

Marine Theft

Marine theft is a problem nationwide. All sizes and types of boats and related equipment are vulnerable. Millions of dollars in insurance claims are made each year due to the theft of boats, motors, trailers and an array of associated equipment.

What should you do if you are a victim of marine theft? Immediately report your loss to your local law enforcement agency, the Division of Watercraft, the United States Coast Guard if on federal water, your insurance company and the marina or storage manager. Law enforcement agencies can enter vital information into the national L.E.A.D.S. network which could assist in the recovery of your boat.

Some tips to protect your boat and equipment from theft include:

- When your boat is unattended, remove keys, registration and all equipment which cannot be locked inside the boat;
- Permanently mark or engrave all equipment with your social security number;
- Lock outboard motors and fuel tanks to the craft;
- Use a trailer hitch lock and chain the trailer to a fixed object in a well lighted area. If moored, secure the vessel to the dock with a steel cable and lock;
- Photograph your boat and equipment and record the OH number, hull identification number and the serial number of all electronics equipment for your file;
- Organize a dock watch program at your marina.

Caution must be exercised when buying a boat due to the number of stolen boats. To avoid problems, match the hull identification number listed on the title and registration to the one attached to the boat. Inspect the HIN on the transom to be sure it has not been altered in any way.