

Spring Equipment Maintenance: Crime Prevention Tune-up

As fleet managers, rental companies and equipment owners hurry through their catch up on maintenance priorities before the summer season, National Equipment Register (NER) asks that you take a minute to include a “Crime Prevention Tune-up” to address any deferred equipment security maintenance. Below are some suggestions to keep in mind while checking tires, replacing cutting edges, and deciding whether that seat can go another season.

Crime Prevention Tune-up

1. Identification

- a.) Can you find the machine’s identification? If not, call NER for guidance. We have some of the most comprehensive data on this, and our experts have been assisting law enforcement in identifying machines since 2001.
- b.) Is the identification you found actually the machine identification, or is it a component identifier? Not sure? Call NER; again, we’ve been doing this a long time and can help make certain you have the right information.
- c.) Is the Serial Number/Product Identification Number decal or plate intact and legible? NER or your dealer can help you get replacement identification if needed.
- d.) If the ID is missing, does it appear to have been tampered with (stolen), or just fell off? NER **STRONGLY** encourages owners to report missing machine identification to NER, as stolen plates are often used to hide the identity of stolen equipment.

2. Markings

- a.) Your company name and phone number should be applied in an obvious location on the machine, as well as near the operator’s controls and near the serial number/PIN.
- b.) If your company decals are damaged, or has been pressure washed off, it might be a good time to get some new ones. Don’t forget be sure they include a phone number.
- c.) Owner Applied Numbers such as your inventory control number or unit number should be prominently visible on the machine.
- d.) If you are an NER HELPtech registration member, do you have NER HELPtech warning decals? They’re free, just call NER.

3. Records

- a.) Does the Serial Number/Product Identification Number you found on the machine match your records? Remember that if the machine is stolen, you want to report the machine identification **EXACTLY** as it appears on the machine. The best way to improve recovery of a stolen machine (and the arrest of the criminals that took it) is to report accurate, confirmed information. If in doubt whether the numbers you recorded are correct, contact NER.
- b.) Does your inventory control number or unit number correspond to the correct machine serial number/PIN? Often NER receives incorrect theft reports in which an owner reapplied a unit number to a new machine from an old machine that was sold off, but did not update the machine records and reports the old machine’s serial number. Not only may their new machine never be identified as stolen, they’re reporting that old machine as stolen, and the police may take it away from the new owner. That’s a mess you want to avoid.
- c.) If at all possible, the inventory control number in your records should exactly match the inventory control number applied to the machine. Just like the Serial Number/PIN, if the machine is stolen you want to report exactly what number is on the machine, not an abbreviation of it.

Spring Equipment Maintenance: Crime Prevention Tune-up (continued)

- d.) Record the serial numbers of major components while you perform maintenance, especially if a machine has had a motor transplant. Component serial numbers can be critical in identifying your equipment if it's stolen and the machine identification altered.
- e.) Record attachment serial numbers. Ideally, they should have their own inventory control number, but at the very least be sure you have a record of anything that has a serial number and if it belongs to a certain machine. If an attachment does not have a serial number (such as buckets and pallet forks), be sure to apply an inventory control number or other owner applied number so that you have some way to uniquely identify the attachment.
- f.) Is your fleet registered on the NER HELPtech registration database, and is your inventory up to date? If it's been a while since you logged on, spring is a good time to review what data we have and whether it's accurate to your current inventory. A number of insurers offer a theft loss deductible waiver for machines registered with NER's HELPtech, but only if the stolen equipment is accurately registered before the theft occurs.

4. A Picture is Worth 1,000 Words

- a.) Take a picture of each machine, and maintain a digital image inventory of your equipment. Have a picture of the whole machine, the machine identification (Serial Number/PIN), and any unique features, like your logo, inventory control number, attachments and even damage.
- b.) If the only picture of your machine was taken when it was brand new and shiny, that may not be very useful to law enforcement if the machine has 8,000 hours on it. Keep images up to date so that if a machine is stolen, you can provide a recent image.

5. Use Technology

- a.) If you haven't taken the plunge into GPS tracking, maybe this is the season to consider it. There are a number of systems available with varying features and benefits. NER's own IRONwatch system offers a very affordable device with no monthly fee, and features which can be upgraded as the need arises. See www.ner.net, or contact NER directly for details.

To learn more about NER, please contact:

