

Touring caravan thefts in 2019

Thefts of touring caravans seem to be making increasingly frequent appearances in the media. The Swindon Advertiser, for example, recently wrote that it had obtained some startling numbers from the Wiltshire Police records, which revealed that there have been 73 reported incidents of stolen caravans and motorhomes (between 2015-2018). Other areas, such as West Mercia have a much higher level of reported thefts.

As this can negatively affect the industry, the NCC is continuing its work with CRiS (Central Registration & Identification Scheme), VINCHIP™, CSSG (Caravan Safety and Security Group) and NaVCIS, to share intelligence and limit thefts. (The latter, the National Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service, is a national policing unit focusing on organised vehicle theft.)

The Business talked to the NCC's Security Consultant and representative on NaVCIS, Tim Booth, about common failings and what businesses and caravan owners can do to minimise the risk.

"Currently, in excess of 70% of touring caravan thefts are from storage sites – and that includes those that advertise themselves as specialist secure storage providers.

"Many of the caravans left in storage tend to be the 'premium' caravans that owners cannot store at home, or dealers cannot display on their premises. These sites allow for 'cherry picking' by criminals.

"It seems thieves have their preferred locations and are not adverse to returning to the scene of a previous crime. Many owners perceive that because a storage facility says it is 'secure', they need to make less effort. So we see



NaVCIS @NaVCIS_UK · 18 Dec 2019

Yesterday our @NaVCIS_UK #Ports & @nfum #Plant & #Agricultural officers assisted @HantsPolice with a search of a premises - a number of stolen vehicles & caravans recovered - enquiries are on going #workingtogether #ruralcrime



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caravans stored without physical security devices fitted, alarms/trackers not set, specialist tracking systems fitted but not being subscribed to (albeit the consumers claim an insurance benefit for them being fitted) and leisure batteries poorly maintained.

"Research found that over 1,000 caravans in storage had faulty leisure batteries – these owners (where details were available) were contacted and advised. It

may sound obvious, but caravans or motorhomes in storage should be regularly checked – for vermin infestation, storm damage – especially bearing in mind recent bad weather – and of course for the actual theft of the leisure vehicle.

"It is evident that while the sophistication of theft-deterrent devices is rising, so is the sophistication of thieves. Interestingly, there is no 'high season' for thefts – in fact there's often more tourer thefts in January than in July and August.

"The levels of attendance by Law Enforcement Agencies at 'unlawful encampments' has increased - often stolen caravans are identified there. In all, approaching 150 recoveries were made last year, and there are still some operations that are ongoing. Thankfully, working with CRiS and through VINCHIP™, we have seen a significant drive by Law Enforcement to disrupt criminality."

CSSG THEFT FIGURES

The CSSG collated theft figures suggest 800 touring caravans were reported stolen in 2019. This is an increase, albeit a single figure rise, from the previous year. It remains however, significantly less than the one-time high of 1500+ thefts per annum.