

Fighting Theft at Unattended Car Washes: Some Suggestions

Cheating a change machine by manipulating coins or paper currency has been with us since the beginning. The early bill acceptor technology, as used by National Rejecter Inc. (NRI), never anticipated the copy machine, which compromised the then available bill acceptor technology. As the methods of cheating were (and still are) discovered and addressed by improved technologies and component design, the thieves also kept refining their methods and the chase has continued ever since.

Now that technology has come close to completely preventing cheating electronic acceptance devices, thieves are using other methods of theft. Below are some of the methods used to defeat the integrity of change machines and some suggestions for increasing your security.

Stringing

All bill acceptor manufacturers have been fighting this method for many years. Fortunately, this type of theft has been slowed by continued development of new and improved bill acceptor designs. The best preventive measure is to be sure you have the most recent bill acceptor model for your equipment.

Bill Acceptor Penetration

Heavy metal nose covers made from stainless steel are available from some manufacturers. This modification has a restricted opening for the bill and helps prevent the penetration of the tools normally used. The drawback is that it is harder for the customer to insert the bill. In areas where this type of theft occurs, bill acceptors made of plastic may not be the best option.

Cutting it Open

Thicker stainless cabinets may take longer to penetrate but can admittedly be compromised by portable plasma cutters and other types of machine tools. A method of alarming the changer to sense the heat of a cutting torch is to glue Styrofoam to the inside of the face of the changer and install a smoke detector inside the cabinet. The heat from a cutting torch will make the Styrofoam smoke and set off the smoke alarm.

Changer Pullout

Using a truck or heavy equipment, changers are being pulled out of walls. There are also incidents of thieves running into walls with stolen vehicles to knock the changer loose. Anchoring the cabinet to the wall may result (and has) on bringing the wall down. Consider installing shock sensors as part of your alarm system and mount one inside the changer cabinet to sense this type of attack.

An Attack from the Rear

This allows concealment while the thief works on penetrating the rear of the cabinet. The simple solution is to arm the equipment room door and to place motion detectors and/or pressure sensitive floor mats in strategic areas.