

# Equipment Theft Plagues South Florida Geospatial Community

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## Abstract

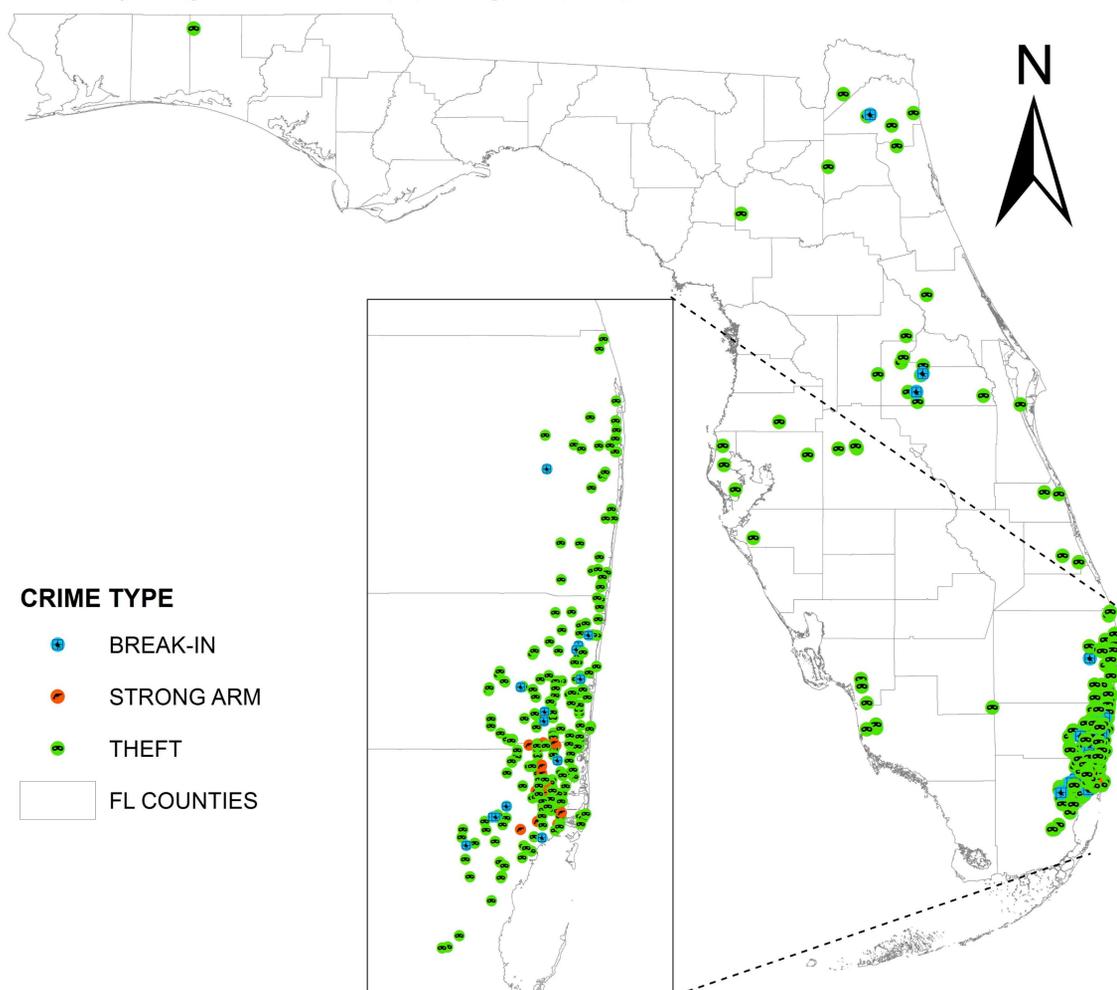
Over the past 15 years, surveying and mapping equipment theft has severely impacted geospatial professionals across Florida. Southeast Florida, specifically Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade counties, continues to be particularly hard hit. This project summarizes and visualizes both the number of reported crimes committed against surveyors and mappers as well as the value of the equipment stolen from 2002 through May 2017. During this time, over \$5.6 million in equipment was stolen. Maintaining the map and database is a collaborative effort between the Florida Surveying and Mapping Society and the University of Florida Geomatics Program. Best practices that have been developed by local companies over the past 15 years are included as guidance for those involved in geospatial data collection. Awareness, communication, and vigilance is paramount to limiting the impact equipment theft has on the geospatial industry.

## Objectives

- Raise awareness regarding pervasiveness of equipment theft across the geospatial industry in Florida & communicate best practices for limiting potential future thefts
- Quantify the financial magnitude of reported survey equipment theft for communication with law enforcement agencies

## Map of Reported Theft Locations

### Surveying and Mapping Equipment Crimes in Florida



To view the dynamic online map, visit: <https://goo.gl/eyC0K1>

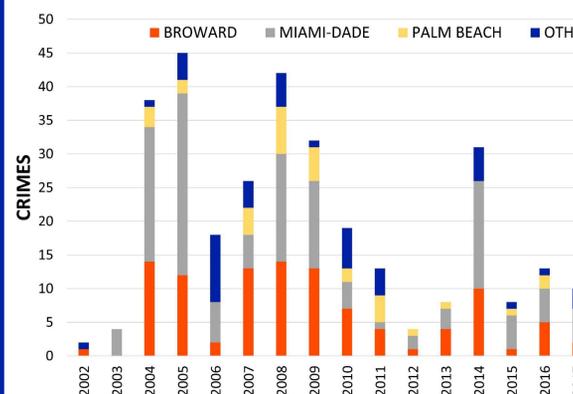
Map of reported crime locations involving surveying and mapping equipment from 2002 through May 2017 in Florida with an inset map featuring Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties

## Theft Data Summary

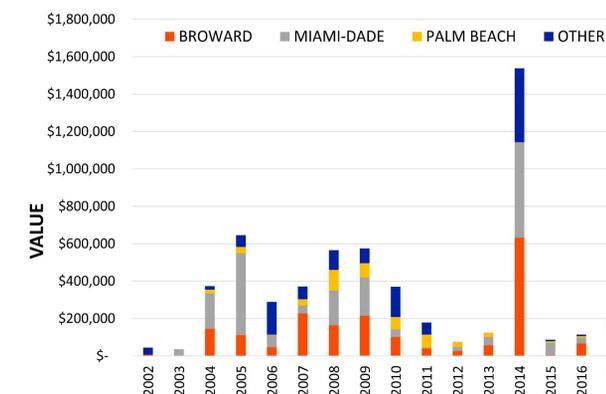
YEAR	CRIMES	TOTAL VALUE	YEAR	CRIMES	TOTAL VALUE
2002	2	\$44,500	2010	19	\$369,672
2003	4	\$36,000	2011	13	\$178,620
2004	38	\$373,911	2012	4	\$75,000
2005	45	\$645,402	2013	8	\$124,821
2006	18	\$289,000	2014	31	\$1,537,669
2007	26	\$371,245	2015	8	\$86,600
2008	42	\$565,012	2016	13	\$114,000
2009	32	\$574,888	2017*	10	\$199,700
<b>2002-2017</b>			<b>313</b>	<b>\$5,586,040</b>	

\* - Jan:May

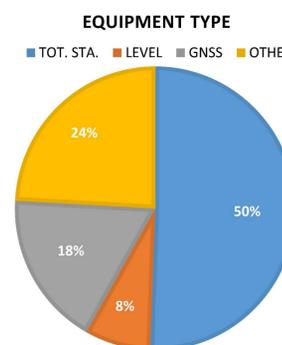
Summary of crimes involving surveying and mapping equipment



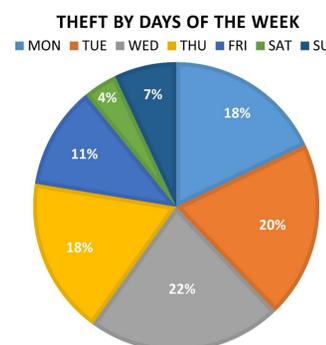
Number of crimes involving surveying and mapping equipment by year. Data is organized into the three urban counties in the southeastern Florida tri-county area and other counties



Value of thefts of surveying and mapping equipment by year organized by county



Percentage of each predominant type of surveying and mapping equipment reported stolen from 2002 through May 2017 (n > 500). The 'other' category includes data collectors, field computers, and miscellaneous high value surveying equipment items stolen during this time period.



Distribution of survey equipment thefts including office break-ins by days of the week (n = 313)

## Best Practices for Theft Prevention

1. When loading or unloading equipment from the office or at any job site, **pay attention to your surroundings** to ensure you're not being watched by suspicious vehicles/persons.
2. When leaving a job site, **watch to see if anyone is following**. The criminals are looking for an opportunity to snatch and grab when the crew is not paying attention.
3. When the crew goes to lunch or stops for a break, **do not leave equipment unattended in a truck**. Either take the equipment into the restaurant or leave someone in the vehicle with it.
4. **Take pictures** of any suspicious vehicles and their tags with your smartphone.
5. **Be suspicious** of anyone hanging around a jobsite.
6. **Be careful when setting up a jobsite**. Try not to set up where it might be convenient for a truck to pull up right next to the equipment and snatch it while the crew members are not paying attention.
7. **Stay within five steps of the instrument** at all times because it takes only a few seconds to jump out of a car or truck, grab it, and take off.
8. A job located inside a construction fence can provide a false sense of security. **Remain vigilant** by taking precautions and monitoring activity of others onsite.
9. Thieves are opportunistic and willing to commit survey-equipment-related theft any day of the week. For office security, most break-ins occur on the weekends (12 of the 18 reported). Therefore, **take extra security measures to secure offices during the weekends**.



## Resources & Contact Information

- Dynamic online map (AGOL App) of survey equipment crime in FL: <https://goo.gl/eyC0K1>
- Crime report form: <https://goo.gl/MZDPU1>
- Rick Pryce: [rpryce@craventhompson.com](mailto:rpryce@craventhompson.com)
- Adam Benjamin: [abenjamin1@ufl.edu](mailto:abenjamin1@ufl.edu)
- Dr. Henry Hochmair: [hhhochmair@ufl.edu](mailto:hhhochmair@ufl.edu)

Please report any thefts should they happen to you (Use shortlink to form)

Contact us to be added to our equipment theft notification email list