

Protect Your Horse Against Theft and Loss

Every day, horses are reported missing or stolen. Some U.S. sources offer estimates of close to 40,000 annually. Horses can also get loose and become lost following riding accidents and natural disasters (i.e. fires and floods). Once lost, horses are difficult to recover; and many are quickly sold.

Here is some sound advice to help keep your horse safe:

- **Keep all documents that provide proof-of-ownership in a safe place.** Registration papers, bills of sale, health records, and photographs will help identify your horse and prove ownership. Photographs should be clear and current and show your horse from all four sides. If your horse has unusual markings, brands or coat patterns, take close up pictures if possible.
- **Don't leave a halter on your horse or hanging near a gate.** Halters make it easier for thieves to catch horses.
- **Lock gates and barn doors.** Locked gates and barn doors often will deter a thief, but be careful and do not create a fire hazard
- **Utilize strong fencing around your property.** Wire fencing is easily cut by thieves and run through by horses.
- **Keep your horse in an area where he/she can be seen from your residence or the roadway.** This is especially important at night, when the majority of thefts occur. Check your horse several times daily. Horse friendly neighbors are a great asset and another pair of eyes.
- **Restrict access to your pasture.** Secure/block farm lanes and driveways that are in remote areas, not regularly accessed or far away from your residence.
- **Install motion-sensor lights.** Mount the lights on barn buildings or fences where your horses are kept at night. They will turn on if anyone approaches the barn or field.
- **Consider purchasing monitors or alarms.** Video monitors, web cams and alarm systems can be wired to a monitor in your home or office.
- **Report suspicious activities to your local police.** When possible, write down a description of the people and vehicles (license plate numbers are important).
- **Freeze brand or Microchip your horse.** You can have your horse permanently identified by microchip or freeze brand. Freeze brands are effective visual theft deterrents. In order for microchipping to be effective, you must register with a national registry.