

Preventing Building Site Theft

Key Features

Millions of dollars are lost on home building sites through theft and vandalism. Thieves are resourceful and anything on a building site is vulnerable, e.g. tools, materials, timber and especially white goods/appliances. Theft from residential construction sites accounts for 1% of the cost of a new home. These hidden costs are often passed onto the homebuyer.

This brochure is part of an overall package developed to assist builders/owners to reduce the incidence of building site theft and vandalism, promote site safety and reduce the associated costs of site theft to the industry and the public.

Importance of Neighbours

At all stages of the building process, neighbours can play an important part by reporting suspicious behaviour. Get to know immediate neighbours and make your contact details available. Ask for their help and give them the attached checklist to be completed if they see anything suspicious.

Foundation Stage

✓ Items	Notes
Fencing	Temporary fencing can help reduce the incidence of theft and vandalism. Information on fencing, such as builder details and afterhours contacts prominently displayed on the site, will assist the Police in responding quickly to an incident and identifying a specific house / lot construction site.
Power/Lighting	If street lighting has not yet been activated, consider placing some form of temporary lighting illuminating the front and footpath areas of the building site.
Co-ordinated Deliveries	Where possible coordinate deliveries of materials and goods to coincide with their use or installation by tradesmen. Most thefts occur when items such as windows and timber are left out unattended for extended periods of time.

Frame Stage

✓ Items	Notes
Site Safety	Materials, dirt or rubbish left on the footpath are a hazard and can leave the builder/owner subject to expensive legal action should an injury or damage take place.
On-Site Storage	Consider placing an on-site storage container or compound for secure storage of tools and materials. It is also a good idea, space permitting, to park your trade vehicles within the site to prevent theft of, or from, vehicles.
Marking of Materials	All materials and timber should be marked with the company name or building site lot number.

Lock up Stage

✓ Items	Notes
Windows/Door Locks	At lock-up stage, ensure the building becomes less vulnerable to theft. Ensure that all doors and windows have adequate locks fitted and that all locks are engaged when the site is unoccupied.
Appliance Delivery	Try to co-ordinate the delivery of expensive appliances to coincide with their installation. Don't leave appliance packaging in view, as it provides a visible cue for potential thieves.
Access Controls	The builder/owner should ensure that all Master keys are accounted for. Recover keys, no longer required by tradesmen and delivery contractors, as soon as possible.
Alarms	If fitted, have the alarm system activated and operating as soon as possible. Monitored alarms are best as they provide a notification service to Police from the monitoring agency.

Fit Out Stage

✓ Items	Notes
Appliances	Fit-out of major appliances and whitegoods should be delayed until the last possible opportunity. Some builders do fit-outs with the new owner present, who then takes possession of the house.
High Risk Items	High-risk items, such as spas and compact hot water services, should be secured in a manner making them difficult to steal. There are a range of special bonding adhesives, and tamper-proof metal fasteners, which can be used to make the theft of these items more difficult.

Handover Stage

✓ Items	Notes
Co-ordinated Handover	All efforts to expedite the hand-over process should be made. A fully completed house with no occupants is a target for an opportunistic thief. The builder should aim to hand over the keys to the house as soon as possible after the work is completed.
Check Contract Items	The builder and purchaser should check over the contract upon completion of the home. The purchaser should ask for, and receive, details of serial and model number of appliances/whitegoods that have been fitted.
Property Inventory	The purchaser should record the details of all valuables in the home by marking, with an engraver or ultraviolet pen, to deter theft. These details should be recorded on an inventory form for referral if necessary, at a later date.
Review Security	As soon as possible after taking possession, the purchaser of the home should review the security measures in place. This may include the changing of lock barrels, fitting security lighting and window locks etc.



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