

# Contractors – lock up and leave or lose



TruckSure

By Trevor Toohill

I usually write my articles with the transporter and owner operator in mind but of course a whole lot of other trades and industries use light, medium and heavy trucks for all purposes.

One thing I have noticed over the last couple of years is the increasing incidence of theft and accordingly theft claims – truck batteries and trade tools being top of the list!

However, just about anything that isn't nailed down is fair game.

During recent research I came across the following article which gives a pretty good overview of the problem and what you and particularly trade contractors should be doing about the security of your gear. There are similar risks to transport operators of all sizes and many use containers and small sheds for storing valuable tools and equipment.

IBANZ, John Lucas - ICNZ Insurance manager, and the publisher of Covernote have kindly given permission for me to reproduce the item here in TRUCK Journal.

As usual if you feel like discussing this then contact through [www.trucksure.co.nz](http://www.trucksure.co.nz) and talk to our brokers.

## "Theft Of Trade Tools A Growing Problem?"

Theft from trade vehicles is becoming a common problem, but very few trade tools in vehicles and on worksites are adequately secured. The Insurance Council (ICNZ) and NZ Police are urging brokers to educate their clients on how to reduce the risks of tool theft.

NZ Police report that about \$200,000 worth of hand and power tools were stolen from the Waitemata/North Shore area in just a one month period.

During January while people were on leave and work sites were closed, approximately \$57,000 worth of power tools were stolen from residential garden sheds and 18 builders' vehicles were broken into with \$85,000 worth of tools stolen.

Police believe that the perpetrators were well organized and were actively targeting worksites, trade vehicles and residential properties that were not well secured.

Some of the vehicles had tools stolen from them on worksites, while others were broken into on the street and up residential driveways.

Of the thefts on construction sites, 40% had no security. Construction site containers are normally considered ideal for site tools and equipment lock ups. However, these containers are only as good as their locks and any surrounding security. A number of the shipping containers that were broken into had padlocks smashed and evidence that heat was used.

It's also possible thefts from construction sites are the result of inside knowledge from other workers on site and that the

whereabouts of valuable tools is being communicated to organized criminals.

It is certainly worth talking to tradie clients about investing in extra security for vehicles. Most trade vehicles have factory immobilisers preventing the vehicle being stolen but not enough is being done to protect the vehicle contents. Insurance claim deductibles for commercial tool thefts are about \$1,000 so many thefts are simply not claimed for.

Very few trade vehicles are equipped with alarms including motion and glass break detectors or secured tool lock boxes. Power tools will often have serial numbers that should be recorded and better still is a covert form of ID like SelectDNA.

The installation of unique identifiers on power tools (and even truck batteries) is more robust as serial numbers can be removed. SelectDNA is a covert marking system, similar to data dots. Police are equipped with the special lights that can identify if property is marked.

Being able to positively identify stolen property in the possession of someone else then allows Police to track down the owner and charge the suspect. A lack of any form of property identification makes the Police's job that much harder and often the offender cannot be charged.

### Loss prevention initiatives for worksites and depots

- Record serial numbers of all power tools and equipment
- Purchase a covert identification kit that will mark all tools – these cost about \$50
- Keep photographs of tools – record on your smartphone
- Keep garages and tool sheds securely locked
- Consider employing security on construction sites

- Consider installing security cameras on construction sites
- Install better quality locks on container lock ups, and consider monitoring to your cellphone

### For trade vehicles with equipment inside

- Many trade vehicles have locks forced and rear canopies broken into. Install lockable purpose built tool lock boxes and securely fix to the vehicle
- Install audible intrusion and motion sensor alarms
- Connect tool boxes to the alarm system
- Remove tools from trade vehicle during the evenings and on weekends
- Lock vehicles on worksites when unattended
- Consider installing dark tinted window film to keep tools out of sight
- Avoid parking trade vehicles on the street at night, if at all possible

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