

Norfolk & Suffolk Crime Prevention

Guidance Note

Vehicle Fuel Theft



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NORFOLK
CONSTABULARY
Our Priority is You

Growing fuel prices in the last few years have led to an increase in the theft of fuel. Every accessible vehicle has become a potential target. Stolen fuel is not only costly to replace, but may incur additional costs due to missed deliveries and business disruption. In addition to fuel costs, there is often damage caused during the theft, such as damage to locking fuel caps, anti-siphon fillers and holes in tanks.

How do fuel thieves work?

If they can't get into the tank through the fuel cap they may cut fuel lines or drill directly into the tanks. The risk of damage must be considered when implementing any additional security measures. As with catalytic converter thefts, thieves target poorly monitored storage yards or warehouses storing fleet vehicles. Fuel thieves typically assess opportunities during the day time and strike at night or weekends. Be aware of loiterers and strangers walking through your parking areas and challenge any suspicious behaviour.

Defensive Parking

Where possible, park in a highly visible and well-lit area. Off-road parking areas such as secure compounds should be used whenever possible. A highly visible parking area should be open to view from passers-by or from a monitored

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CCTV system. Vehicles with a high clearance from the ground make fuel tanks and catalytic converters vulnerable and exposed to attack. Try to park in a way that will reduce this vulnerability and hinder access to these areas. Park vehicles so fuel tanks are as inaccessible as possible, i.e. parking the vehicle tank to wall or tank to tank if possible. The goal here is to obstruct access underneath the vehicle and near the fuel storage and filler points. At the very least you want to slow the thieves down as much as possible so that your other security measures have time to effectively respond.

Parking Area

Consider where you are parking. Generally thieves do not like to be seen committing a crime. Consider where the vehicles are parked and would a particular parking pattern allow a better view into the compound from passers-by. Make sure your compound does not contain anything that may assist a thief stealing from your vehicles i.e. empty barrels, tubing, wheel barrows and objects that could be used for climbing perimeter fencing.

Effective Security Lighting

Good dusk to dawn security lighting makes your vehicles visible to passers-by without creating glare. Also consider additional movement sensor lighting which would alert a passer-by to an intruder. It may be worth considering covering any lighting with protective caging.

Monitored CCTV

Recording images of thieves committing crimes that have already taken place can be of limited value. It is more effective to have monitored surveillance where an operator can see a prowler and challenge them via a remote public address system. The operator could also instigate an appropriate response should the prowler refuse to leave the site. This could prevent a crime from being committed and possibly save on costly repair bills and business disruption.

Security Fencing

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Good quality strong perimeter fencing will deter the occasional/opportunist thief and should slow down the more organized thieves so that your other security measures such as monitored CCTV can respond. Fencing on its own in a remote location will be vulnerable to attack if not supported by some form of surveillance and monitoring.

Signage

The fixing of signs highlights the security measures you have put in place and helps deter thieves. They can also remove a potential thief's excuses for being in a particular area or carrying out a specific action.

Some examples of wording for signs include:

- **Private property keep out**
- **Warning CCTV in operation**
- **Security patrols in operation**
- **Cat converters and property security marked**
- **All vehicles have security devices**
- **All vehicles are left with minimum fuel**

Rules

If you are a business premises make sure you have rules for staff and visitors. These should ensure that staff are vigilant and can challenge or act on suspicious behaviour.

Visitors should be asked to formally sign in to register their presence on your property and their reason for being there.

Locking Fuel Caps and Anti Siphoning Deterrents

There are many products available that can make the fuel tanks on your vehicles less vulnerable. Please be aware these could be damaged if an offender manages to gain access to your vehicle.

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Prior to carrying out any permanent adaptations or alterations to your vehicle ensure that whatever you intend to do does not affect your warranty or guarantees.

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