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Dealership Security Program

There is an average of 470 cars stolen in Canada each day. According to The Insurance Bureau of Canada, the cost to Canadians is about 1 billion dollars each year, \$600 million in insurance premiums, and \$400 million in health care, police, court and corrections costs.

The theft of late model vehicles, especially those not equipped with an anti theft device are more likely to be stolen than those equipped with such a device. Cars left insecure on a car sales lot are an invitation to criminals. Therefore, it is essential that Car Lot owners take a proactive approach to combat auto theft. The following suggestions are made to help you prevent car theft from your lot, and unlawful entries into your building.

Lot and Building Security

We have all heard the expression a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Your car lot and building is the same. Here are some suggestions to increase the security of your business and decrease your chance of becoming a victim.

Ensure vehicles cannot be driven or towed from your lot. The best method to prevent this is to provide a fence around your property with a locked access gate. If a fence and gate is impractical, it is recommended that the cars be arranged around the perimeter of the lot so they cannot be driven or towed. After hours, disabled vehicles should be parked at the entrance to the lot to prevent vehicle access.

Make sure the lot is well lit. Adequate exterior and interior lighting will deter criminals.

Install a monitored alarm system in your building. Criminals are less likely to break into a building if it is alarmed. Having your building alarmed will signal a response from police if your building is entered. It is also recommended that the smoke of fire detection be installed at the same time, and monitored by your alarm company. Smoke detection can be installed for as little as \$75 per detector, and monitored for no additional cost.

Alarm systems are a deterrent to criminals and will signal a response if your business is broken into. Therefore, it is important to identify vulnerable points of entry or "weak links" in your building security. Insure that all doors not visible from the street are solid and equipped with dead bolt locks. Windows not visible from the street should be barred or security glazed.

In many cases, most criminals that break into businesses have been there before, most likely during business hours casing your business so be aware, and make note of anyone suspicious. It is important for you to identify items within your building that have a higher potential for theft such as vehicle keys, parts, cash, and computer equipment. It is these types of items that criminals are after therefore it is necessary to insure that these items are secure within your premises. Items such as keys and cash should be locked in a ULC listed safe. Items such as parts should be locked in a parts room within the interior of the building restricting direct access.

Key and Vehicle Control

You cannot manage what you do not control. Criminals stealing cars from car lots usually do so by using the key. The thief posing as a customer, will either steal the key from the keyboard, or when taking the car for a test drive, they will have another key made and return later and steal the car.

The following system will assist you in maintaining key control and preventing thefts from occurring.

- Maintain a daily inventory of all vehicles on your lot, which includes description, value and VIN number.
- Identify a member of your staff (Sales Manager) as the "Key Controller" This person will be responsible for the key inventory that will include signing them out to salesmen.
- All keys should be locked in a steel key cabinet at all times that is attached to a wall that is out of site of the public. The Key Controller will be the only one with access.
- Each key should have a tag attached to the key identifying which vehicle the key belongs to. The date the vehicle was put into inventory should also be included. A duplicate tag is left on the hook so the key controller will know what keys are out.
- Each salesperson is given tokens. The number of tokens is determined by how many cars the salesperson is allowed to test-drive at one given time. These tokens are engraved with the salespersons name. When a set of keys are given to a salesperson, the salesperson will give a token to the Key Controller who hangs the token on the hook where the keys were removed. At the end of the day if the keys are not returned the Key Controller will know who has them. This will also allow other salespeople to find the keys easier and preventing lost sales.

Vehicle Test Drive Log

A vehicle test drive log should be completed each time a vehicle is test driven by a customer. The log should be set up per vehicle and include the date driven, customers name, drivers license number, address and the salesperson who authorized the test drive. The purpose of the log is to not only track customer interest in vehicles which will help sales, but also maintain a security log if a vehicle is not returned or later goes missing. Recording complete details about the customer test-driving the vehicle will act as a deterrent to potential thieves. If the vehicle is stolen, the sign out log can provide police with valuable information to assist in recovering the vehicle. It is also important to keep this log in a safe place out of site from the public.

Useful Contacts

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