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Tools of the trade - why insurance isn't enough in the face of rising tool theft

Trade tools are more than just equipment; they're a tradie's livelihood. Yet, these high-value and easily portable items are becoming prime targets for thieves. A staggering 29,000 tools were stolen from Victorian tradies in the 12 months leading up to March 2023, costing a massive \$20 million annually, according to the Crime Statistics Agency.¹ It's a worrying trend that not only impacts the pocket, but also disrupts work and impedes relationships with clients and employers.

Insurance may seem like the obvious safety net; however, it's not a perfect solution. While insurance policies can cover the cost of tools, they can't compensate for the disruption to work schedules or the inconvenience of having to replace the tools. This scenario creates an extremely stressful situation for the tradie and the client, and can also have a significant cost impact for both parties. Delays to the jobs are almost inevitable if supplies, equipment, or materials can't be replaced in a timely manner.



What can be done to prevent tool theft?

The first line of defence against tool theft is a solid locking mechanism. Whether the tools are kept in a ute, garage, or job site, they should be secured in a heavy-duty toolbox that is further fixed to the vehicle or premises with a hardened steel chain and a strong padlock. Motion-activated alarms can provide an additional layer of security, emitting a sound if anyone attempts to tamper with the toolbox.

¹ <https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/crime-statistics/latest-victorian-crime-data/recorded-offences-2>



Media release

Despite these precautions, one of the most effective ways to deter thieves is through visible surveillance systems, specifically security cameras. When mounted prominently on a vehicle's tray or at a job site, security cameras serve as a powerful deterrent against theft. Most thieves are opportunistic and look for easy targets; the presence of a camera implies a higher risk of getting caught.

Modern security cameras come with advanced features like movement detection and real-time alerts. If someone attempts to tamper with the tools, the camera can send an immediate notification to a smartphone, helping the owner to act quickly. The high-definition video footage can also serve as crucial evidence in the case of theft, aiding in the identification and prosecution of thieves.

However, surveillance cameras are not solely about capturing or deterring thieves; they offer peace of mind, empowering tradies to focus on their work with the knowledge that the tools are under constant surveillance. Security cameras are also versatile and suitable for various locations like job sites, garages, or any remote location where tools might be stored. Many modern cameras are also solar-powered, making them sustainable and low-maintenance.

Uniden's range of home surveillance devices offers practical and efficient solutions for enhancing security for tradies. Products like the **Uniden Wirefree Security Range** from the **App Cam SOLO Series** provide high-quality footage, easy installation, and recording capabilities on both the camera and the cloud, as well as real-time alerts. These features make them an invaluable addition to any home security setup.

For those looking for a top-of-the-line surveillance option, the **Guardian App Cam Solo 2K 4G PT Kit** is an ideal choice. This wire-free 4G cellular smart security camera offers features such as 2K Super HD recording, starlight night vision, and artificial intelligence (AI) notifications, providing a comprehensive security solution without the need for Wi-Fi or mains power.

Protecting trade tools is not just about safeguarding assets; it's about securing livelihoods. It's important for tradies to be proactive, not reactive, when it comes to tool security.

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