

Construction Boom Fuels Crane Theft

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Moscow's building boom has fueled a growing trade in stolen construction equipment, new research shows.

Research by Avtolokator, a security company that uses satellite tracking to tackle car theft, shows booming demand among auto thieves for heavy equipment, including self-propelled cranes, excavators and bulldozers, the firm said Friday.

In the first 11 months of 2012, attempted thefts of building equipment were up 1.2 percent from the same period last year, according to figures gathered by the company.

Most of the attempted thefts in the past two years, 85 percent, targeted personal vehicles. But a large proportion of the remainder is accounted for by construction equipment.

Theft of commercial vehicles is much rarer, but building equipment, including dump trucks and cranes, accounted for 63 percent of all such attempted thefts.

"Construction machinery is rarely equipped with additional protection, and such theft does not occur as often as car theft. However, the cost of such vehicles is close to the price of an expensive foreign car and can reach \$13 million," Taimur Dvidar, general director of Avtolokator said in e-mailed comments.

"During the construction boom in Moscow, demand for large construction equipment has grown, including on the 'gray' market, and that makes the issue of security against theft more urgent every day," he added.

Motorcycle theft is also on the increase, with thieves taking advantage of the relatively small size to load parked motorcycles into vans. In several instances, prospective "customers" have made off with motorcycles during test drives.

Igor Sechenykh, marketing director for construction-machinery-maker JCB's official Russian dealer, Lonmadi, declined to reveal sales figures but confirmed that the market for construction equipment is growing.

"I wouldn't call it a construction boom — this isn't China — but nonetheless, demand is growing year on year," he said.

"I've heard about the growth in theft from some of our clients," he said. "It's quite simple: It is expensive and people like to sell it. If you're talking about an excavator, you're looking at 3 million rubles easily."

The market for construction equipment, including excavators, bulldozers and road graders, grew 96 percent to 20,804 vehicles in 2011, according to market research company Abarus.

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