

THERE IS SAFETY IN NUMBERS BY SHAWN M. AXELROD

Over the years many people have written articles about safety. This article however is about a different aspect of the subject. I do not intend to deal with grounding, torn wires, potential shock hazards etc. The safety I am talking about has to do with the security of your equipment. All of us in the hobby have equipment that is valuable. Granted some of us may own equipment that is worth upwards of \$10,000 or more, while others have equipment worth only \$100. But all of it is valuable. I fall into the lower end of the scale myself HI!!!

Last year I started to protect my household valuables, including my radio equipment by using what our local Police Dept. calls "Operation Identification". This is a program by which home owners or apartment dwellers go through a three part identification process to protect their valuables. First of all you take pictures of every room in the house, the garage & shed etc. This way you have a record of how everything looked before a fire flood break-in etc. You can take separate pictures of such items as stereos jewelry and radio equipment for a close up view of the goods. You could also use a video camera if you have access to one.

Secondly you record the Model and Serial numbers of all of your goods. This is where you really get to know what you have in your radio room. I have the Model and Serial numbers of everything from my ICOM R-70 to my Mini Tun-3 and Clock recorded. This list along with the pictures is kept in a secure place such as a Safety Deposit Box. This secure place should be outside of the home as in case of a major fire or tornado the information would be safer elsewhere.

The third section of Operation Identification is to mark all of your valuables. They recommend that you use a number that nobody else has, so I used my SIN number. This is my Social Insurance Number, in the USA you could use a Social Security**Number. These are never duplicated so your markings will be unique. I bought a cheap \$8.00 electric engraving pencil at the hardware store and engraved my SIN number on all valuables. The idea behind this is it makes it (A) harder to "fence" marked goods, (B) easier to identify your goods when the police recover them.

Now you have the pictures of all of your valuables, You have the Model & Serial Numbers of them listed out and they are marked. Some Police Departments with this type of program will give you stickers to put on doors and windows saying you are part of the project and your home is protected by it. Our local police claim homes under Operation Identification are far less likely to hit by thieves than those homes not in the program. This combined with an alarm system is a good step to keeping your radio room and household valuables safe (A Pit Bull would be a nice touch, but I do not like them HI!!!)

One final thing to consider is the insurance you have. Should you have a major disaster of some kind, will your insurance company replace every thing. I now have Replacement Value Insurance. This means that the insurance company will replace my valuables with new identical units. If you have older radio equipment and your insurance company says although it was worth \$1500 new the devalued price is \$500 you are stuck for the other \$1000 to replace it. Replacement Value Insurance or any other name it may go under, means that my insurance company buys me a brand new ICOM R-71 if mine is lost or stolen. I do not have to come up with a few hundred dollars on my own to replace it. If you have a lot of equipment and furniture you could find yourself with not enough insurance to cover the costs of replacing your goods. Add up the replacement costs of all of your household goods and equipment in today's dollars and then go out and get that amount of insurance. By the way you should remember to up the amount of insurance you carry every two or three years to make up for new goods and to cover inflation costs.

Well enough said about that. By the way I am not an Insurance salesman, but I have seen people find out they were not covered the way they thought they were. Now it is up to you to do what you think is best. I figure for the cost of an \$8.00 engraver, a couple of rolls of film and a few hours of time it is some of the best safety measures you can take in your radio room and or home.

By the way one other little side benefit of all of this marking is if you are out on a DX'pedition with a bunch of people you sure can tell which is your equipment in a most easy way, because there is safety in numbers.

Good luck and may you never need to make a claim after you have done all of this hard work.

**In the US, you should use your driver's license number (plus the two-letter postal code for your state). Social security numbers are supposedly confidential, so police departments don't have access to them. bp/