CONTRACTOR’S EQUIPMENT: A GUIDE TO BETTER SECURITY

“Security on construction sites should be a major concern for all contractors. The total losses due to theft and vandalism on construction sites have been increasing dramatically over the past decade. Exact figures are not available, but estimates place the losses in the billions of dollars.” (American Insurance Services Group, Inc.)

While you may not be able to keep professional thieves from stealing your property, you can make it extremely difficult for them, and virtually impossible for amateurs. The layout of a construction job site and its corresponding security plan often make the difference between controlling losses and suffering costly thefts. A job site without guards, fencing, adequate lighting or controlled exits makes a very easy target.

There is no perfect security program because job sites in different locations require different protective measures.

Poor Security Affects Everyone

Remember, when job sites have inadequate security, contractors and their subcontractors are exposed to:

- Theft by employees, and the public resulting in loss of material and time delays to procure replacements.
- Vandalism by employees, former employees, local gangs or children.
- Arson or accidental fires caused by vandals, vagrants or children.
- Injuries or fatalities to children who wander onto an unprotected construction site.

Theft Costs You in Many Ways

Some contractors ignore job site theft or decide not to take action against it. They simply add stolen property cost to job costs. These direct costs can be substantial. As much as 3-5% of the job cost, according to one estimate. But there are also some significant indirect costs of job site theft:

- When stolen tools aren’t available, delays inevitably occur and productivity drops.
- Contractors sometimes buy cheap tools to cut theft losses. These tools may be too shoddy to steal, but they also negatively affect productivity because they work poorly, wear out quickly and break.
- When theft is rampant at a job site, employees’ tools are likely to be stolen. Some union contracts hold employers responsible for theft of employees’ tools.
- Employer-tolerated theft hurts employee morale. Honest workers don’t like working where theft is ignored. Poor morale leads to poor productivity and friction.
Management is seen as weak and ineffective.