

# Air Conditioner Thefts



Over the last several months, the Kernersville Police Department has seen an increase in Air Conditioner thefts. With the prices for copper and other scrap metals on the rise, this type of larceny has become more common. Some thieves disassemble the units where they sit, and some take the entire unit. They take the condenser coils to scrap metal dealers for a quick few dollars. The owners however, are left to replace the damaged or completely missing unit. Unfortunately, these units are typically located behind a residence or business giving thieves coverage while they work to remove the units. Any type of protection is better than nothing, as thieves are looking for an easy target that will be quick and painless.

Here are several ways you can protect your AC units from theft:

**1. Install an air conditioner cage.**

Cages are a very effective deterrent. Once a thief sees how well your unit is protected, they are likely to move on to an unprotected unit. These cages are anchored to the ground to prevent the thief from stealing the cage or dismantling your air conditioner unit. They can also be customized to have access panels that will allow technicians easy access for maintenance when needed.



**2. Install an air conditioner alarm.**

The most effective alarms monitor the system in multiple ways to ensure protection. A sensor monitors the refrigerant pressure level and the system control wires so that if either line is cut, the alarm is triggered. Experts suggest looking for a central air conditioner alarm with a control box that is mounted indoors to prevent thieves from disabling the alarm. These alarms are best installed by professionals due to the refrigerant or electrical requirements.

**3. Install a fake alarm system.**

If you cannot afford an alarm system, a low cost fake system may act as a deterrent. Thieves look for an easy mark, and a fake alarm complete with a couple of wires and a warning sticker might be enough to send thieves down the road looking for an easier target.

**4. Get a watchdog.**

This is a tested and proven way to prevent theft of an AC unit located in your back yard. The threat of the dog attacking them, or even simply alerting the homeowner or neighbors may be enough to send a thief on his way.



**5. Put up a "Beware of Dog" sign.**

Even if you don't have a dog, the sign may give thieves second thoughts before trying to steal your AC unit. Home security experts say that the signs do work and are much more effective than a "no trespassing" sign. If a thief is there to take your AC unit, breaking a trespassing law won't stop them, but the threat of detection or being bitten might.