

Information sheet No. 5



Crime prevention

Stranger danger

It should be remembered at all times that thieves involved in equestrian crime know what they are doing!

They usually know what they are looking for, where to find it, etc. and very often they are stealing to order. It stands to reason then that people involved in this sort of crime are likely to be 'horse people' In that they are familiar with handling horses, are knowledgeable on tack, and are part of the 'horse community'. They may not commit crime in their own locality, but are likely to travel around looking for potential targets. For all these reasons, it is essential that any equestrian documents are kept safely under lock and key. It is also a wise precaution not to be too open with details of possessions to anyone, even friends. Quite innocently, information can be passed on to others and can have devastating consequences if it gets into the wrong hands.

Be vigilant at all times and, in particular, keep an eye open for strangers. Ideally, all strangers should be 'challenged' and asked for identification, but NEVER PUT YOURSELF A RISK! For example, if you are alone, young or vulnerable in any other way, do not put yourself in a potentially dangerous situation. 'Can I help?', 'Who are you looking for?', or, 'Are you lost?' are challenging but not aggressive. If you are unhappy with their answer, take note of their description and registration number, if with a vehicle. If really suspicious, contact your local police.

It is recommended that this should be policy with staff on premises, and also carried out by all owners and riders. They also recommend the keeping of a log of visitors. For example, record the organisation the person is from, his/her car or vehicle details, date and time of visit, and ask for their visiting card.

Descriptions of those you are particularly suspicious can be vital. Apart from giving an impression of vigilance, it is extremely useful to the police if the worst happens.

Record keeping

Proof of identification

In the event of the worst happening, the police must be provided with the most comprehensive and clear details of your loss, whether it is your horse, equipment or vehicle.

In addition to security marking, the keeping of written and photographic records of your horses and equipment may prove vital in their recovery, and costs nothing to complete.

If you have to provide details or prove ownership, the fact that you can identify your own horse may need to be backed up with other proof. The police must be very confident the horse and equipment which has been stolen is the one in question, before they can take action!

Veterinary surgeons will carry out the completion of a descriptive chart, but this will involve a fee for their services. Such a description will already be in existence if as your horse now requires a passport.

Photographs

Take clear, sharp colour photographs for a good visual record of an animal. Stand the horse up properly and take the photographs from the left and right side, head on and tail on. Any particular peculiar points such as scam or whorls should show up clearly in the photographs. Facial markings and patterns are particularly distinguishing and some animals may require individual photographing of these features. Also photograph all four chestnuts on your horse's legs. These are as individual to your horse and our fingerprints are to us.

Compile an inventory

Do not forget to make a comprehensive inventory of tack and equipment. Include relevant descriptions (colour, size, etc.) serial numbers and details of security marking or post coding. The list will also be of great use when making insurance claims. The keeping of receipts is also a useful practice to follow.

KEEP ALL RECORDS SECURE to ensure they do not fall into the wrong hands, and they are readily available when needed.