



Lincoln Police Department Crime Analysis Unit

Lost or Stolen Cell Phones

Cell phone thefts continue to rise nationwide. There are a number of large-scale stolen electronic operations in the United States. Gathered intelligence states criminals sell the inventory every few weeks through flea markets and ship the phones overseas.

Cell phones are rarely recovered when they are reported lost or stolen. New technology is in the works which would allow phones to be permanently disabled if a theft occurs.

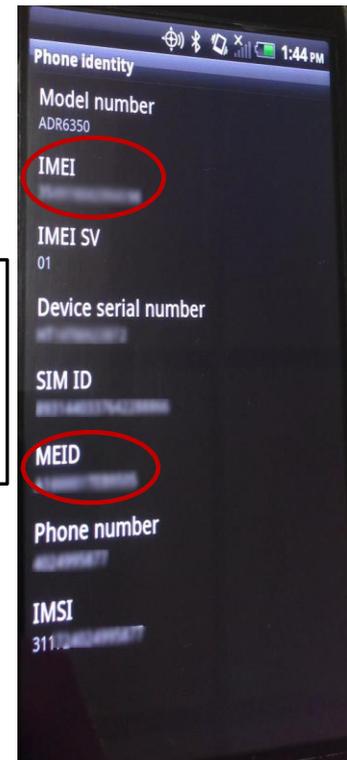
There are three unique identifying numbers on your cell phone. Different organizations use different numbers for tracking purposes. Industry standards prefer victims to provide the IMEI or MEID number, both of which are assigned by the carrier, rather than the serial number. This may explain the reason for the low number of cell phones being recovered. **It is imperative for victims to document the IMEI number, the MEID number and serial number of the cell phone.**

IMEI – International Mobile Equipment Identity

- 14 or 15 digits depending on format (no more/no less)
- Used by GSM networks (AT&T, T-Mobile)
- Unfortunately, relatively easy to modify

MEID – Mobile Equipment Identifier

- 14 digits
- Used by CDMA networks (Verizon, Sprint, Cricket, U.S. Cellular)



Steps to take if your phone is stolen

- 1) File a police report and provide all identifying numbers (IMEI, MEID & Serial)
- 2) Notify your phone company
- 3) Change passwords to other accounts accessible via your stolen cell phone
- 4) Track the phone if there is a built-in GPS