

# On the winning side

The Construction Equipment Security and Registration Scheme, better known as Cesar, has come a long way since 2007 and shows what can be achieved in the fight against organised crime

## PLANT THEFT

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To understand the influence of the Cesar scheme on the security of construction plant, it is necessary to take a step back to 2006, when the theft of plant was effectively seen as an occupational hazard on site.

"The CEA came to us to highlight the problem that machinery theft was averaging something like £1.5m per week, with related costs running at many millions more," says Metropolitan Police head of gangs and organised crime Commander Neil Basu. "At that time, the two phrases that you could often hear used were: 'one key fits all' and 'one stolen is another sold'. The CEA basically wanted to know what we, as the police, were going to do about it."

The response from the Metropolitan Police to tackle the problem of machinery theft was threefold and the Met made recommendations to the industry on that basis, he says: "These were to establish a police unit dedicated to tackling the problem of construction and agricultural machinery theft; create a database to capture all reported theft for the UK; and develop a universally accepted marking scheme, recognised by the industry, for the industry."

These recommendations were ultimately embraced by the industry and, working together with the Metropolitan Police Service, the CEA took up the challenge to become

**62%**  
Fall in mini-  
excavators stolen  
since 2009

the owner of the proposed marking scheme. In a remarkably short time, November 2007, the first machine protected by the new scheme rolled off the production line at JCB World Headquarters. And so Cesar was born. Fast forward to today and more than 160,000 machines are protected by Cesar.

The funding necessary to form the dedicated Met Police Unit came from donations from

another section of the industry that could see the value of clamping down on theft: namely the insurance companies specialising in the arena of construction and agricultural machinery. So a year



The triangular CESAR stickers have helped prevent theft of plant

Commander Neil Basu speaking at the Construction Equipment Association conference in September



later, in October 2008, the Plant and Agricultural National Intelligence Unit (PANIU) was formed and with that came a national database designed to capture all reported machinery thefts.

As the reputation of PANIU

grew, so too did the theft database, Commander Basu notes: "Accurate reporting of thefts was key so that the industry and the public had confidence in the police response. The reported plant theft figures peaked in October 2010, with an estimated



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£2m of machinery reported as being stolen each week.”

PANIU engaged with industry partners and embarked upon a crime prevention strategy that Commander Basu describes as “the likes of which had never been seen before”. Machinery manufacturers were encouraged to fit Cesar to their fleets as standard, as were the major buyers of equipment, namely the hire companies. Contractors and clients were also advised to consider the security measures for the products that were being used on their sites.

### Industry standard

Cesar was quickly recognised as the industry standard, with the insurance industry offering substantial discounts on premiums if Cesar was fitted. In conjunction with motor insurance test facility Thatcham, a five-star security rating system was introduced for construction and agricultural machinery, mirroring the system used by the car industry. The more stars a manufacturer or end user could gain on its product, the greater the insurance discount offered.

The benefits were quickly realised and seized upon: fit a unique key, immobiliser technology and Cesar to the machine and three stars could be achieved, which broadly led to a discount on premium of around 12.5 per cent.

According to Commander Basu, there are further gains to be made: “We are currently working towards a more streamlined system of funding for PANIU where the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime has a single contract with the CEA instead of the existing eight individual contracts with the insurers. This

agreement will further enhance and cement the relationship that exists between the Metropolitan Police and the CEA.

In collaboration with its insurance partners, Allianz, Aviva, HSB Engineering, NFU Mutual, Northern Marine Underwriters, QBE, RSA and Zurich, PANIU has seen machinery theft go down 33 per cent since the peak of October 2010.

Some facts and figures from PANIU:

- A machine protected by Cesar is six times less likely to be stolen than an unmarked machine;

- A Cesar-marked item of machinery is four times more likely to be recovered in the event of theft;

- Not one John Deere tractor fitted with a Thatcham three-star security device has been reported stolen to PANIU in the past 18 months;

- JCB recorded theft has fallen 59 per cent. Just five JCB machines meeting the three-star rating have been reported stolen in the last 18 months (one of these had had the keys left in the ignition);
- The Met has recorded 1,201 Cesar-marked items of equipment stolen and 360 have been recovered, which is 30 per cent. The national recovery rate for machinery theft in 2008 was around 5 per cent;

- The most stolen item of machinery by generic type is the mini-excavator. For July to September 2009 the figure was 256 reported stolen. Today that has fallen by almost two-thirds to 95.

- PANIU has assisted in or been directly involved in the recovery of more than £12m of stolen machinery since it was established.

“The work of PANIU and the relationship that has been fostered between the Metropolitan Police Service, the CEA, Datatag and the wider industry is a brilliant example of what can be achieved in the fight against organised vehicle crime,” says Commander Basu. “This relationship has been born out of a shared desire to tackle head-on machinery theft in the UK.”

“Our partnership with the police has been key in ensuring

## HOW CESAR BENEFITS CONSTRUCTION

Cesar reduces the risk of having a contract jeopardised by the disruption, inconvenience and cost of equipment theft, writes Kevin Howells of Cesar scheme manager Datatag. Cesar is a simple, effective and proven deterrent against opportunistic and professional thieves and it also contributes towards lowering machine operating costs.

The scheme is the UK’s only official approved plant and equipment registration scheme. It was designed by police officers working in partnership with the construction industry to provide police on the ground with a simple and effective way to identify stolen machinery and equipment.

Substantial insurance premium discounts and reductions in mandatory excesses can be obtained by having Cesar fitted to equipment. Most major construction equipment manufacturers – including JCB, Doosan, Manitou, Caterpillar, Bobcat and Takeuchi – have been fitting Cesar as standard for more than five years.

As the word has spread about the effectiveness of Cesar many customers, including the major utilities and infrastructure organisations, will only hire equipment if it is Cesar-registered. This is becoming increasingly common as many insurers specify this as a policy condition for major sites.

The key benefits of Cesar are:

- Cesar is widely supported in the construction industry and it has been adopted by many leading manufacturers, trade



organisations, the police and the insurance and asset finance industries;

- Cesar is the only official security and registration scheme for plant and equipment;

- Fitting Cesar decals and tracking technology provides a lifetime’s protection for a machine with no subscriptions or annual fees;

- Cesar, powered by Datatag technology and support, is a powerful deterrent against theft and an invaluable aid in recovery;

- Cesar does not charge machine owners or insurance companies for recovery;

- Cesar registration alone qualifies a machine for one ‘Thatcham star’;

- Cesar registration qualifies a machine for insurance premium discounts and/or lower insurance excesses from most leading insurers;

- Cesar uses an array of Datatag high-tech security markings to give each machine a unique and permanent ‘fingerprint’ that is impossible to remove;

- Cesar helps the police by providing a means of positively identifying a machine and by providing information through the police national computer 24/7;

- Cesar helps reduce costs for machine owners and operators, contractors and the insurance and asset finance industries.

that there is a committed crime fighting team working in tandem with the Cesar scheme,” adds CEA chief executive Rob Oliver. “Our scheme manager, Datatag, has now also been able to extend the practices and technology involved in Cesar to other sectors, including the motorcycle market. Future challenges are to extend scheme take-up overseas and to

build the value of our machine database for the benefit of our industry.”

For those interested in finding out more, Commander Basu will be talking at the forthcoming Combined Industries Theft Solutions conference at JCB’s headquarters in Staffordshire on 12 November 2014 – for more details visit [www.theftsolutions.org](http://www.theftsolutions.org)