

A Step By Step Process to Protect Your Equipment

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In a previous article I covered the possible increase in thefts because of the budget crisis in California. Because of strong lobbying by police and prosecutors, the state legislators have backed away from decriminalizing the many theft laws that keep equipment thieves in jail.

The Governor and the legislators have not resolved the threatened release of the prison population, which would also have a devastating effect on our communities and businesses. The claim has been made that the prisoners to be released are non-violent low risk offenders. Trust me when I tell you, anyone that has been put in prison most likely has committed multiple offenses previously.

The job market is very bad now; there are well-qualified people that cannot find work. If the governor releases the proposed 17,000 convicted felons out of prison, what will be the chances that they will find gainful employment? After not finding any work, what will they do, the answer is self-evident, and they will revert back to a life of crime. We will be their victims.

In this article, I will give you some things you can do to protect your equipment. Hopefully, these steps may reduce the incidence of theft and help with recovery should you become a victim.

Let's start with your equipment, since that's the easiest and most valuable thing thieves can steal. I'm going to assume most of you will be leaving your equipment on the jobsite. If your employees are bringing it back daily to your yard, you're already ahead of the game. Equipment left on a jobsite reminds me of the Target store logo. Anyone with a truck, trailer and key can take it in a hot second. Anything you can do to slow down the theft will frustrate the

thieves and hopefully make them go elsewhere. Wheel locks and fuel shutoffs are some inexpensive measures that can pay off. Taking ignition keys and using battery shutoff features at least make it tougher for the amateur thief. The Equipment Lock Company makes a variety of locks for Conex boxes, loaders, excavators, and trailers. They are heavy duty, easily installed and can be keyed alike for convenience. Conex boxes seem to be a current problem as the thieves know you store your valuable hand tools inside. Go to their website at www.equipmentlock.com to view the variety of devices they make.

Besides locks, another step is to electronically track your equipment. There are various companies that offer these types of devices; they can also be researched on the Internet. Two devices I have had experience with are LoJack and Mobilock (by DeWalt).

I can say that when I found stolen equipment using these devices, I also found the suspects that were involved in the theft. These devices are reasonably priced if you compare the cost of replacing your equipment. Some devices require a monthly service fee, and some require some semi-annual maintenance for their back-up batteries, so make sure you ask when comparing features. The benefit is peace of mind that your equipment will be there tomorrow when you go back to work.

When you have equipment on jobsites, have accurate records of what's out there. Have make, model, Product Identification Number (PIN) and any other numbers that have been applied, such as Owner Applied Numbers (OAN) or other inventory num-



CPP member uses the Hilti to mark their equipment.

bers. If the equipment is stolen, you will have the important information needed by the police to make a report. Remember last month I mentioned getting an OAN for free at www.agcrime.net.

If you have a space on top of the ROPS, have your company name, logo, PIN or OAN painted on the roof of the equipment. Many police departments have helicopters or other aircraft. Having these identifying features on your equipment will make it easier for the police and the bad guys rarely look up there for additional markings.

In my last article, I wrote about the Hilti powder actuated tool (model DX 462). Since we got one at the Crime Prevention Program (CPP), the response has been tremendous by our members. There is already a waiting list to use this great tool. I wish we had another one or two to lend out. If your equipment gets stolen, and it is properly marked, there is a better chance of recovery. This tool drives the serial number, OAN or other identifying number into the steel frame, making removal difficult. CPP members are also encouraged to apply our specially manufactured security labels. These labels are made to last, and are not easily removed. The labels contain information encouraging anyone to anonymously call the 24/7 reward hotline. The CPP then contacts the equipment owner to verify whether the equipment is stolen. This layered approach to protecting your equipment will pay dividends in the long run.