

# Storage Cage Security

(August 2016)

According to Victoria Police, storage cage theft is on the rise with hotspots that include South Melbourne, St Kilda and surrounding areas. VicPol suggest that Owners Corporations and residents address security vulnerabilities in and around their properties. A review of current approaches to preventative security discloses poor approaches to this growing risk including a lack of understanding by residents in how they can improve the protection of their stored assets.

## Understanding storage cage theft

Although there is an absence of statistical data related to storage cage theft, anecdotal evidence suggests little consideration by property developers to security in the design and installation of storage cages. This includes cheap or ineffective gate slide bolts or locking devices, wire mesh that is easily breached, access gates that can be kicked open or lifted off hinges, and locations that are isolated thus providing extended time for a perpetrator to force entry into a storage cage.

Good security strategies focus on prevention through target hardening. A harder target such as a well secured and designed storage cage can create a deterrent effect for a potential perpetrator who may well decide there is too much risk in breaching a particular cage. It is well reported in the literature that criminals are thwarted by three collective strategies:

1. *Increase the effort* i.e. make it difficult to breach the building, area or cage;
2. *Increase the risks* i.e. introduce CCTV, improved lighting and site monitoring or patrols to increase the chances of detection; and
3. *Reduce the rewards* i.e. ensure valuable items are not displayed or obviously stored.

## Ten considerations in storage cage security

The following should be considered to minimise risk and hence loss:

1. Inspect your storage cage to ensure there are no access weaknesses including climbing or perimeter points. Have any weaknesses or unnecessary openings addressed.
2. Ensure gate hinges are secure, that gates cannot be lifted off hinge points and are generally "kick proof"
3. Ensure the gate slide bolt protrudes sufficiently into the bolt receptacle to securely lock the gate opening and thus would be difficult to jemmy, shake or force open.
4. Use a good quality key lock.
5. Do not hide the key to your storage cage in the area such as in your vehicle and do not use a key tag that identifies your storage cage.
6. Know the location of CCTV cameras and ensure there is adequate lighting for your cage.
7. Ensure any valuable items are hidden from view i.e. internal cupboard or secure cabinet.
8. Do not openly store alcohol in your storage cage - it encourages late night visitors!
9. Use appropriate Owners Corporation approved shade cloth on all perimeters of the storage cage.
10. Check your insurance coverage as many policies do not cover contents of storage cages. Some specifically exclude them. Your coverage should then influence your storage needs.