



## **Controlling Theft and Vandalism at Construction Sites**

Construction theft is big business. Industry experts estimate that one to two percent of construction cost is as a result of theft. That amounts to Billions of dollars each year. Everyone from the potential owner, Contractors, equipment dealers, insurance companies, equipment manufacturers all suffer when job sites are vandalized or equipment and materials are stolen.

Theft and vandalism of construction sites is not new and not limited to the Tri Cities. This is a national problem that will not go away. It does require everyone to take an active role in reducing the opportunity for theft and vandalism.

### **Sites are most vulnerable on weekends and overnight**

- Heavy equipment most likely to stay intact
- Tools are most popular
- Appliances are popular as well
- Scrap metal/copper prices are high so theft increases

### **Owners/builders must be committed to stopping theft and vandalism on their sites**

- Build Partnerships with local suppliers and scrap metal companies in the area.
- Talk to the community and neighbourhood associations you are building in for their support.
- Work along side your local Crime Prevention Unit within the Police Department -
- Complete a Construction Site Registration form so Kennewick Police is aware of your jobsite and contact persons.
- Contractors should keep excellent records, have after-hour contacts, and be willing to prosecute.

### **Post signs**

- "Private Property"
- "Security Cameras in Use" but only if there are cameras on site.
- "No Trespassing"
- Post signs that vehicles may be searched.

- Contractor's and builder's contact information.
- Rewards Program Signs - Use on gates, buildings, perimeter fencing, tool sheds, and job trailers. Signs are available through the Home Builders Association of the Tri Cities and Tri Cities Crime Stoppers.
- Reward Flyers - These highly visible flyers can be used on gang boxes, trailers, small equipment, storage sheds and port-a-potties. In addition these flyers can be distributed to homes and businesses close by to job sites.

## **Surveillance Cameras**

- The idea of being caught on video is a great deterrent to theft and can cost effective. When used in conjunction with motion sensor lights at night they can provide valuable information.
- IP (Web based) Surveillance systems – Can be transferred from one jobsite to the next. Video streams are transferred to any location in the world using a standard PC. May include motion detection and two-way audio.
- Remote accessibility - Can be linked to a website to give the public the ability to view the progress of a project.
- Increase possibility of apprehension – When properly used they do result in deterrence, detection, and prosecution.
- Security and Safety - Monitoring worksites can also be used to spot unsafe working conditions and/or procedures.

## **Access Control**

Contractors need to take extra precautions to secure their construction sites.

- Change the padlocks on the gates and around the site several times during the construction. You never who or how many people have keys.
- Use a chain link fence to secure the perimeter of the site.
- Walk the perimeter of the site and check for breaches where someone could enter the site, then repair it.
- Have someone check out the site several times over the weekend.
- Secure storage sheds with good locks.
- Install locks as soon as possible.
- Challenge strangers on your property or job sites. Show them you are on the alert.
- Keep entrances and gates to a minimum. Lock gates when you are done for the day.
- Use a reputable Security company.
- Wear identification badges with companies' logo.
- Include employee search clause in contracts.
- Key control - If you store equipment keys on a key board, have someone take the keyboard home

## Equipment Security -

### Mark It!

Mark your equipment, metal pipe and moveable property. i.e. weld business name on property.

- Property that belongs to the company should be marked with its Washington State Tax ID Number preceded with "WA TX". Personal property and tools should be marked with the owner's driver's license number preceded with "WADL"
- Put numbers in two spots: hidden and obvious.
- Paint your larger equipment a distinctive color and include your name or logo. Paint tools all the same color.

**Die Stamp:** Permanently mark tools and equipment with the blow of a hammer. Electric engravers can also be used.

### Record It!

Inventory equipment frequently and store it so it is obvious if something is missing.

Keep records. Record serial numbers and numbers you applied. Take color photos.

### Protect It!

Re-key your equipment - most construction equipment is commonly keyed.

- Don't leave equipment in remote areas.
- Install anti-theft devices: fuel cutoffs, hydraulic bypasses, track locks or alarms.
- Keep equipment and supplies locked up in a securable storage shed.
- Use locking gas caps and oil caps on equipment and vehicles. Lock cabs.
- Disable vehicles with hidden switches.
- Cluster equipment. Plan to end the day with near empty tanks.
- Keep equipment and supplies locked up in a securable storage shed.
- Remove the keys from large equipment and vehicles.
- Install GPS in large construction vehicles left on site.

### Communicate

- Talk to the neighbor's. They could be potential witnesses of future crimes.

- Advise law enforcement, local homeowners and businesses owners of contractors contact information. You can register your jobsite on-line at <http://www.ci.kennewick.wa.us/Police/CrimePrevention.asp> .
- Use the Crime Stoppers program. Offer rewards to citizens and employees.
- Create partnerships with homeowners in partially completed subdivision.
- Utilize an employee rewards programs for not allowing crimes to occur.

## **Miscellaneous**

Conduct criminal background checks on all staff, contractors, sub-trades, and security guards.

- Zero tolerance policy on internal theft and allowing theft to occur.
- Security Guards should be visible and if possible use a marked trailer.
- Just-in-time delivery - install appliances at end of the job.
- Copper - theft of this metal is very high. Secure all metals and if possible install at the end of the job.

---

**Police Department • Crime Prevention  
741 S Dayton St • P.O. Box 6108  
Kennewick, WA 99336-0108  
(509) 585-4212 • Fax (509) 585-4592**