

MARINE SECURITY

Although organized marine theft is on the rise, there are many things you can do to protect yourself and your property against thieves.

Boaters are advised to practice the common sense crime prevention measures mentioned in this pamphlet and to keep in mind the three factors which discourage thieves everywhere:

- time
- noise
- visibility

Any crime prevention technique which requires a thief to spend more time, to make more noise, or to be more visible during the commission of the crime, may discourage the thief altogether.

BOATING EQUIPMENT

Mark it Engrave your driver's license number on all of your valuable boating gear. Include the prefix CA to indicate California, or if from another state, the abbreviation of that state. This will enable authorities to trace lost or stolen items. You have a better chance of recovering your property and the authorities have a better case to prosecute.

Photograph it Photograph, or video tape, the interior and exterior of your vessel showing all installed equipment and additional gear carried. A photograph of any unique features, equipment, or even identifying marks or scratches can be useful. Open drawers and lockers and photograph interiors and contents. Date and sign the photographs and add any clarifying or identifying messages. Store the photographs or video tapes in a safe place -- not on the boat.

Record it Compile a written inventory of your marine equipment, boat and trailer. List all electronics, outboard engines, and other gear by brand name, model and serial number. Use the attached "marine security record" or design one of your own, and store it, along with your photo record, in a safe place away from the

boat. Also provide your insurance company with a copy of both documents.

Record information about your boat by the make, model, registration number, and hull identification number. It is a good idea to engrave your hull identification number, or driver's license number with your state's designated letters, in one or more hidden places on your boat. Write down the location of the hidden number or numbers and store it with your inventory and photo record. If thieves alter or remove your boat's original hull identification number, the hidden number can be used for identification.

Store it Probably the best way to keep thieves from removing property from your boat is not to leave it aboard. When securing your vessel, take home as much gear as you can, including your TV, radio, CB, outboard engines and other gear. If it is not practical to take it with you, store it aboard in a cabinet or locker with a good quality lock. Make sure you remove the key code or combination code from any lock you use. Chain dinghies or outboards left on board. A secure boat cover would also help -- out of sight, out of mind.

TRAILERABLE BOATS

Trailerable boats are the most frequent targets of marine theft. Stealing a boat is much easier if a thief can hitch up to your boat and trailer and drive away. These tips may help:

- Store your boat and trailer in a locked garage or storage shed.
- If you store your boat at home, put it in the back or side yard out of sight.
- Store it with the tongue of the trailer not easily accessible to a thief.
- If you must store your boat in an open driveway, carport, or open side lot, park another vehicle or other large object in front of the trailer.
- If your boat will be stored on a vehicle roof rack for an extended time, chain and padlock the boat to the rack.
- An effective preventive measure for outside storage is to remove one trailer wheel -- store your spare tire separately or secure it with a chain and lock.

- Secure your boat and trailer to a pole or tree with a good quality chain and lock.
- Purchase a good quality trailer hitch lock and use it -- even if you store your boat indoors.
- If you must leave your boat along the shoreline during an extended outing, you may want to remove your outboard motor or secure it with a transom lock.

VESSEL SECURITY

Boats are not generally constructed with security in mind. However, there are several things you can do to reduce the risk of vessel theft.

Heavy duty hinges can be placed on all outside hatches. Hatches can be locked with heavy duty safety hasps and good quality padlocks. However, they are of very little value if they can be pried off. Place match plates on the inside of the doors and hatches and, if possible, bolt through. Interior locking devices can be installed on hatches -- particularly forward hatches. **If these are installed, they should be in the unlocked position while under way.** There are a number of window locks on the market which can be used. You may also wish to cut dowels to fit the windows. However, do not rely on dowels as the only means of security.

DOCK SECURITY

Many boat thieves are successful because they look as if they belong in the area. Become acquainted with your dock neighbors and harbormaster. Help start a "dock watch" at your marina or berthing area. A tactful offer to assist a stranger in finding a person or a boat may alert thieves that you are looking out for each other.

If you plan to leave your boat for any length of time, close and lock all hatches and close window draperies. If you don't have draperies on your windows stow things out of sight, preferably in a locked area. Don't leave portable televisions, radios, and alcoholic beverages in plain view. Needless to say, take your keys with you whenever you leave your vessel.