

**Preventing Theft in Emergency Service Buildings**  
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The Fire and EMS services are always trying to obtain the best possible equipment to do your jobs in the manner which your community deserves. That equipment is maintained so that at a moments notice it will be at the ready to perform its task as required. But what happens when it is not there. What if that valuable piece of equipment has been stolen?

Unfortunately, that scenario is happening with greater frequency all over the country. In this time of "heightened awareness" that piece of equipment may fall into the hands of someone who wishes to use it for a completely opposite purpose than was intended.

As such, the emergency service industry must heighten awareness about security around the station, including policies to assist in that area. Even the most expensive locks won't help if the bay doors are left open after the vehicles respond to a call for aid.

The first and most obvious area of protection are entrances. The doors should be in good condition and locks operating properly. Keys need to be controlled carefully. This is a major task and requires constant vigilance. Keys should only be given to people who require entry into the building. When a member leaves the organization, their keys must be returned. There are several card type entry systems which may eliminate a user with a simple computer key stroke. These systems may be expensive, but a well controlled key system will still work.

As stated above, leaving bay doors open when out on a run is inviting trouble. Automatic door closers in each vehicle will help eliminate such occurrences. The organization should develop strict policies about closing doors when leaving the building whether for emergency purposes or not. Several robberies have occurred with the bay doors open and members in rear rooms of the building. Just because someone is on the premises does not eliminate the threat of theft.

Finally, vigilance is extremely important. During the investigation of thefts from emergency service buildings, members have indicated that while passing the building that evening, they noticed the door to be open. If they had only stopped for a few seconds to secure the building when observing this, the loss could well have been prevented.

Everyone in the organization must take pride and a sense of ownership and remain watchful of both regular and unusual occurrences around the building and to take action to prevent a theft before it happens.