
 Management

Protect your assets, tenants against theft, scams

Although I am new to commercial real estate, I am not new to the numerous ways criminals try to victimize people. I have 19 years in law enforcement experience, and I would like to share some information to protect yourself as well as your properties, tenants and employees. Most crimes are crimes of opportunity and the criminals are always on the prowl. Hopefully this article will help to educate you and allow you to pass on this information to your employees as well as to your tenants and their customers.

One of the best things you can do is to always be aware of your surroundings. Simply look around when you walk out of your office. Be aware as you are getting into and out of your car. Simply acknowledging the people around you often can deter a criminal from committing a crime.

We all work in areas that make it easy for criminals to steal items out of our cars. You may park your car in an industrial park, business park, office building or retail center. The common thing for most of us is that we are parking our cars in open parking lots without security. This makes



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it easy for criminals to walk through the parking lot and look in cars and try the door handles. Most of the time, the cars that are broken into are the ones in which the owner forgot to lock the door.

You can do a few things to deter someone from breaking into your car. The first thing

is to always double check that your car is locked. If you have an alarm, make sure that you set it. Next, don't leave any valuable items in your car. If for some reason you do have to leave something valuable in your car, make sure you hide it the best you can. If a criminal cannot see it, he is less likely to break into your car. But remember, criminals spend a lot of time doing what they do, so when they see a jacket or blanket with a bulge under it, they know you are hiding something valuable. Try to place valuables in your trunk or, if you have an SUV, pull the back



Help discourage theft from tenants' vehicles in parking garages by reminding individuals to lock their doors, stay alert and remove or hide valuables.

cover over them.

A new trend for thieves is to follow delivery service trucks and steal packages once they are delivered. We know that the property manager is not always at the office when packages are delivered. One way to combat that is by requiring a signature so deliveries are not left sitting out for someone to steal. You can ask neighboring tenants and businesses if they would be willing to accept deliveries for you.

Fraudulent scams are the fastest growing crime. The important thing to remember is that if it is too good to be true, it most likely is a scam. The basis of a scam is someone trying to trick you into thinking you are in trouble or in harm's way, that you owe money or you're given an

offer you can't refuse.

On the business side of property management, be aware that scammers may try to mimic your company to scam your customers or tenants. Make sure to educate your tenants on how you will contact them and how you will ask for payment from them, so they will not fall prey.

Finally, one of the best things you can do is be a good witness. If you see anything suspicious, do not assume someone else will report it. Get a good description of the person. Also, a license plate number gives a great advantage to law enforcement. The more information you can give to the police, the better. Of course, the key is reporting information to law enforcement. I hope this information has been helpful.▲

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