

Roland Taylor gives a complete guide to crime prevention and what to do to minimise the damage if the burglars do call.

TWOC

(TAKEN WITHOUT OWNER'S CONSENT)

With police forces throughout the UK severely stretched, the chances of break-ins and theft are greatly increased, especially where there is insufficient protection of property and equipment. Many golf courses are situated in isolated areas with their machinery sheds sited a long way from the main complex. In addition to burglaries, those courses close to a conurbation are also likely to be targets for vandalism.

It is a fact that police resources have been badly eroded in rural areas and due to lack of manpower and the distances involved, response to a crime can give the criminal a head start in getting away. One answer to this problem is the formal or informal self-help crime prevention schemes. Courses located in rural areas might like to consider setting one of these up.

Insurance companies, when assessing a club and the level of premiums will expect an individual within the organisation to be responsible for the security. Part of this person's brief should be to make members aware of the importance of reporting any unusual activity both in the complex and out on the course. By making everyone vigilant, the risks of a crime being committed can be reduced. Neighbourhood Watch has proved this in the domestic sector. Your own "Club Watch" could be a good idea.

As far as course maintenance equipment is concerned, the question is how much and what type of security is required to be effective?

A theft prevention plan needs to be drawn up and should be reviewed on a regular basis. In preparing this it is necessary to take into account the following aspects:

- Stopping thieves gaining entry
- Make removal as difficult as possible
- If stolen goods are recovered you will have to be able to prove they were your property.

Gaining entry

There are three things that should be borne in mind at this stage - time, noise and lights. Thieves are going to think twice if a break-in is going to be a long process, plus the possibility of alarms and warning lights going off.

Fencing around the machinery compound is the first line of defence. This can be of the heavy chain-link type, close boarded or a special high security fence. All these should be securely attached to posts set in concrete. Barb or razor wire can be used on the top, but only where members of the public are not likely to come into contact with it. The gates need to be strongly constructed and mounted so that they cannot be removed from their hinges.

Anti theft security posts can also be used to secure the entry and exits from the storage area and in front of the entry doors. One manufacturer states that their range has been tested to an impact speed of 20mph. The posts bent from vertical to approximately 15 degrees at an estimated impact weight of 34 tonnes. These types of posts can be quickly placed in position or removed and are locked at the top. Anyone considering using posts should make sure they are buying anti-theft and not for anti-parking ones.

Perimeter lighting and alarm systems are another possibility. Clear an area of undergrowth around the outside of the compound so that any would-be intruder has no cover in which to work on gaining entry. It sounds like it is being suggested you build Stalag 17, but, unfortunately determined criminals will go to great lengths to gain access.

Buildings

Often as not, use has to be made of what already exists, but in situations where there is a choice, purpose-built storage units should be the first consideration. These come in a variety of shapes and sizes and can be specially manufactured to specific requirements.

A company specialising in these types of structures should be consulted. Heavy-duty steel container units with security locks are a popular choice.

Where traditional brick or timber buildings are used, they will require regular attention to ensure they are kept in good repair. Replace any rotted timber especially around windows and doors. Windows can be barred or covered internally with metal screening. The doors should be fitted with heavy-duty hinges and internal bolts and an alarm system needs to be installed.

Any locks (including padlocks) should always be to the highest security standards and quality available. Again, it is best to go to a company specialising in these.

Surveillance cameras

There are some situations where the cost of these is justified, or they could be part of a much larger system that monitors the hotel car parks and other sites around a complex. If one of these is being considered it is a good idea to make sure the machinery compound is included as this is where considerable amount of capital is tied up.

Signage

This is a relatively cheap form of deterrent. It may make the thief think breaking-in is too risky. The signs should tell a prospective intruder that the building has alarms, surveillance cameras and other security protection. These signs must look professional.

Equipment

Lets assume that potential thieves have gained entry to the building. For their operation to be successful they now have to remove the machinery. It is at this point that they are faced with the next line of defence - immobilisation.

A determined team of criminals will come equipped with the means of moving what they are after. This could include a low loader lorry with lifting gear and winches.

Pedestrian mowers and turfcare machinery can be chained to larger units or immovable objects such as wall or ground locks.

Tools, brushcutters, chainsaws and other small items are best stored in specially constructed units that are bolted down or cemented into the floor. There are units of this type also available for vehicles so that equipment can be made secure when being used out on the course.

When it comes to larger machinery, this can be immobilised using wheel clamps. Remove all ignition keys, set any alarms or manual electronic immobilisers. Trailers and other towed equipment can be chained in the same way as pedestrian mowers.

It would have taken thieves a considerable time and probably a lot of noise to overcome the obstacles outlined above - as a result there is every chance they will think twice before staging the robbery.

Recovery

So, you discover an empty storage area - it's at this point that the problems really start. Replacement equipment is urgently needed; there are the police and insurance companies to deal with - its hassle all the way from here on. In addition, to this costs start escalating and a lot of time is lost.

Detailed information on what has been stolen will be required. Whilst none of this can be avoided, there are some things that can be done to speed up the recovery.

Trackers

These systems are largely used on cars and large plant machinery. It may be worth considering installing one on the more expensive equipment. An electronic tracking device is fitted and once the item is moved a signal is emitted showing its location. This is picked up by a monitoring station and relayed to the police.

DON'T LET IT HAPPEN TO YOU

ID Tagging

Over the last few years this form of identification has become popular and today many manufacturers fit tags before the equipment leaves the factory. These consist of microchips that contain a code that relates to the product. The code together with make, model and serial numbers are fed into a mainframe computer. Once the machine has been sold, information regarding the new owner is added to the database. In the event of it being stolen the details of the police are who are involved are also recorded.

The tags size makes them virtually impossible to detect with the naked eye and a number can be applied to different parts of a unit. They can only be read using specialist equipment, which a large number of police forces throughout the country now have.

Multi-technology readers are now available that can read and write to a whole range of tags and this combined with a considerable reduction in costs will see increasing use of these identification systems in the future.

Your own ID

This can be stamped into metal parts of the machine, which are normally out of sight. It could be a series of numbers or letters. A record of what has been done and where, needs to be kept.

Computer records

Modern computer systems are ideal for keeping up-to-date information on equipment. This should include,

Suppliers details
All serial numbers including engine
Any modifications that have been made
Purchase price
Depreciation
Photographs can also be easily stored.

All this information can be accessed quickly with as little delay as possible. Where a machine is stolen, it is a good idea to inform the supplier or manufacturer. This is because there is

an outside chance the new owner might contact them or one of their dealers regarding parts or manuals.

Some publications also run a column listing stolen equipment in case one of their readers is approached with a bargain offer.

Staff

Theft can occur any time and anywhere and staff should be always vigilant, not just with their employer's equipment but also their own belongings, whether out on the course or in the staff room. It is a hot day, so a jacket containing a wallet is left on the grass or money is left in a lunch bag in the staff area. The majority of these types of theft are carried out on the spur of the moment. An opportunity presents itself and is taken. This kind of situation not only causes the victim loss and upset it can also lead to suspicion and lower staff moral.

Responsibility

Throughout this article we have talked about the different forms of security. You can have the best anti-theft protection available, but if doors are left open all day and machinery left out on the course unattended for long periods - then it is all worthless.

Each security system requires human input, either to switch it on or to lock something up. One member of the greenkeeping team should be responsible for carrying out the security procedures, otherwise there is the possibility that one person will think another has done it.

Sods Law is that the break-in will occur that night.

No security procedures or systems provide 100% protection. Determined thieves will find a way of getting what they want. At best you can secure premises and property to the degree at which they realise it is going to be a difficult operation and decide to give it a miss.

8PM

NOW YOU SEE IT



8AM

NOW YOU SEE IT!



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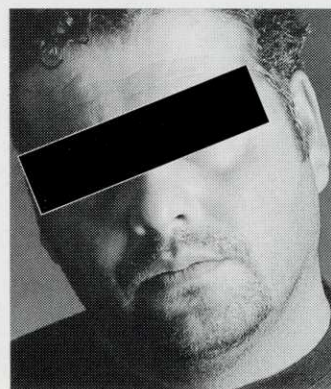


Tel: 01522 529444

Fax: 01522 510868

Email: stopthief@btinternet.com www.lincmaster.co.uk

KEEP THIS SCUM OUT OF WORK



This man makes a living out of stealing other people's property. If it will fit in his van he'll have it.

But there is one thing that really spoils his day. And that is when he sees anything with a Datatag warning sticker. Because he immediately knows that the owner has covertly attached high-tech transponders to their property.

Which means that it can be traced back to its lawful owner in seconds.

And although this scum may be a common thief, he is certainly no fool. So he'll go looking for an easier target.

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Datatag ID Ltd., Sapwith Drive, Brooklands, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0UZ
Tel: 01932 358100 www.datatag.co.uk email: info@datatag.co.uk