Security In Your Business

NEXT TIME you can't find that chain saw, electric drill or hank of new rope that you left sitting in the workshop, better alert the local authorities. You could be the victim of a burglary.

Arborists, industrial weed control firms, and professional turfgrass managers across the country are reporting bizarre acts of burglaries that connote professionalism in crime far above the level of local pranksters. And it's on the increase.

City foresters in Illinois recently discovered prized black walnut trees had three chain saws stolen from a parked truck. A weed control firm in the southeast reported 50 cases of herbicides taken from the back-end warehouse—in broad daylight. A golf superintendent in the midwest went to his equipment shed early one morning and discovered several power mowers, a tractor and a backhoe missing. He had personally put the equipment away the previous night. The list goes on and on.

Professional thieves have found small business firms one of the most lucrative sources in their "trade." Unlike private homes where they run the risk of neighbors or residents, small businesses seldom have night watchmen, protective equipment such as bucket trucks, can at midnight.

They work singly or in pairs; sometimes in gangs. They operate from stolen vehicles, rented cars, or on foot. They know that small items will not be as likely to be missed. Also, many firms have deductible insurance against theft. An owner with $200 deductible is not likely to report the disappearance of a $150 chain saw. Or a $225 mower.

What can you do to protect yourself against these crimes? First, take a good look at your physical arrangement—draw it out on paper—and decide where the most vulnerable areas are. Consider that along with a security system you must also include items such as fire protection, power losses, etc. Second, map out a plan of action that will facilitate easy entrance to company property by workers but provide a barrier to customers. Re-design the job truck beds so that equipment is not visibly exposed. (It may also be to your advantage to do this from a safety angle.) Make sure that responsible people are around the premises during business hours—including lunch and coffee breaks.

Here are some other tips:

Keep a watchdog. One chain saw dealer in Cleveland keeps a large dog tied up in his parts department. One look and two barks from him and anyone immediately knows that he means business. A dog tied up in the work yard between shop and office can patrol both areas successfully. If you're located in a more rural area, consider keeping geese. While they do not command quite as much respect as a dog, their hearing is more acute. And the noise created by a flock of startled geese will surely get your attention.

Adequate lighting. This is a must if you park equipment outside or have several buildings. Other than the fact that OSHA requires certain lighting for safety, light (particularly bright light) has a deterrent effect. A well lighted area reduces the opportunity for midnight requisitions. For some, stealing is a game with odds on not getting caught. You can reduce the odds by outside and inside lighting.

Install fences. Security fences won't stop the professional, but they may slow him down. The object is to make your firm a less desirable place for a burglary to take place. Additionally when you have fences, you can also have gates and doors. Keep them locked when you or your employees are not there. That goes for daytime as well as dark. When the work crew is not physically in the work area, lock the gate. If you are a superintendent who must travel the course to check on work progress, lock the work area prior to leaving. If necessary, provide keys to trusted employees or job foremen. Be careful with keys; however, they have a habit of getting lost—or in possession of the wrong individual.

Invest in good locks. A cheap $1.98 lock will give you about the same in protection. But a $5 to $10 bolt lock is a good investment. Easily "fenced" items such as saws, tools, radios, etc. should be kept behind an additional enclosed storage area. Good locks on truck compartments make it more difficult to "lift" these items. It's not a bad idea to periodically change locks all the way around the area.

Light beams that trip when "lifted" smaller items more commonly found elsewhere or chemicals which can be blackmarketed into the agricultural community.

Chain saws are a hot item. Mobile radios, small power mowers, trailing spray rigs, ropes—almost anything that someone else in another industry or another part of the country can use are potential items. Even larger items, if commonly around like trucks, can be successfully stolen and re-sold. The rule of thumb is that if you need it, someone else probably needs it too.

The professional burglar is as highly skilled in his endeavors as you are in your business. He knows his "market" and just what can be "fenced" quickly to return a fast buck. He also knows exactly the time to strike. Don't necessarily count on being hit only at night. The professionals can pull a heist at mid-morning just as easily as they can at midnight.

(continued on page 30)
SECURITY
IN YOUR BUSINESS
(from page 18)
sitive pneumatic signal tubes placed
across the road in front of the work-
shop can also be used. In more so-
phisticated operations, investment
in a closed-circuit television cam-
era may be just the item to guard
a truckload of expensive turf pro-
tection chemicals.
Cooperative business plan. En-
gage with several local firms who
are in the same area as yours to
periodically check on all businesses.
Being helpfully nosey may prevent
a burglary. Then too, should a
neighboring owner find a crime tak-
ing place, he can use his own busi-
ness telephone to alert the police.
Identify your property. This is of
prime importance. Make note of
serial numbers of large and small
items. Keep these in a security vault
or with local police. For vehicles,
dies and stamp each item with a
mark. It's worth the investment! In
it's not a bad idea to make a small
ness telephone to alert the police.
In an employee's place of
ment to be used on off-duty hours
at an employee's place of residence.
It quickly has a habit of inadver-
tently becoming lost or misplaced.
If your operation is small, consider
equipment, don't permit your equip-
ment in their hands. Speaking of
equipment, don't permit your equip-
ment in their hands. Speaking of
item in your inventory. Make lists
of items carried in trucks and make
substitution game is crafty and em-
phatically disappears. Or a hank of manila
rope wears out too fast. Yes, the
substitution game is crafty and em-
fees become professionals at
drivers responsible for their being
there. For chemicals, assign the dis-
tribution to a foreman who keeps
all pesticides under lock and key.
Provide work clothes and lockers.
This discourages driving home from
the last job. Have employees park
their vehicles in front of the office
and away from the work area.
Another way to reduce employee
pilfering in areas where high value
items are located is by bonding.
While this may be satisfactory for
some, others in the "Green Industry"
find that it discourages potential
(continued on page 32)
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Park Irrigation Problems Toro Brochure Solves

For a park or recreation area to be an attractive, healthy, green environment for people, it must be watered adequately and consistently. And that can be accomplished with a minimum of manual attention, while actually conserving water, with the use of modern automatic underground irrigation systems, according to a new brochure from the Irrigation Division of The Toro Company.

The Toro brochure, titled “The Innovators Solve Turf Irrigation Problems in Park and Recreation Areas,” points out that turf areas serving different purposes, such as picnic grounds and open play fields, require varying amounts of water at varying intervals.

Those variables can be accommodated with precision and efficiency, regardless of topography, soil or climatic conditions, geographic location or seasonal changes, with modern automatic irrigation systems, the brochure states.

According to Toro, irrigation equipment—including master controllers, satellite controllers, valves and sprinkler heads—can be matched to the specific watering needs of “any park or recreation area, under any given set of circumstances, present or future, anywhere, anytime.”

Copies of the brochure may be obtained by writing to: Dept. PRA, Irrigation Division, The Toro Company, P.O. Box 489, Riverside, Calif. 92502.

For More Details Circle (163) on Reply Card