



## Lee's Summit Police Department

# Business eWatch

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### Common Locations for theft include:

- **Building Sites**
- **Churches**
- **Historical Buildings**
- **Unused commercial**

### Or domestic buildings

- **Scrap yards**
- **Residential streets**

## Preventing Scrap Metal Theft

As scrap metal prices rise, so do reports of AC unit, copper, and catalytic converter thefts. Business owners have several crime prevention options available to them when brainstorming ways to better secure AC units, under-used buildings, and vehicle fleets.

### *AC Units*

AC units pose a greater risk of being stolen due to their outside location, usually on the back or less-travelled sides of buildings. Since criminals do not want to be seen or heard, AC units are easy targets for thieves looking to scrap a quick buck. Certain security measures can be made to help reduce the likelihood of your property becoming a target. We can typically deter would-be thieves by making their target too risky, too time-consuming, or too difficult to steal. Since most AC unit thefts occur during the overnight hours, proper lighting throughout the property plays a key part in theft prevention. The parking lot, exterior doors, AC units, and out buildings should all bill well lit. Dusk-to-dawn lights are preferred over motion sensors. Why allow a thief to creep around the dark spaces of your property? Instead, keep the property well lit throughout the night. Good lighting means a criminal can be easily seen, which increases his chances of being caught. This makes your property risky.

Additionally, an audible alarm attached to the AC unit can help ward off thieves. Alarms should be loud enough for passers-by to hear and should have their own power source and/or backup battery. Surveillance video or motion-sensor cameras can also help deter and identify thieves. Performing daily inspections of units can help prevent further damage, as many thieves spend 2-3 days removing property from a single AC unit. Finally, the safest option is to install AC Units on the roof, whenever possible.

A stream of products using new technologies are readily available, including the Thief Zapper. This device installs on an existing AC unit and sends the owner a text alert if the unit is stolen. Other companies have developed smartphone apps that allow owners to view surveillance footage in real time. Motion sensor activation text alerts the owner as well.

### *Copper*

Copper is usually stolen from uninhabited buildings. If you have an unused building on your property, you may be at risk. As mentioned before, lighting is an excellent deterrent. Additionally, consider reinforcing all exterior doors since thieves typically kick or pry doors open to gain access to abandoned buildings. Exterior doors should be composed of solid wood or metal. Install a Grade 1 quality deadbolt lock with at least a 1 1/2" throw. Consider adding a metal doorframe reinforcer called a Jambbrace and 3" screws in the strike plate. Finally, leave blinds open and a few interior lights on so passers-by can see if anyone is inside the business after close.

### *Catalytic Converters*

It only takes a thief a few seconds to remove the catalytic converter from a vehicle. Devices like the CatClamp act as a shield to discourage potential thieves. If you have a vehicle fleet, consider securing the lot during overnight hours. Use a cut resistant deadbolt to secure the gate and keep the lot well lit.

Taking a few small steps in the crime prevention direction will greatly reduce your chances of being targeted for AC unit, copper, or catalytic converter theft. These crimes will continue to fluctuate with the market price of scrap metal, so making a long-term investment will most certainly be worth the expense.

### Additional Personal Safety Online Resources:

The National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) offers safety tips for adults, teens and children on the web at <https://www.ncpc.org/>

The New York Police Department addresses travel safety and street smarts at [http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/crime\\_prevention/personalsafety.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/crime_prevention/personalsafety.shtml)

Consultant Journal provides individual consultants with a series of questions you can use to assess personal safety risk when meeting with new clients. Article here: <http://consultantjournal.com/blog/assessing-risk-safety-new-clients>

Sign-up to receive Business eWatch by creating a user profile online at: <http://cityofls.net/City-of-Lees-Summit/Registration.aspx?returnurl=%2fCity-of-Lees-Summit.aspx>

## Personal Safety During Client Meetings

Meeting with clients one-on-one is a necessity for many, but have you ever considered your personal safety during these encounters? Agreeing to meet with a complete stranger may be an everyday practice in your line of business, but taking a few precautionary steps may mean the difference between playing it safe or becoming a crime victim.

Consider apartment complex managers. They typically require a photo ID before showing an apartment to a prospective client. Managers photo copy the ID and check out with office staff before providing the tour. By forcing a potential assailant to identify himself up front, managers protect themselves from crimes like kidnapping and assault.

If you also meet with clients one-on-one, consider adding these proactive safety steps to your regular routine:

Before meeting with a new client, Google them. Check their affiliations online and make sure they are who they say they are.

Whenever possible, conduct your first meeting at your office or in an open public setting, like a coffee shop or community square.

Let someone know where you'll be, who you'll be with, and what time you'll return or be in touch. If you call this information in from the meeting location, let your client overhear the conversation.

Ask a friend or colleague to call you on your cell at a pre-arranged time during first-time client meetings.

If you'll be meeting in a dangerous or isolated area, consider bringing a partner. Don't agree to meet in dangerous neighborhoods after dark. Reserve these areas for early morning/daytime meetings only.

Avoid wearing expensive jewelry or carrying large amounts of cash.

For women, carry a briefcase instead of a purse. Wear comfortable flats or boots in place of heels.

Don't sit if the client stands.

Know where doors/exits are for a possible escape route. Position yourself between the exit and your client. Never let yourself get blocked into a room with no way of escape.

Similarly, follow the client. Don't let them follow you.

Appear confident and in control.

Drive defensively to and from client meetings.

Finally, trust your instincts! If something doesn't feel right, excuse yourself.

## Contact Us...

Business eWatch is published by the Lee's Summit Police Department's Public Information Unit. For more information, please contact:

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