

# Theft & Vandalism Prevention For Contractor's Equipment

Theft and Vandalism losses to contractor's equipment are increasing at an alarming rate. One out of eight contractors are victimized annually, resulting in over \$1 billion in losses, for the construction industry.

Operating costs of the entire construction industry are affected when losses reach epidemic proportions. Besides the direct costs of stolen tools, indirect costs include expensive delays when employees arrive to the jobsite and have to wait for tools to be replaced.

While you may not be able to keep criminals from stealing your property, you can take positive steps to make it extremely difficult for them.

## Effective Management

Concerned management will ensure that "Equipment Security" becomes an integral part of day to day operations. Specific responsibilities need to be assigned to individuals who have the authority to carry out positive measures to prevent theft and vandalism losses. The following control measures are recommended:

- A current inventory of all equipment should be maintained with photographs of larger and/or more expensive equipment.
- The date of purchase and the cost/value of the equipment should be recorded.
- A hardened steel punch (or etching tool) should be used to duplicate the serial numbers on the equipment in at least two places; one obvious, and the other hidden.
- Serial and identification numbers, as well as the location of all such numbers on the equipment, should be recorded and kept with the inventory list.
- Equipment should be identified with company, names, logos, etc. to provide additional identification.

## Yard and Job Site Security

- Keys should be removed from unattended equipment and locked in security boxes in a safe location.
- Keys for all equipment should be accounted for each day at the close of business.
- Equipment should be immobilized by removing the battery, rotor, and lowering blade/buckets. Electric starting systems may be removed in equipment is not used daily.
- Antitheft alarms should be provided on all major pieces of equipment. Consider installing GPS devices to help track larger and/or more expensive tools and equipment.
- Antitheft and antivandalism devices, such as: double ignition locks, fuel and oil locked caps and sealed cabs, should be provided on all equipment.
- A dependable and reliable watchman and/or security patrol should be employed for equipment storage and/or job site locations.

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- Storage yards should be well lighted and fenced. Entrance gates should be locked and checked at the close of business. Lighting can be an effective safeguard against crime. Motion sensors, lighting that highlights the site keeping equipment in clear view of the public instead of lighting that shines towards the road and blocking observation.
- Padlocks should not have exposed shackles that can be easily cut with bolt cutters. Never leave a padlock hanging around open. Criminals can exchange your lock for their own.
- Shanties and storage buildings, containing high value, should be provided with theft alarm systems.
- Consider using video monitoring alarm systems when higher value tools, items and equipment are on site.
- The local police department should be notified of your job site locations and requested to increase patrol activity. Provide names and phone numbers of key personnel to local police so they know how to get in contact with you during non-working hours.
- Post 'No Trespassing' and 'Will Prosecute Trespassers'.
- Control vehicle traffic inside jobsite. Designate a parking area for personal vehicles. If you want to keep tools from straying into trunks of vehicles, keep them separate from the work area.
- Occasionally, the supervisor should go back to the site 20 - 30 minutes after work ceases. This is the opportunity some thieves use to case the job or steal directly at the end of the workday.

#### **Employees & Neighbors**

- Perform background screening on new employees.
- Have a drug free workplace policy that includes pre-employment screening.
- Explain your policy on "gray areas" to employees for taking scrap lumber and materials, and on borrowing tools and equipment.
- Get neighbors involved! Do you know your neighbors? A neighbor who pays attention to your site can be a great deterrent.
- Let neighbors know that safety is important on your site and that children shouldn't play in the area and get hurt.
- Report all incidents to police no matter how small the loss.

Contact your local Great American Loss Prevention Specialist for additional information.

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