

Construction Sites – Tool Theft

This Loss Prevention Standard provides guidance on reducing the potential for tool theft on construction sites.

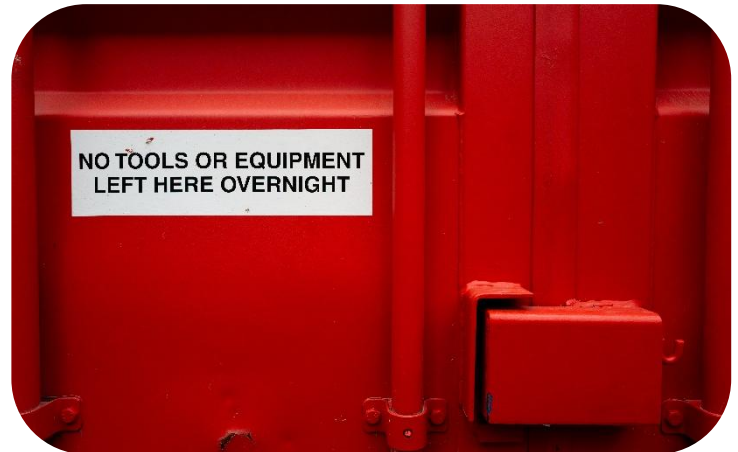
Construction Sites – Tool Theft

Introduction

The theft of tools and small items of plant and equipment from construction sites is a significant risk for contractors, subcontractors, plant hire companies and project owners.

In addition to the direct replacement cost, tool theft often results in damage to the premises and other property, hire costs, project delays and programme disruption.

Effective management requires a combination of physical security, procedural controls, asset identification and recovery measures.



Understanding the Risks

Commonly targeted items include:

- Power tools.
- Hand tools.
- Surveying equipment.
- Portable generators and compressors.
- Disc cutters and breakers.
- Lighting towers.
- Batteries and battery charging equipment.
- Lifting accessories.
- Specialist trade equipment.

These items are portable, relatively easy to remove and usually have a strong second-hand market value. Factors that can increase the risk of theft include:

- Location, e.g., busy city or town centres, quiet rural or remote sites, etc.
- Inadequate perimeter security.
- Poorly secured site compounds and storage containers.
- Poor electronic security, e.g., intruder alarms, video surveillance systems (VSS), etc.
- Unsecured tools left in work areas.
- Insufficient out-of-hours security during shutdowns, holiday periods, etc.
- Vehicles containing tools left unattended or overnight.
- Lack of asset registers and inventory controls.
- Lack of tracking, marking and ownership identification systems.

Managing the Risks

Management and Planning

The following measures should be considered during project planning and implemented throughout the construction works:

- Conduct a security risk assessment to identify assets at risk, assess their vulnerability to theft, and determine appropriate security controls.
- Develop and maintain a documented tool theft prevention strategy.
- Consider enhanced security measures for high-value tools, plant, and specialist equipment.
- Regularly review and update security arrangements in response to changes in site conditions, project programmes, or occupancy levels.
- Incorporate theft prevention requirements into site induction and awareness processes.

Site Security

Construction sites should be protected through a layered security approach which should include:

- Site hoarding or adequate security fencing.
- Controlled access and egress points.
- Security personnel appropriate to the risk.
- Video Surveillance Systems (VSS) with remote monitoring capability.
- Adequate external lighting.
- Security warning signage.
- Enhanced security during non-working periods.

Refer to the Aviva Loss Prevention Standard **Construction Sites - Security** for further guidance.

Storage Arrangements

When tools and equipment are not in use, the following controls should be adopted:

- Store tools in robust, locked tool chests or cabinets.
 - ✓ Use security-rated storage containers, stores, and padlocks.
- Locate internal storage areas away from public access points.
- Secure external storage compounds with appropriate fencing and locking arrangements.
- Consider the use of intruder alarm systems for theft attractive equipment locations.
- Remove surplus tools, plant, and equipment from site as soon as they are no longer required.

Construction sites are particularly vulnerable to theft during periods of reduced occupancy, such as evenings, weekends, holidays and site shutdowns.

- Remove tools and portable equipment from site and increase security monitoring during these periods.

Refer to the Aviva Loss Prevention Standard **Security - Locks** for further guidance.

Vehicle Security

Vehicles are frequently targeted due to the ease with which tools and equipment can be removed and transported. Where tools are transported in vehicles, ensure:

- Only tools required for current operations are carried.
- Vehicles are adequately secured.
 - ✓ Consider upgraded physical and electronic security measures.
- Tools are kept out of sight.
- Security-rated tool vaults or fixed storage units are installed.
- Vehicles are parked in secure, visible and well-lit locations.
- Tools should not be left in vehicles overnight.

Refer to the Aviva Loss Prevention Standard **Tool Theft from Vehicles** for further guidance.

Asset Management and Equipment Identification

Effective asset management plays a key role in monitoring equipment movements, identifying missing items promptly and supporting investigations and item recovery.

Considerations should include:

- Maintaining an up-to-date inventory of tools and equipment.
- Recording ownership details, serial numbers, make and model information.
- Operating a sign-in / sign-out system for shared equipment.
- Undertaking periodic stock checks.
- Promptly investigating missing items.
- Minimising the quantity of tools stored on site.

Tools and equipment should be:

- Permanently marked with unique identifiers.
- Recorded photographically.
- Registered on recognised security marking or recovery schemes where appropriate.
- Considered for forensic marking technologies and covert identification systems.
- Risk assessed for the use of GPS-enabled tracking solutions on theft attractive assets.

Incident Response and Recovery

A prompt and effective response to theft incidents can improve recovery prospects, minimise disruption, and help prevent further losses.

The following measures should be considered:

- Maintain accurate records of tools, equipment, and assets to support theft investigations and recovery efforts.
- Report thefts to the police as soon as practicable.
- Preserve all relevant evidence, including Video Surveillance System (VSS) footage, access records, and witness statements.
- Notify insurers promptly and in accordance with policy requirements.
- Utilise asset-tracking technologies and recovery services where available.
- Investigate incidents and review security arrangements to identify lessons learned and opportunities for improvement.
- Communicate relevant findings to site management and the workforce to strengthen theft prevention measures.

Contact Information

Canada

Please visit [Aviva Risk Management Solutions | Aviva Canada](#) or email us at arms.canada@aviva.com

Ireland

Please visit [Insurance Risk Management | Business Risk Management Insurance - Aviva Ireland](#) or Email us at armsireland@aviva.com

United Kingdom

Please visit [Aviva Risk Management Solutions](#) or email us at riskadvice@aviva.com. To speak to one of our advisors, call 0345 366 6666.*

*The cost of calls to 03 prefixed numbers are charged at national call rates (charges may vary dependent on your network provider) and are usually included in inclusive minute plans from landlines and mobiles. For our joint protection telephone calls may be recorded and/or monitored.

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For more information please visit: [Insurance Risk Management | Business Risk Management Insurance - Aviva Ireland](#)

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- Site Security - [Orbis Protect](#)
- Vacant Site Security - [VPS](#)
- Security Marking - [Selectamark](#)
- Electronic Security - [SECOM](#)
- Vacant Property Security - [Vigilance](#)

For more information please visit: [Aviva Risk Management Solutions - Specialist Partners](#)

Standards, Sources and Useful Links

Canada

- CPTED Canada and local police/municipal CPTED guidance.

United Kingdom

- National Business Crime Centre [Construction Sites Security Guidance](#)
- Secured by Design [Construction Site Security Guide](#)

Loss Prevention Standards

These documents set out best practice recommendations to help reduce the likelihood and impact of losses.

Relevant Aviva Loss Prevention Standards include:

- **Construction Sites - Security**
- **Tool Theft from Vehicles**
- **Mobile Plant Theft from Construction Sites**
- **Delivering Successful Construction Projects**
- **Security - Locks**
- **Security - Doors, Windows and Other Barriers**

Please visit [Loss Prevention Standards](#) to view the full library.

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26th August 2026

Version 1.0

ARMSGI4902026

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