

BULLETIN

R i s k C o n t r o l

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by Keith Forbes

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Tips for Preventing Workplace Theft

Industry experts agree that the theft of agricultural and construction equipment is on the rise. Although it's difficult to know an exact number, the total value of equipment stolen annually ranges between \$300 million and \$1 billion.

This doesn't take into account monetary losses from business interruptions, project delay penalties, wasted workforce and management time. All indicators are that equipment theft is on the rise in the U.S.

Theft is usually a crime of opportunity. Removing that opportunity can greatly reduce the occurrence of theft in the workplace.

- Keep valuable portable items locked up, such as laptops, purses, etc.
- What can't be locked up should be secured (chained, bolted down, or critical components removed).
- Use cabinet/furniture locks.
- Back up all software and valuable information on computers, either on a server or other device, and keep this in a secure and fireproof location, or off site.
- Hide items that can't be secured. This applies to valuables in your car while parked, also including the use of your trunk.
- Lighting acts as a deterrent by making your home or business look occupied or



less vulnerable. Timers can be used when you are away from your home or office to make the lights go on and off as they normally would. Businesses can light parking lots, doorways, and loading areas, to make intruders easily visible to passersby and patrol cars.

- Post your property with "No Trespassing" signs. The legal requirement for these signs is 12 inches square in size, with two inch size lettering. These signs should be every 500 feet on fences, or three signs per mile on open land, and at gates and driveways.
- Chemicals can be marked in their plastic containers by using a rubber stamp and ink. Particularly vulnerable are containers of herbicides. They should be marked upon receipt and kept in a well-secured location. Most chemical thefts occur within 24 hours of receiving delivery.
- Put ID plates or ID numbers on equipment. This can be engraved or utilize some hi-tech system specifically for that purpose.

DataDots™-- DataDots are miniscule dots of information virtually invisible to the naked eye, to identify your business. The dots can be sprayed or applied by other means, to your equipment by the user/equipment owner. The dots are identified and read using a black light and magnifying device. A warning sticker is also displayed. Information can be found at: www.microdotsecurity.com.

Copper Cable: DataDot™ protection can be used to apply virtually invisible laser etched micro dots profusely to the surface of the exposed copper cable and components, making it virtually impossible for a thief to effectively remove the identity of the lawful owner.

Vehicles: DataDots™ are already used in the U.S. and around the world by manufacturers such as Nissan, Lexus, BMW, Mini, Ford, HSV, Audi, and more.

Operation ID -- Operation Identification is a nationwide program to prevent property theft and burglary. This is done by marking your personal property with your permanent identification number, and displaying the Operation ID sticker. This can use several systems including acid-etch ink, to permanently mark the property so it cannot be washed off. Another way is to use a special rubber stamp with a unique number to identify the owner, should it be lost or stolen. This can be applied easily to a large number of locations on the equipment. An electronic etcher can also be used. Heavy equipment can be marked by using a metal stamping kit. An online search of "Operation Identification" will provide the names of law enforcement agencies using this program.

Record Information -- Make a video tape and/or list of the marked items including the make, model, size, color, and serial number, as applicable. Also, record the exact spots where you have engraved the items. Keep this record or video secure or offsite for reference and additions.

Asset Tags -- Can be difficult to remove, and can be obtained from sign companies and office supply sources.

Security experts recommend a multi-layered approach, not just one type of protection. This could include security cameras, dummy cameras, "deer cams" for secluded areas, intruder alarms, or guard service.

Finally, contact the crime prevention office in your local sheriff's or police department to obtain more tips. A free security audit may also be a service they provide.

(Sources: Fresno County Sheriff's Department Crime Prevention Office, Micro DOT Security Solutions, U.S. General Services Administration.)

Workers' Compensation Safety Awards



The deadline to submit Workers' Compensation Safety Award Nominations will be Monday, April 14th. Nominations received after this date will be held until the fall conference.

The awards will be announced at the spring conference in Monterey, on May 5, 2008. Over the years, we have received many very good ideas for improving safe work, in addition to activities undertaken by employees to enhance their own workplace conditions. For information and nomination forms, go to the JPIA's website at www.acwajpia.com and click on Resources, Risk Management, Safety Awards, or contact Terry Lofing at 800-231-5742, Ext. 3126.

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