

## Parking Lot Security

At some youth facilities, you wonder if your car will be there when you go outside, and that's in the day time. At others, remaining outside in your car isn't very safe either. At these locations, it's hard to attract and keep good staff. High staff turnover and security concerns are indicators that the facility may experience frequent or severe losses, which can result in higher auto insurance premiums. These conditions could also pose a liability issue for the organization if the dangerous condition were known and no one responded.

There are several steps youth organizations can take to improve parking lot security:

**Fencing:** Fencing your lot is a very effective means of improving parking lot security because you limit access to the entrance and exit, which can be monitored.

**Lighting:** Proper lighting is important, not only for people walking or driving in your lot, but also for police or others to be able to see down the narrow corridors formed by adjacent parked cars. Without proper lighting, security cameras prove to be less beneficial. Experts advise that every portion of your parking lot should be illuminated from at least two, and preferably four lighting (pole) locations. Lights should be mounted at a minimum height of 20 feet, and illumination should be at the level of 2 to 5 foot-candles. Orient CCTV cameras so they are not blinded by the rising or setting sun, automobile headlights, and reflections from parking lot lights.

**Layout:** The layout of your parking lot can help to increase natural surveillance. Rerouting incoming and outgoing traffic through the parking lot to pass by the more remote areas can reduce criminal opportunities. Removing or pruning vegetation can eliminate hiding places.

**Staff training:** Train staff to respond properly to incidents that may occur in parking lots. Confronting someone who is breaking into a car is a good way to get shot or worse. The resources that staff may have to call upon will vary from location to location, but the following rules apply to all clubs:

- If you are concerned about parking lot security, for whatever reason, go back inside and get another staff person to walk out with you, or call the police.
- Keep keys in your hand to use as a weapon, or throw keys to create a distraction.
- Scream and shout and run if confronted (don't permit yourself to be moved to a more isolated location).
- If you use a remote door lock release, only unlock the driver's door and relock the door after you enter the vehicle.

If you rent your facility to other groups, stipulate in the contract that the groups must provide their own security, both inside and outside. Markel had one report of a drive-by shooting that occurred during a rental group's party, when people unaffiliated with the program were loitering in the parking lot.

---

If you have a safety or risk management question or a suggestion for a topic, please contact Markel's Risk Management Department at [safety1st@markelcorp.com](mailto:safety1st@markelcorp.com).