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“10 Tips for Theft Prevention”

Lynching was a common punishment for horse rustlers in the 19th century. Men caught committing horse theft were often hung on the spot without the benefit of a trial. We don't hang horse thieves anymore but theft is still a lucrative crime. Everyday, horses, equipment and tack are stolen from farms, boarding facilities, horse shows and even backyards.

Theft is something you don't like to think about, until it happens to you. Then the inconvenience, emotional and economic impact takes its toll. Here are ten simple ways to protect yourself and your stable against theft.

1. Permanently identify your horse with a freeze brand, hot iron brand, microchip or lip tattoo. Permanently marking your horse makes identification and recovery possible. Thieves are less likely to steal traceable horses that are permanently marked.
2. Photograph your horse. And keep these photos with detailed description of your horse in an organized file. Having a proof of ownership file including bill of sale and registration papers helps police investigate and prosecute the case.
 - a. Let's look at two police case scenarios. In case number one, the horse owner reports her bay, quarter horse mare stolen. The horse is 10 years old and named "Dusty". (How many bay mares are in your state? What are the odds that a police officer could identify "Dusty" from any other bay horse?)
 - b. In the second case, the owner provides the police with photos and a detailed description of a bay mare that has a visible freeze brand. The horse owner made fliers using a current picture. She posted them at auction barns and tack, and feed stores. An accurate identification of the horse was made quickly. Which case do you think betters your odds of recovering a stolen horse?





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3. Don't leave halters or lead ropes hanging on trailers, stall doors or anywhere in the open. These provide an inviting means for thieves to catch and remove your horses.
4. Use permanent markers to label items such as; grooming tools, clippers and even extension cords. Often someone just "borrows" these items and forgets to return them. Clear labeling makes these missing items easy to spot. Things like saddle name plates are easily removed. Mark expensive items like saddles in an inconspicuous area so you can identify them if they are tampered with.
5. Record serial number, date of purchase, price and identifying marks on all valuable items. Keeping track of your property comes in handy for any insurance claims.
6. Consider installing a security or alarm system in your facility. Guinea hens, donkeys or barking dogs alert you to someone's presence. The attention and noise can startle a thief looking for an easy target. A professionally installed security system complete with signage on your driveway informs a potential thief you are prepared and security savvy.
7. All entrances and exits should be well lit. Consider installing motion detector lights. These lights come on when they detect movement, catching your attention as someone enters the area. Trim shrubs around doors and gates to improve visibility and prevent someone from hiding behind them.
8. Use strong locks to secure doors, parked trailers and gates. Lock your trailer to your truck whether at a show or at home. If parked and detached, prevent your trailer from being stolen by running a sturdy chain through the tires and secure it with a steel hardened lock.
9. Be a good neighbor. Watch each other's property for suspicious activity and report it to the authorities. Be alert and aware of what is normal and what is not. Keep a pad and pen in your truck to write down license plates of suspicious vehicles.





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10. Never leave a wallet, purse or other valuables in your vehicle. Whether at a stable parking lot or trail riding camp, these items are frequently stolen. Don't mistakenly believe if you cover it with a jacket or put it under your seat a thief won't find it. That's the first place they look. Within hours the thief is writing checks on your checking account, using your credit cards and you are the victim of identity theft.

Taking these precautionary steps can significantly reduce your chances of becoming the next victim of theft. Anything you do to make the thief's job more time consuming and difficult, increases his risk of being caught. Remember, if your place is protected, he may just pass it up for an easier mark.

Police Story

These are the funny comments made to me while riding my police horse.

"I think he looks good enough to eat." young hungry boy.

"He is so handsome if I was a horse I would marry him." young girl

"Ouuu, so that's what happens when you don't brush your teeth" horse yawn

"How many toes does he have?" smart aleck

"How do his shoes stay on?" junior scientist

"I've never seen a real live horse before" inner city youth

"Does he talk? Make him say something" budding ventriloquist

"Is he married?" prospective bride

"Can he run faster than a speeding bullet?" superman fan

"Can I smell your horse? I haven't smelled one since I was a boy on the farm"
elderly gentleman

"He smells like heaven" Yes he does.

Ride safe!

