



## Crime Prevention Information

### Trailer Theft Prevention

There have been a lot of trailer thefts in the Lowcountry in recent years. Here are several common risk factors and prevention measures for owners to consider.

The most common risk factor is that these trailers are almost always plain white or black, usually completely unmarked. Most commonly taken are the small enclosed utility trailers, sometimes flat-bed or open car trailers, less often full-size enclosed car-trailers, possibly due to registration/tag requirements.

The stolen trailers are usually unattended at a jobsite or on business premises after hours.

There are several theft prevention measures available including tongue locks, wheel locks, chaining wheels. Another major deterrent would be marking the trailers in an obvious manner.

(1) Have a steel fabricator weld your company name or phone number onto an obvious part of the frame. It is relatively inexpensive to do (\$30-\$75) and very time consuming to remove.

(2) Mark trailers with special paint-jobs, decals, or lettering. Many owners are reluctant to do so as not to attract thieves to the contents. Sometimes owners trade out trailers often and want to make them easier to re-sell. These are valid concerns so the circumstances should be considered, but by making these obvious markings, it makes it much more likely a thief will be found out while still in possession, less likely he could sell it, and consequently serves as a major deterrent to taking it in the first place. If you are considering decals, I would recommend 3M Scotchlite reflective decals like used on emergency vehicles. These decals are extremely difficult to remove, come off in little tiny chips, and will always leave a residual ghost image.

(3) Spray-paint your name/phone number on the INSIDE in big, bright fluorescent paint. A buyer would see it and it would be hard to paint over because often fluorescent paints bleed through other paints.

(4) Obtain state license plates for the trailer. This may cost a few dollars but a thief would recognize he would be at higher risk of being discovered due to paperwork involved in trying to sell it and the fact that its serial/VIN numbers are definitely on record (Imagine how much car theft would occur if cars were not required to be registered).

For more information on this and other topics contact:

Charleston Police Crime Prevention Unit  
180 Lockwood Blvd.  
Charleston, SC 29403

(843) 769-7407

[CrimePrevention@Charleston-SC.gov](mailto:CrimePrevention@Charleston-SC.gov)

[www.Charleston-PD.org](http://www.Charleston-PD.org)