



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

P.O. BOX 10070 – BROOKSVILLE, FL 34603-0070 FAX 352 796-0493 PHONE 352 754-6830

Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
Community/Media Relations Manager, 352-797-3609

Re: Construction Site Theft on the Rise

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With new construction on the rise in Hernando County, unfortunately construction sites have become a target location for thieves. District Detectives with the Hernando County Sheriff's Office have been called upon recently to investigate thefts taking place at homes and businesses under construction. Suspects are mostly targeting materials that are delivered by suppliers but have also targeted items that have been installed. Theft to construction sites are one of the main factors that cause pricing to rise in this field which directly affects the consumer and contractors.

District Two Detectives have provided a few tips (below) for citizens and contractors to take, in an effort to deter this type of activity.

- Establish theft-prevention policies and clearly communicate them to all workers, including subcontractors and their employees;
- Establish an inventory-control system for all equipment and tools;
- Distinctive Characteristics - Add characteristics to equipment or specific items so that in the event they are stolen it may be easier to identify the stolen item(s) and assist in returning the item(s) to the owner;
- Offer rewards to workers and citizens who provide information about theft;
- Develop a system to verify the identity of individuals who deliver packages, materials, and equipment (e.g., driver's license, company photo I.D., and/or credit card). With these forms of identification, one can be reasonably certain someone is who they say they are. If in doubt, call that person's company and verify employment;
- Offer financial incentives to supervisors and workers for practicing theft prevention, including prompt reporting of suspicious activity or persons around a work area;

- Site Security - Add security technology (such as cameras, GPS monitors, motion detectors, etc.) and keep the site well lit (if applicable). Utilize well-placed signage that denotes what security measures are being taken to help deter criminal activity. **This is one of the most essential steps;**
- Trespass Signage - Ensure the signage is well placed and within the guidelines of Florida State Statute 810.09 (D) for Construction Site Trespass;
- Neighborhood Involvement - Citizens living near construction sites are urged to contact law enforcement if they observe suspicious activity at or near the construction site. Suspicious activity may include, but is not limited to, after-hours (night time) visits by subjects removing items, persons on or near the construction site who are not performing construction type work, etc. Remember, **If You See Something, Say Something;**
- Let everyone know the construction foreman and supervisors are watching and keeping track;
- Educate everyone on the importance of preventing construction site thefts. Delays in reacquiring materials for a scheduled job causes workers to become backed up, resulting in loss of wages.

The Office of Sheriff:

The Office of the Sheriff is established by the Florida Constitution. As a constitutional officer, the Sheriff has the exclusive authority to administer his or her agency and is responsible for preserving the peace throughout the entire county, carrying out the laws of the state, the orders of Florida courts, and the ordinances of the Board of County Commissioners. The Sheriff is the chief law enforcement and correctional officer of the county.

Sheriff Al Nienhuis was initially appointed as the Sheriff of Hernando County by the Governor in January of 2011. He was then elected by the people of Hernando County in 2012, and remains accountable to them.