

# Anti-terrorist driver training

There are many forms of driver training, from a straightforward defensive driving to the intensive training stage. There is another type of hush-hush training, which many aspire to achieve but only a few qualify for. Welcome to the art of anti-terrorist driver training!

Sean Khoo, who was brought in by Subaru for the Autotrail event, is one of the very few driving experts in this part of the world who trains security personnel and VIPs on the art of countering terrorists from behind the wheels of a car. He speaks to *Wheels Asia* on what anti-terrorist driver training is all about.

**Wheels Asia (WA):** In the light of today's security concerns all over the world, why hasn't there been a proliferation of anti-terrorist driver training schools? Or is this sort of training a low-profile thing that is open to only the invited few?

**Sean:** I guess for one, a venue is needed to conduct such training for anti-terrorist driving. Doing training in a car is never cheap in Asia - rental of appropriate training venues, equipment and cars are always high. In this type of training, cars have to be expendable as some form of vehicle damage may occur arising from the training, which has to be realistic for the drivers to experience real-life situations and be ready mentally as well as physically.

You are right - this type of training would need to be low profile and confidential. It cannot be a program open to public or people will use the training to commit crimes. Anti-terrorist training is meant for law enforcement personnel and would be good for high profile personalities who may face security threats from kidnapping - possibility of such cases happening here in Asia are higher than bombings or assassinations.

**WA:** If one were to enrol himself in this anti-terrorist driver training, where can he go? Are there such training programs in this region?

**Sean:** At the moment, I do not think anybody has opened up this type of training to the general public in this region. Foreign trainers are brought over to Asia to conduct the training. Normally, drivers will go overseas to undergo such training. I do this type of training but only for high-profile people, bodyguards or law enforcement personnel only.

**WA:** Describe what you went through in the anti-terrorist driver training.

**Sean:** To start with, the training entails a lot of basic driving skills. It then goes on to other areas of concerns such as more advanced techniques including ramming and counter-intervention techniques. It also branches out to escort driving as well as protective driving.

In addition, there are tactical driving techniques, which need to be learnt and performed under stress and confines. In some circumstances, anti-surveillance and case studies of assassinations are also taught.

**WA:** How do you see the future of anti-terrorist driver training? Is this sort of training going to gain prominence and importance in the future?

**Sean:** It has always been part of the training for special police personnel providing protection but on a low-profile basis.

I am confident if there is a venue to provide this type of training, there would be a market for it. In Asia, there has always been a threat of kidnapping and car jacking. Such training can thus be scaled down for the public whereas a more intensive version be targeted for protection personnel.

**WA:** If one were to be trained in this field of driving, what sort of money can he expect to make? Big bucks?

**Sean:** Driving alone may not make you the big bucks. In terms of

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protection driving, you would need to learn all the other related areas such as bodyguard techniques. Experience is also a major concern in this field of work. That said, if you have all the qualifications and experience and are prepared to go to places such as Iraq to work, the money can be good.

**WA:** It's obvious that you are very familiar with Subaru cars. What are your impressions of the brand?

**Sean:** I have been involved in performing precision stunt driving with Motor Image using Subaru vehicles for close to 4 years since 2002. I am always excited when it comes to performing stunts with a Subaru car. The pleasure of driving with confidence in a Subaru allows me to execute good stunt performances all the time.

The stability of the Subaru car is what makes it a perfect fit to do precision driving. The Subaru car offers safety and reliability, which is critical. The vehicle's centre of gravity and engine design (Subaru Boxer Engine and The Subaru Symmetrical AWD) provide an overall stable platform to execute

stunts and manoeuvres with no possibility of flipping. The suspension and traction is also critical in that the car has the ability to be placed where it is supposed to be during the manoeuvre. If you look at the Subaru car, the car is designed with safety in mind with its ring shape reinforcement frame / sub-frames in the engine compartment.

I am excited to be involved in AutoTrail this year and be part of the huge Celebrate Singapore festival in Singapore. I am looking forward to sharing the excitement of precision stunt driving with Singaporeans and car enthusiasts. ●

