vehicle will have a higher chance of being written off, and that gets priced into your premium," Van Vuuren says.

By the same token, white and light-coloured cars attract lower premiums, as they have the best visibility. Your premium may be affected by up to 10%, depending on the colour of your car. Metallic paints can also attract an extra premium, as they are more expensive to repair.

The factors that insurers look at when calculating your premium include: The make and model of the car you drive, where you park your car during the day, and at night, your driving experience and claims history and the visibility of the car on the roads.

Good news for owners of darker cars is that the colour of your car isn't a factor when it comes to theft and hijackings. Here, it's the make and model the thieves are after, says Van Vuuren.

Nevertheless, it's advised to think carefully before you go out and buy that outrageous purple dream machine. It may just end up costing you a bit more on your insurance premium.

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