

SECURING A LOAD: SECURESEAL™ REUSABLE SEAL SECURITY PROTOCOLS

Tamper-indicating security seals are widely used to detect tampering or unauthorized entry to trailers, containers, bottles, etc. Seals range from “high tech” electronic seals to plastic seals with paper labels and sequential numbering.

It is important to understand that seals are not locks. They are not intended to stop unauthorized access: they are intended to leave unambiguous non-erasable evidence of entry or tampering.

The Vulnerability Assessment Team (VAT) at the Argonne National Laboratory in the USA studied **244 different security seals**, both passive and electronic, developed either commercially or by the US government. Most of these seals are in widespread use, including for critical applications. How many of the 244 seals were they able to defeat? All of them. They claim in fact, that they learned how to defeat many seals using rapid, inexpensive, low-tech methods. They further reiterated that cost was not a good predictor of seal security stating, “The effectiveness of seals is strongly dependent on the proper protocols for using them. These protocols are the official and unofficial procedures used for seal procurement, storage, record keeping, installation, inspection, removal, disposal, reporting, interpreting findings, and training. With a good protocol, a modest seal can provide excellent security. On the other hand, a sophisticated seal used poorly may be worse than useless if naively trusted.”¹

In the logistics industry, there are three types of seals primarily in use today: plastic pull-tight seals, bolt seals and reusable seals, available in various electronic or mechanical versions. Seals are not “locks” – nor are they intended to be, and each seal offers advantages and disadvantages. Persistent thieves can thwart any of them - electronic, plastic or mechanical and hence none are immune to tampering: which is why your sealing procedures are crucial.

It is a fact that company employees perpetrate most theft from commercial lorries. Companies lose millions of pounds each year to theft. Strict adherence to security seal protocol however, can play an integral role in helping to keep your employees honest. Security personnel need to be vigilante in checking for signs of tampering.

The SecureSeal™ can, like all seals, be tampered with: Made of stainless steel and with a random number generator, it is difficult to defeat – but like all tamper-evident seals, not impossible. If a SecureSeal™ has been tampered with there will be evidence of tampering - and this is where the security personnel protocols need to be vigilante. Proper simple-to-follow security procedures can significantly increase your chances of catching thieves and detecting load “shrinkage”.

¹ *Vulnerability Assessment of Security Seals*, <http://www.ne.anl.gov/capabilities/vat/seals/index.html>
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SECURESEAL™ REUSABLE SEAL

SECURING A MOBILE LOAD STEP-BY-STEP

When sealing a load using a SecureSeal™:

1. Check the plunger – is it intact and is the tip (nipple) intact and securely attached to the cable?
2. Check the glass over the seal numbers: is it intact?
3. Check the stainless steel casing: front, sides, top and bottom of the casing – is it intact, scratch and damage free? There should be no holes, scratches or dents.
4. Thread the cable through the trailer handle.
5. Insert the cable tip (nipple) into the plunger.
6. Close the seal by pushing the plunger firmly closed.
7. Record the number on the manifest.

Checking a load upon arrival:

1. Verify the number on the manifest against the number on the seal.
2. Verify that the cable is properly through through the trailer handle.
3. Check the glass over the numbers: is it intact?
4. Check the stainless steel casing: front, sides, top and bottom of the casing – is it intact, scratch and damage free? There should be no holes, scratches or dents.
5. Open the seal, examine the plunger: is it intact and the tip (nipple) intact and securely attached to the cable?

If any of the afore-mentioned indicators are not in line with the condition of the seal when it left the last checkpoint, then it may have been tampered with and further investigation should be immediately undertaken to ascertain whether theft has occurred.