



Protecting your Pack / Troop / Crew's Trailer and Equipment



Excerpt from "Nine Tips For Preventing Troop Trailer Theft". *Bryan on Scouting*. April 29, 2011.
blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2011/04/29/nine-tips-for-preventing-troop-trailer-theft/

Here are some ways to ward off potential thieves:

1. **Purchase a wheel lock.** Phillip Moore, insurance and risk management specialist at the national BSA headquarters, recommends checking with a boat dealership to buy a device like the ones police officers use on illegally parked cars. "The wheel lock is a visible deterrent and does not allow the trailer to be moved," Moore says.
2. **Block the doors.** Moore also suggests parking your trailer so that its rear doors butt up against a wall or some other permanent structure. Combining that with a wheel lock will make it much tougher for a thief, he says.
3. **Don't store any gear inside.** It may not be practical for all troops, but Jason P.'s unit keeps all of its gear at a separate location. If thieves discover the trailer is empty, they may leave it alone.
4. **Paint the top of your trailer** with large identifying information. This way, "if it is stolen it can be identified from the air, where most of those who would steal it would not think to look," says Ken K.
5. **Think before you park.** Rather than parking the trailer in a church lot that's empty most nights, many Scouters said their trailer lives at the home of an adult leader. It's "just like real estate," says Eric C. "Location, location, location."
6. **Make friends in high places.** If you don't want to or can't park at a Scouter's home or at your meeting site, ask your local police department if they'll let you store your trailer there. That's what Mike L. did. "As far as I know, that's a pretty good spot. I think everyone should consider it!"
7. **Get insured.** "Nothing is 100 percent safe," Ken K. reminds us. So insure your trailer and its contents from theft or damage. It might be money well spent.
8. **Go incognito.** A cool design for your trailer can be an important recruiting tool and instill a sense of pride for your troop. But Cindy P. says those markings also might make it a target. "Our trailer has no troop identifying markings on the outside," she says.
9. **Lock it down.** You can never have too many locks, suggests Ron S. "When we built our troop shed and pad behind our charter organization, a heavy chain was cemented into the foundation. So, besides being locked to the pad, the trailer doors are secured with heavy duty discus locks and the hitch with a coupler lock."

Suggestions from other Scouters who have had theft issues include:

1. Buy a trailer hitch lock to fit into the ball hitch. This prevents someone using an undersized ball hitch from driving away with your trailer. Locks are available for \$15 - \$50. Some recommend using a golf ball in the ball hitch with a heavy-duty lock on the hitch.
2. Park trailers in a well-lit location.
3. Use heavy-duty locks or disc locks, not standard padlocks on the doors and hitch.
4. Inventory the contents, including pictures and the price paid for items. Update quarterly.
5. Mark all contents with unit type, number, and chartered organization.
6. Put a wheel lock on the trailer on the driver's side so troop drivers will easily see it and remember to remove the lock before campouts.
7. Loop a high strength cable through the wheels on one or both sides of the trailer with heavy-duty lock. This works for dual axle trailers.
8. Park the trailer in such a way that it is difficult for thieves to connect and tow away.
9. Weld the unit number onto a visible place the frame; it's very difficult to remove.
10. Install a GPS tracking device with battery in a hidden place that activates when the trailer lights are connected to the towing vehicle. Some GPSs send a message to cell phones or smartphone apps.
11. Have a conversation with your Chartered Organization and their insurance professional regarding how to protect your unit trailer and equipment with property insurance with replacement cost coverage. Can they be added to the Chartered Organization's policy? Some chartered organizations pay the insurance premium; some units pay the premium to their chartered organization.