

"Working Together for a Safer Community"

Construction Site Crime Prevention

Large construction sites are frequently victimized by the theft of machinery and equipment, tools and material supplies. Because they vary so much, different job sites will require different protective measures and programs. The following are a series of crime prevention recommendations designed to minimize or reduce the theft of property from the construction job site:

Company Crime Prevention Coordinator

The general contractor or construction management company should designate an employee as the company crime prevention coordinator. This should be someone who has management level communication and multi-job site mobility. This responsibility is often assigned to a VP for Operations, Safety Director or Risk Manager. All construction site losses should be immediately reported to this individual. The company crime prevention coordinator should serve as a direct link or liaison with the local law enforcement agency 24 hours a day.

Identify Assets and Property

All assets on a construction site should be identified (marked), inventoried (records), and tracked as closely as practical. A company identification numbering system should be developed. This could be the company tax identification number. Corporate equipment should have

some type of logo/advertising prominently displayed. Employees should be strongly encouraged or even required to have their personal property engraved with an identification number (usually driver's license).

Surveillance of the Job Site

The company crime prevention coordinator should contact neighbors around the job site, residents, and businesses to solicit their support and help in maintaining a safe and secure job site. Emphasize the concern for personal safety as well as property security.

Lock or Guard Gates When Not in Use

Gates to the construction job site should be kept to a minimum. Strange or unrecognized vehicles on the job site should be challenged. If possible and practical to do so, uniformed guards should be utilized during working hours to check vehicles entering and leaving the job site. Gates should be closed and locked at night and on week-ends.

Secure Tools and Equipment When Not in Use

Storage sheds, sea trains or fenced areas should be provided on the job site for the secure storage of tools and equipment. When vehicular equipment is not in use, their cabs should be locked and ignition keys re-

moved. In addition, this equipment should be parked in front of the storage sheds and sea trains. Use metal shields on equipment windows to reduce vandalism. Oil and gas tank caps should be locked. Machines can be disabled with hidden ignition cutout switches.

Construction equipment should be engraved or marked in a least two (2) obvious and one hidden location. Use a hardened steel punch or etching tool to mark the serial numbers on the equipment. Report the loss of construction equipment to the police immediately.

Not All Thefts are From the Outside

Gang boxes and supply sheds should be locked at all times. To avoid losses, the company should maintain a good tool "check in and out" system.

Lighting the Construction Job Site

The effective use of lighting can be an effective deterrent to theft and vandalism on the construction job site. It is particularly effective in deterring the casual or impulse offender. Among the points on the job site that should be highlighted by lighting are the office trailer(s), equipment storage trailer(s), material storage yard and any equipment storage areas. These areas should be illuminated to a minimum of one

foot-candle at ground level. Ideally, these areas should be visible from the most heavily traveled road bordering the construction job site.

Lighting systems triggered by a motion detector or a passive infrared sensor are also recommended for the job site. Such lighting gives the impression an intrusion has been detected and may also warn neighbors of potential intruders. Lighting on the job site should be periodically checked to insure it is appropriate and operative.

Fencing on the Job Site

Fencing is particularly important on the construction job site. Ideally, the entire job site, as a minimum the area around trailers and material storage should be enclosed. If possible, there should only be one or two accesses or gates through the job site fencing. This makes access control easier. Chain link fencing topped by multiple strands of barbed wire is recommended. Chain link fencing allows for surveillance by security patrols, police and by neighbors. Special attention should be given to the fencing of areas used to store hazardous materials, poisons, solvents, explosives, flammables, etc.

It is recommended that employee's either park their personal vehicles outside the construction fence or have a specifically designated parking area within the fence. The objective of this recommendation is to minimize the theft of tools, material and equipment.

Alarms Systems

Electronic alarm systems can be an effective means of providing security on the job site, particularly for office and storage trailers or for material storage areas. Portable alarm systems are available that will detect motion, activate lights and sound alarms. Unless you are very isolated, it is recommended that alarms sound locally. This may serve to scare off the perpetrator and draw attention of a neighbor or passerby. Alarms can also activate telephone calls to the contractor or private security services. Before making such alarms installations, however, the local law enforcement agency should be contacted.

Security Companies

It may be advisable to employ the services of a credible, bonded and insured security company either to maintain guard staff on-site or to make periodic patrols of the construction job site. An advantage of using a contract private security service is that they can be given access to patrol inside the job site as well as the perimeter. They can also be given the responsibility for checking lighting and alarm systems on the job site, as well as the integrity of fencing.

General Security Recommendations

Enlist the support of employees in minimizing theft and vandalism. Explain to them the consequences and that insurance carried by the company either has a deductible for coverage or does not cover pilferage of tools and material on the job site.

You should immediately report all vandalism and theft to your local law enforcement agency. Have serial numbers and information about markings on the equipment available when the responding officer(s) arrive. Make sure there is a complete record of model and serial numbers of all equipment assigned to the project.

If possible, remove graffiti from the job site as soon as possible. Graffiti often spawns or encourages further graffiti.

"No Trespassing" signs should be prominently displayed on fencing or the perimeter of the job site. Such signs discourage unauthorized intrusion onto the job site and if correctly worded aids in the prosecution of apprehended trespassers. "No Trespassing" signs and other warnings of danger can help protect the company from liability exposure for possible injuries to strangers or trespassers. The local law enforcement agency or an attorney may be consulted for appropriate wording of warning signs. Such "No Trespassing" and/or warning signs need to be easy to read and large enough to be seen from a distance.

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