

Community Capers

Category: "Information"

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Canada suffers from hundreds of thousands of dollars in construction theft every month. It's not only contractors suffering at the hands of thieves, its equipment dealers, insurance companies and equipment manufacturers.

Perpetrators misconstrued as construction workers are often making off with the goods. Partial blame could be placed on today's weak economy for the increase in construction thievery however this type of theft is not foreign to the new home industry. These modern day pirates are stealing appliances, copper pipes, lumber, drywall and even bags of cement

Another catalyst to construction theft has been the dramatic increase in copper prices over the past few years. This epidemic has prompted homeowners and builders to sleep in their vehicles outside new home construction just to make sure they aren't stripped of their home's copper wiring. These copper capers are stealth like individuals who cut and pull copper wire before the drywall is fastened to the walls.

So why is theft at construction sites such a problem? The answer is simple, "Because the goods are there and in many cases unprotected". Items such as windows and lumber are always front and centre on a burglar's, "hit list".

Whether heavy equipment, small tools, appliances or copper wire. These crooks help themselves to anything that isn't screwed down. Although most equipment thefts happen on the weekend thieves will appear whenever the opportunity presents itself.

Theft of equipment and materials can set the completion date of new home construction back by several weeks, depending on what is stolen. New home builders must do their part to assure their assets are protected. Keep in mind construction thieves have no boundaries but you can send a strong message to these low life's by creating your own boundaries.

Temporary fencing creates a physical and psychological boundary for crooks that will help reduce the chances of vanishing product. Another option would be to drop off storage containers with beefy padlocks on building sites to contain sought after items. (preferably a "puck lock" which does not allow an intruder to use bolt cutters to gain entry).

There are many other great products that could help in the prevention of theft to your new home. Everything from high security metal fasteners to special bonding adhesives which could help keep your plumbing intact. All dropped off lumber should be marked with your company stamp or identifiable florescent paint.

Night time and weekend security guards could be an option for residential developments especially during the pre-lockup stage. Once a new home gets to the lock-up stage, builders should make sure all the doors and windows have adequate deadbolts. And of course home builders must make sure the home is secured before leaving the premise, whether during the day or late at night.

Key control on new home construction could save headaches down the road. With today's high security keys being virtually non-duplicating without proper protocol, builders could keep strict control on who holds a key to the premises. Arrange to have your monitored alarm in place as soon as possible to help protect your property.

Coordinating deliveries of items like soaker tubs, spas, and hot water tanks around installation is always a great idea. That way your fixtures won't be conveniently lying around in boxes creating a golden opportunity for the bad guy.

Don't underestimate one of your strongest defenses against construction theft, neighbourhood involvement. Become acquainted with your neighbour's and trade contact information. It's important to cement the importance of communication between neighbour's, contractors and police with updates on current suspicious activity.

Organize a pre-construction crime prevention meeting with the developer and building foreman. This is where you can discuss the necessary crime prevention initiatives like Block Watch or Neighbourhood Watch programs and encourage participation from local residents.

It's always a good idea to maintain and distribute a schedule of subcontracting activity so your neighbours and crew know when others are expected to be onsite. Supervisors and neighbours can then be on the alert for impostures planning a theft.

Neighbourhoods working together are still the best ways to prevent construction theft in today's world.