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A Silver Lining to an Otherwise Gray Cloud

By Lou Koven, Investigator, Crime Prevention Program of Southern California
Email: protectyourequipment@gmail.com

Many are frustrated about the California Air Resources Board (CARB) requirements that have been thrust upon us recently. The extra book-keeping requiring the tracking of your equipment is straining already limited resources.

No one in the industry wants these extra obligations, but in the long run, there are some benefits to be gained when you register and mark your equipment. Currently, CARB requires your Equipment Identification Number (EIN) to be placed on the right side of your equipment, on a red background with white numbers, 3 inches tall and 1 ½ inches wide. I would suggest, for added security, that you place the EIN on both sides of your equipment.

During the training conducted by CARB last year, some of us in law enforcement were hoping that something good might come of these burdensome requirements. The ownership information in the Diesel Off-Road On-Line Reporting System (DOORS) will provide law enforcement officers with a readily available database to check for stolen equipment and will therefore be better able to return it to the rightful owner. CARB officials agree and are now preparing to grant limited access to some law enforcement officers on a trial basis. We see this as a great way to locate the owners of stolen equipment and an improved method to reduce future thefts. For additional information go to: www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/ordiesel/faq/faq-labeling.pdf

Apply For Your Owner Applied Number Free

When you mark your equipment, what number should you use? There are a variety of opinions on the subject. Typically, some have used California Driver's License (CDL) numbers, which

is a good idea. However, this works best when the owner of the company and the equipment uses his/her CDL, rather than using employees' CDL's. The reason to use the CDL is because law enforcement officers have instant access to your information.

The other option available to everyone is the 'Owner Applied Number' (OAN), which is a nationwide identification program. The best part about it is that this number is permanent and free. The program is federally funded and administered by the Tulare County District Attorney's Office. To get your OAN, go to their website at www.agcrime.net. Click on the banner that says "Sign Up For OAN". The next banner will say "California Residents"; click on that. That will take you to a new page that shows an Owner Applied Number Application. Be sure to fill this out carefully as whomever you list as a contact will be called by the police in the event of a theft recovery. Put in the county where your business is located. If you have multiple branch offices in different counties, each office could have their own number, which would assist local law enforcement. If there is a change in the contact person, email oan@agrime.net and update the contact information.

Since it is your own personal identifier, once you receive your number, apply it to every piece of equipment your company owns. If you have a theft, this OAN can be used as an additional serial number for the police report, or it can be used to identify items with no serial numbers. Currently the OAN is ten digits and looks like this CA0190152D. The first two digits "CA" identify the State of California; the next three digits identify the county, with

(Continued on Page 24.)

“019” indicating Los Angeles County.

The next four digits “0152” are your personal assigned number and the last digit “D” is the first letter of the last name or company name (i.e. John Doe). This program was started in Northern California to mark farm equipment and has proven to be very successful in loss recovery. These numbers can be used by your family for household inventory and tracking purposes as well. If you have questions about this program please contact the Agcrime Unit at (559) 685-4850.

CPP Recovery of Stolen Backhoe/Loader

A CPP member recently had a backhoe loader stolen from a jobsite in Santa Monica. The suspects involved parked the stolen loader a short distance away in a no stopping zone in Los Angeles. The victim reported the stolen loader to the local police department. By that time, the loader had already been impounded by parking enforcement for being in the red zone. Unfortunately, the two reports did not cross and the loader still appeared to be stolen.

The victim notified the CPP Investigator who, with help from CPP Board Member, Investigator Gabe Marquez of the California Highway Patrol (CHP); were able to locate the stolen loader at the impound lot. Because the victim is a member of CPP, their equipment did not languish in the impound lot, where it would accumulate storage fees or possibly face lien sale and auction. It was a happy ending for the victim, but

brings up an important reminder. After reporting your theft to the police, immediately notify the CPP. The CPP will make a flyer and then using our extensive e-mail database notify law enforcement, tow yards and the construction industry of your theft. And we will check other resources which may result in your stolen equipment being recovered more quickly, similar to the Santa Monica incident.

Hilti Marking Tool

The Crime Prevention Program of Southern California (CPP) has just invested in a Hilti® powder actuated tool used to mark members' equipment. The Hilti tool will drive the identifying numbers you have chosen into the equipment's metal. The large numbers make identification easy and removal difficult. The use of the Hilti tool is exclusively for CPP Members for a small fee to cover materials only.

Call the CPP Office at (562) 860-9006 to reserve use of the Hilti tool. This is a reliable method of marking your equipment. When you call CPP, please be sure to ask them for the CPP labels for you to place on all your equipment as an extra layer of protection. The CPP labels are made of a special security laminate, are difficult to remove and contain the 24/7 toll free reward hotline telephone number.

For information on reducing theft or the Crime Prevention Program of Southern California, call (562) 860-9006 or visit www.crimepreventionprogram.com.

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