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Secure your construction site: \$1b a year lost due to theft of equipment, tools, materials and fixtures

Secure Jobsite



By Scott Campbell,
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My wife and I recently purchased a new home. So new, in fact, that our neighborhood is presently a year from completion making the homes to our west, gleaming, new structures perched upon landscapes of dirt, dust and construction debris and the homes to our east, skeletons of homes-to-be. The night we moved in I observed a uniformed security officer roving slowly throughout the streets of our surrounding area in a marked SUV. Upon first glance, one may question the need for such a physical presence. Why is a private security company roaming our streets? Is the crime rate higher than we thought? Did we make a mistake moving to this area?

No such mistake was made however, a problem does indeed exist: criminals have discovered a lucrative and growing market in construction equipment. According to the National Insurance Crime Bureau, close to \$1 billion a year is lost nationwide due to the theft of construction equipment, tools, materials, fixtures and end-user appliances.

As an owner of Corporate Resources Group, a private security firm in Mass., we have observed a growing trend amongst commercial and high-end residential construction projects: They are becoming our clients. The reason is because jobsite security and the associated loss of productivity are the primary concerns among professional contractors and construction end users.

As commercial and residential developers and contractors research their options in securing their jobsites, we field a lot of inquiries. What is most notable according to both statistical information and client requests is that most jobsite theft occurs at night and on weekends. Often clients ask us if we can supply them with wireless camera systems where they can monitor and record their projects from remote location via a laptop computer or similar monitoring system. Our experience dictates that although remote monitoring is good, the ability to implement intervention is excellent. Cameras can monitor any and all activity and is a useful tool, but only as a component of a greater arsenal.

The physical presence of security personnel on a jobsite is the most effective means in which to guard against theft. Of course there is the cost associated with security personnel and there are two ways in which to defray such

an expense. When an insurance company insists that the developers and builders on a commercial jobsite secure the location during the construction phase, the cost of security can be added to the insurance premium as a built in expense as the cost of doing business. As a part of a residential development, the associated cost of security can be shared as a mark-up built into the cost of the construction of each home within the development. People understand the need for security and are willing to share the cost for the peace of mind that someone is physically watching their financial investment when they cannot. After all, let us not discount the money saved in insurance premiums and in the lack of theft due to the presence of a competent security presence.

Here are some ways in which we assist our construction clients manage their theft prevention efforts:

- Establish theft prevention policies at a given jobsite and communicate it to all workers by having them sign off on the policies and keep a record of such documentation.
- Develop a system of access control to identify and verify people that conduct deliveries. Check identification. When in doubt, contact a suspicious person's place of employment.
- Implement a system of documentation for the checking in

and checking out of all tools and equipment.

- Lock and immobilize equipment during non-working hours and where possible, protect with alarms.

- Double stamp all tools and equipment, once with a conspicuous number and once with a covert number. Keep records of all recorded tools and equipments off jobsite and keep only copies of the original on site with security personnel.

- When possible and practical, fence in the worksite and utilize nighttime lighting to keep the general public out of the jobsite.

- Inform the personnel on a jobsite when a contractor(s) is fired or quit so they know who is authorized to be on the jobsite.

- Do not wait until a theft occurs to establish a means in which theft is reported and investigated. Contact the police within the jurisdiction of the theft, as well as the chain of command within the contracting company.

- Develop and maintain good relationships with local law enforcement.

- Prosecute criminals to the fullest extent of the law to set an example to others of the ramifications to jobsite theft.

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