



**20
26**

BauWatch Crime Report United Kingdom

**From Tools to Tactics:
How Construction Site Crime
Is Reshaping Risk in the UK**



BauWatch

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Executive Summary

A Stabilising Perception Masks Deeper Structural Risks in the UK Construction Sector

Construction site crime across Europe continues to reshape how projects are planned, secured and delivered. While some markets are seeing stabilisation, the United Kingdom presents a more complex picture: headline indicators suggest slight improvement, yet underlying risks are intensifying in critical areas.

The UK construction sector remains a central pillar of the national economy. According to the UK Office for National Statistics (ONS), construction contributes around six percent to the UK's gross value added and employs more than 2.1 million people. This scale underlines the sector's economic importance, but also its exposure. Construction sites combine high-value materials, mobile assets and complex subcontractor structures in open and constantly changing environments. These characteristics create persistent vulnerabilities that can be exploited by both opportunistic and organised crime.

The BauWatch Crime Report 2026 shows that the perception of increasing construction site crime in the UK has slightly decreased from 66.6 percent in 2025 to 64 percent in 2026. Despite this modest improvement, the UK remains 6.4 percentage points above the European average of 57.6 percent. At the same time, the share of respondents reporting a significant increase has risen to 20 percent, exceeding both the previous year and the EU average. This indicates that while overall sentiment may be stabilising, the intensity of experienced incidents is increasing. This divergence is a defining feature of the UK market. Crime is not necessarily becoming more widespread, but it is becoming more severe, more targeted and more disruptive.

One of the most critical developments concerns the growing human impact of crime. Workers are increasingly affected directly, with financial losses and job insecurity rising sharply. The proportion of workers left out of pocket due to crime has reached 38.7 percent, nearly 15 percentage points above the EU average. Job losses linked to criminal incidents have also increased significantly to 27.7 percent. This indicates a structural shift in how the consequences of crime are distributed. While companies may be absorbing or managing financial impacts more effectively, the burden is increasingly carried by individuals on site. At the same time, the nature of theft is evolving. The UK has seen a slight reduction in the theft of traditional high-value materials such as copper and timber. However, this success has been offset by a sharp rise in the theft of smaller, more mobile assets. Tool theft has increased to 57 percent, the highest level across all surveyed markets and more than 10 percentage points above the European average. This suggests a clear displacement effect: as certain assets become better protected, criminals adapt by targeting items that are easier to access, transport and resell.

A further critical development is the decline in security measures despite elevated risk levels. The use of fixed CCTV systems has dropped by 7.2 percentage points and CCTV towers by 6.8 percentage points year-over-year. While the UK still exceeds the EU average in surveillance deployment, this downward trend creates new vulnerabilities. At the same time, 76 percent of respondents report that budget pressure leads to cutting corners on security, reinforcing the growing gap between risk and protection.



„The BauWatch Crime Report 2026 shows that the situation in the United Kingdom is becoming more complex rather than simply worse. While overall perception appears to stabilise, the real impact of crime is intensifying, particularly for workers on site. Additionally, criminal tactics are evolving, from tool theft to digital reconnaissance and seasonal targeting. For British construction companies, this means that security must move beyond individual measures and become a fully integrated part of project planning and risk management.“

Petra Ehrhard, Group Marketing Officer, BauWatch

The threat landscape itself is also becoming more sophisticated. Traditional cyberattacks are declining, but more advanced methods are emerging. The UK is now significantly above the EU average in the use of drones for surveillance and the cloning of digital access credentials. This indicates a shift towards intelligence-led crime, where offenders gather information and exploit access rather than relying solely on direct attacks.

Furthermore, crime in the UK shows a strong seasonal pattern. A total of 71.3 percent of respondents report that incidents occur more frequently during autumn and winter, significantly above the European average. This highlights the importance of environmental factors such as reduced daylight and visibility.

Finally, the new report reveals a broader systemic impact: crime is increasingly disrupting the construction supply chain. In 2026, 26.4 percent of projects required the replacement of subcontractors due to crime-related scheduling issues, nearly 10 percentage points above the EU average. This indicates that the effects of crime extend far beyond individual incidents, affecting timelines, coordination and project stability.

Taken together, these findings show that construction site crime in the UK is entering a new phase. While headline indicators suggest stabilisation, the underlying dynamics point to increasing complexity, higher impact and growing structural risk.

What this means for construction companies

For construction companies in the United Kingdom, security is no longer a secondary operational issue. It is becoming a central factor influencing project performance, workforce stability and financial outcomes. Companies that rely on reactive or

fragmented approaches risk falling behind. The findings highlight the need for integrated strategies that combine physical security, digital protection and strong operational processes.

Six key trends shaping construction site crime in the United Kingdom

The **BauWatch Crime Report 2026** identifies six major trends:

// **The human cost of construction site crime is increasing significantly, with workers more frequently affected by financial losses and job insecurity.**

// **Theft is shifting towards smaller, more mobile assets, particularly tools, while theft of high-value materials is declining.**

// **Security measures are being reduced despite persistently high crime levels, weakening overall site protection.**

// **Criminal activity is becoming more sophisticated, with greater use of digital access methods and surveillance technologies.**

// **Crime is increasingly influenced by seasonal factors, with a strong rise during autumn and winter.**

// **The impact of crime is extending beyond individual incidents, disrupting supply chains and affecting project continuity.**

Why the study results matter for you

The **BauWatch Crime Report 2026** provides a comprehensive overview of how construction site crime is evolving in the United Kingdom and across Europe. The findings show that the UK is facing a combination of stabilising perception, rising impact and increasingly adaptive criminal behaviour.

For construction companies, this creates a challenging environment. Crime is no longer limited to material loss, but increasingly affects workforce stability, project timelines and supply chain

reliability. Addressing these challenges requires a more strategic approach to security. Proactive planning, targeted investment and improved coordination are essential to protect assets, ensure safe working environments and maintain reliable project delivery.

In a sector defined by tight schedules, complex supply chains and high-value assets, construction site security is becoming a decisive factor for long-term success in the United Kingdom.

Trend #1

The Worker Pays the Price: UK’s Human Cost of Crime Crisis

While some headline indicators suggest that companies in the UK are beginning to manage the financial impact of construction site crime more effectively, the underlying data reveals a far more concerning development: the burden of crime is increasingly being transferred to individual workers.

The most striking finding is the sharp rise in the number of workers who are directly affected financially. The proportion of employees left out of pocket due to criminal incidents has increased from 33 percent in 2025 to 38.7 percent in 2026.

This places the UK 14.9 percentage points above the European average of 23.8 percent, making it the most pronounced negative deviation across all surveyed markets.

At the same time, the impact on employment is becoming more visible. The share of respondents reporting that people lost work as a result of construction site crime has risen from 22.8 percent to 27.7 percent. This is 10.7 percentage points above the EU average, underlining that crime is not only creating financial strain, but also contributing to instability in employment.

Crime impact

Category	2025	2026	EU 2026	UK vs EU
Workers out of pocket	33 %	38.7 %	23.8 %	+ 14.9 pp
People lost work	22.8 %	27.7 %	17 %	+ 10.7 pp
Project delayed	41.8 %	43.8 %	40.2 %	+ 2.6 pp
Project went over budget	32.5 %	25.3 %	25.5 %	- 0.2 pp

At project level, the picture appears more stable. While delays have increased slightly to 43.8 percent, the share of projects exceeding budget has declined significantly to 25.3 percent, now broadly in line with the European average. This suggests that construction companies are becoming more effective at managing direct financial losses and maintaining cost control.

However, this apparent stabilisation at company level masks a deeper structural imbalance. The data indicates that while organisations may be absorbing or redistributing some of the financial impact of crime, individual workers are increasingly exposed to its consequences. This shift fundamentally changes the nature of construction site crime in the UK.

Crime impact

What does that mean for the UK?

Crime is no longer only a matter of stolen materials or disrupted timelines. It is becoming a workforce issue, with tangible effects on personal finances, job security and working conditions. For many workers, incidents such as theft or vandalism now result not only in operational inconvenience, but in direct personal loss.

This development has wider implications for the construction sector. Increased financial pressure on workers can affect morale, productivity and retention, particularly in an industry already facing skills shortages and high labour demand.

It may also lead to rising insurance claims, disputes and reputational risks for employers. In this context, construction site security must be viewed not only as a means of protecting assets, but as a critical component of workforce protection. Companies that fail to address this shift risk not only financial losses, but also long-term challenges in maintaining a stable and resilient workforce.

Ultimately, the UK data highlights a clear turning point: construction site crime is evolving from an operational issue into a broader social and economic challenge for the industry. Addressing it effectively will require a more holistic approach that places equal emphasis on protecting people as well as property.



Trend #2

The Power Tool Epidemic: Theft Shifts to Mobile Assets

The structure of construction site theft in the UK is changing in a fundamental way. While there has been measurable progress in reducing the theft of traditional high-value materials, this has been offset by a sharp and concerning increase in the theft of smaller, more mobile assets.

The most striking development is the surge in tool theft. The share of respondents reporting theft of small tools and power tools has increased from 51.6 percent in 2025 to 57 percent in 2026. This places the UK 10.3 percentage points above the

EU average, making it the most affected market in this category. At the same time, theft of heavy machinery has risen slightly to 16.6 percent and remains significantly above European levels.

In contrast, theft of copper has declined by 4.8 percentage points, while timber theft has fallen even more sharply by 6.6 percentage points. These declines suggest that targeted security measures for high-value materials are having an effect.

Most commonly stolen items

Item	2025	2026	EU 2026	UK vs EU
Small tools & power tools	51.6 %	57 %	46.7 %	+ 10.3 pp
Heavy machinery	15.6 %	16.6 %	11.2 %	+ 5.4 pp
Copper	48.4 %	43.6 %	48.7 %	- 5.1 pp
Timber	22.2 %	15.6 %	14.8 %	+ 0.8 pp

This development reflects a classic displacement effect. As construction companies improve protection around high-value materials, criminals adapt by targeting assets that are easier to access, transport and resell. Tools, in particular, represent an ideal target: they are widely available on site, highly mobile and often insufficiently secured.

The UK therefore faces a dual challenge. On one hand, progress in securing materials demonstrates that targeted security investments can be effective. On the other hand, the sharp rise in tool theft shows that criminals are becoming more adaptive and opportunistic. Without a broader, more integrated approach to site security, gains in one area are likely to create vulnerabilities in another.

Trend #3

The Vanishing Defence: Declining Site Security

Despite persistently high levels of perceived crime, the UK is seeing a noticeable decline in the deployment of key security measures. This creates a growing imbalance between the level of risk and the level of protection on construction sites.

The use of fixed CCTV systems has fallen from 48 percent in 2025 to 40.8 percent in 2026, a decrease of 7.2 percentage points. Similarly, CCTV towers

have declined by 6.8 percentage points to 24.2 percent. While both measures remain well above the EU average, the downward trend is significant. At the same time, budget pressure is intensifying. The proportion of respondents reporting that financial constraints lead to reduced security measures has increased to 76 percent, which is 5 percentage points above the European average.

Security measures

Category	2025	2026	EU 2026	UK vs EU
Fixed CCTV systems	48 %	40.8 %	21.6 %	+ 19.2 pp
CCTV towers	31 %	24.2 %	18 %	+ 6 pp
Perimeter fences	36.4 %	34.2 %	35.5 %	- 1.3 pp
Budget pressure leads to cuts (net)	68 %	76 %	71 %	+ 5 pp

At the same time, companies are planning to increase investment in security systems and personnel, suggesting a growing awareness of the issue. However, this response appears reactive rather than strategic.

Operational weaknesses further complicate the picture. Poor perimeter control is reported significantly more often than in other European markets, and access control is becoming a growing focus area. While 77 percent of respondents report using or planning access control solutions, gaps in execution remain.

Overall, the UK presents a clear example of a security paradox: awareness of risk is high, but the consistent implementation of effective measures is declining. This gap is likely contributing directly to the rise in opportunistic crime, particularly the theft of smaller assets.



76%

reported that financial constraints lead to reduced security measures





Trend #4

The Spy in the Sky: Digital Crime Gets Smarter

The nature of digital threats in the UK construction sector is evolving rapidly. While traditional forms of cyberattack are becoming less common, more sophisticated and targeted methods are emerging.

The proportion of respondents reporting hacking or disabling of security systems is slightly below the European average. However, this does not indicate

a reduction in risk. Instead, it reflects a shift in tactics. The UK is now a hotspot for more advanced forms of digital crime. The cloning or hacking of digital access credentials stands at 23.1 percent, which is 7.6 percentage points above the EU average. Similarly, the use of drones for surveillance has increased to 24.4 percent, 7.2 percentage points above the European benchmark.

High-tech methods

Method	2026	EU 2026	UK vs EU
Hacking/disabling systems	20.7 %	22.1 %	- 1.4 pp
Cloning/hacking credentials	23.1 %	15.5 %	+ 7.6 pp
Drones for surveillance	24.4 %	17.2 %	+ 7.2 pp

These developments point to a clear strategic evolution. Rather than directly attacking systems, criminals are increasingly focusing on gaining access, gathering intelligence and exploiting weak points in digital and physical infrastructure.

This makes construction site crime harder to detect and prevent. It also requires a shift in security strategy, moving beyond traditional perimeter protection towards integrated solutions that combine physical security, cybersecurity and real-time monitoring.



7.2%
decrease in fixed
CCTV usage



23.1%
reported cloning or hacking
of digital access credentials

Trend #5

Winter Is Coming: The Seasonal Crime Wave

Construction site crime in the UK is strongly influenced by seasonal factors. The data shows a clear and growing concentration of criminal activity during the darker months of the year.

The share of respondents reporting that crime becomes more frequent during autumn and winter has increased from 64 percent in 2025 to 71.3

percent in 2026. This places the UK 5.8 percentage points above the EU average and highlights a pronounced seasonal vulnerability.



This trend reflects the practical realities of construction site security. Reduced daylight hours, lower visibility and fewer on-site personnel create favourable conditions for criminal activity.

The fact that this seasonal effect is more pronounced in the UK than in other European

markets suggests that existing security strategies are not sufficiently adapted to these changing conditions. Addressing this vulnerability requires targeted, seasonal adjustments to security measures, particularly during high-risk periods.

Trend #6

The Ripple Effect: Crime Destabilises the Supply Chain

The impact of construction site crime in the UK extends far beyond immediate losses. One of the most significant findings is its growing effect on project continuity and supply chain stability.

The share of projects requiring subcontractor replacement due to crime-related scheduling issues has increased from 22.6 percent in 2025 to 26.4

percent in 2026. This places the UK 9.8 percentage points above the EU average, making it one of the most pronounced country-specific deviations.



This finding highlights the broader systemic impact of construction site crime. When subcontractors must be replaced, the consequences extend across the entire project lifecycle. Delays increase, coordination becomes more complex and costs rise. In this context, crime is no longer an isolated operational issue. It becomes a structural risk that affects planning reliability, supply chain stability and overall project delivery.

For the UK construction sector, this underscores the need for a more holistic approach to security. Protecting assets is only one part of the equation. Ensuring continuity of operations and stability of partnerships is equally critical for long-term success.

Security Solutions and Best Practices

Effectively Protecting Construction Sites: Strategy, Technology and Coordination Are Key

The findings of the **BauWatch Crime Report 2026** show that construction site security in the United Kingdom is becoming increasingly complex. Crime is no longer limited to isolated theft incidents but is evolving into a multi-layered challenge that affects workers, supply chains and overall project delivery.

In particular, the UK data highlights several critical risk areas: the growing financial burden on workers,

the sharp rise in tool theft, the decline in core security measures and the increasing sophistication of digital and seasonal crime patterns. These developments underline that traditional, reactive approaches to site security are no longer sufficient.

Effective construction site security in the UK must therefore be proactive, flexible and integrated into all phases of a project.



A key element of modern site security is visible deterrence. Measures such as CCTV systems, mobile camera towers and perimeter fencing signal that a construction site is protected. While the UK still shows above-average use of surveillance technologies compared to Europe, the recent decline in deployment suggests that maintaining consistent visibility remains essential. Particularly in light of rising opportunistic theft, visible security can prevent incidents before they occur.





At the same time, the increasing use of drones and digital credential misuse demonstrates that criminals are becoming more strategic and technologically advanced. This requires a shift towards intelligent monitoring solutions. Remote video surveillance, real-time alerts and data-driven analytics allow suspicious activity to be detected early and addressed before it escalates.



However, technology alone cannot address all vulnerabilities. The UK findings clearly show that operational weaknesses, particularly poor coordination between contractors and site management, contribute significantly to security failures. This highlights the importance of clear processes, defined responsibilities and effective communication across all stakeholders.



In addition, seasonal risk factors must be taken into account. With crime significantly more frequent during autumn and winter, security strategies should be adapted accordingly. Enhanced lighting, increased monitoring and additional patrols during darker months can help mitigate these predictable risks.



Ultimately, construction site security in the UK must be viewed as a strategic investment rather than a cost factor. The financial and operational consequences of crime, particularly its impact on workers and supply chains, far outweigh the cost of preventive measures.



BauWatch supports construction companies, developers and infrastructure operators across the UK with flexible and scalable security solutions. By combining visible deterrence with advanced monitoring technologies and data-driven insights, BauWatch helps protect construction sites, reduce risks and ensure project continuity.

Six practical tips for greater construction site security



Prioritise visible deterrents

Visible security measures deter before incidents occur by signalling from a distance that the site is protected. CCTV towers, lighting, fencing and clear signage increase the perceived risk for offenders and often prevent opportunistic crime before entry.



Integrate security planning early

Security should be integrated into project planning from the outset. Considering when high-value materials and equipment are on site, planning access points and storage, and allocating budget early helps prevent structural vulnerabilities.



Strengthen coordination

Security gaps often arise from poor coordination rather than missing measures. Clear responsibilities, aligned standards across contractors and regular communication between all parties help eliminate typical blind spots.



Raise security awareness

Effective security depends on the awareness of everyone on site. Regular site inductions, toolbox talks and clear communication of risks and incidents encourage staff and subcontractors to actively contribute to site security.



Adapt security measures

Security needs to evolve with the construction process. Measures should be continuously adjusted to project phases, with increased protection during high-value installations and consideration of seasonal risks such as reduced daylight or holiday periods.



Focus on prevention

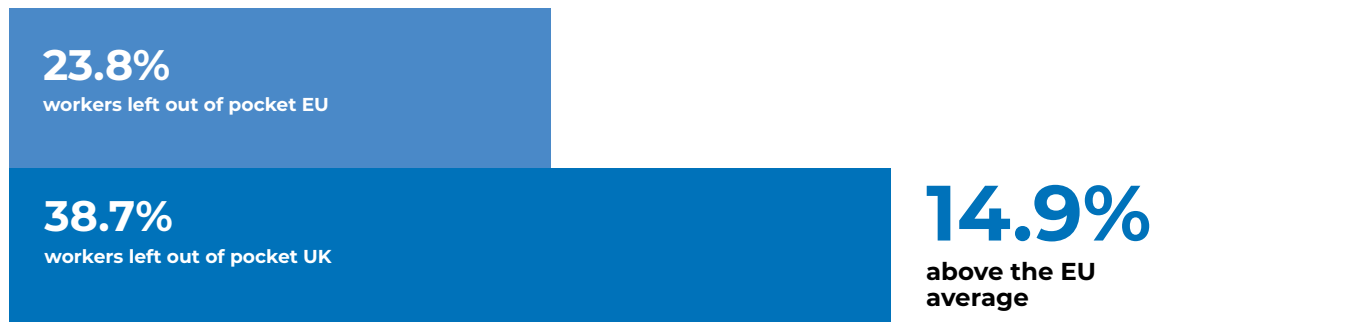
A preventive approach is more effective than reacting to incidents. Regular risk assessments, combined physical and technical measures and continuous review help reduce incidents and ensure long-term project stability.



Key Findings of the BauWatch Crime Report United Kingdom 2026

1. The human cost of crime is escalating significantly

The share of workers left out of pocket has risen to 38.7 percent, which is 14.9 percentage points above the EU average. At the same time, job losses due to crime have increased to 27.7 percent, underlining that the burden of crime is increasingly affecting individuals rather than companies.



2. Theft patterns are shifting towards tools and mobile assets

Tool theft has increased to 57 percent, making the UK the most affected market and placing it 10.3 percentage points above the EU average. At the same time, theft of high-value materials such as copper and timber has declined, indicating a shift in criminal focus.



3. Security measures are declining despite high risk levels

The use of fixed CCTV systems has dropped by 7.2 percentage points, while CCTV towers have declined by 6.8 percentage points. At the same time, 76 percent of respondents report that budget pressure leads to reduced security measures, creating a widening gap between risk and protection.

7.2%

decline in use of fixed CCTV systems

6.8%

decline in use of CCTV towers

76%

report that budget pressure leads to reduced security measures

4. Digital threats are becoming more targeted and sophisticated

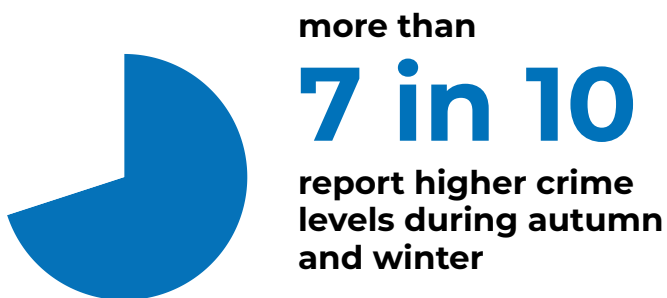
The UK shows significantly higher exposure to credential hacking and drone-based surveillance than the EU average. This indicates a shift towards more advanced, intelligence-driven criminal tactics.

5. Crime is increasingly influenced by seasonal factors

More than seven in ten construction professionals report higher crime levels during autumn and winter. This highlights a structural vulnerability linked to reduced visibility and changing site conditions.

6. Construction site crime is disrupting supply chains

The share of projects requiring subcontractor replacement has risen to 26.4 percent, nearly 10 percentage points above the EU average. This demonstrates that crime is increasingly affecting project continuity and operational stability.



Security Checklist for Site Teams

Construction sites are constantly changing, and so are the security risks. Regularly reviewing the most important safety measures helps to identify vulnerabilities at an early stage and prevent incidents. The following checklist helps project teams to systematically assess the security status of their construction site.

Extra tips for site managers:



Many security incidents on UK construction sites stem from everyday operational gaps rather than major failures. Consistent processes, clear communication and simple preventive measures can significantly reduce risk.



Security should be reviewed regularly, particularly at key project milestones, during handovers or when high-value tools and equipment are brought onto site.



Strengthen coordination between contractors, subcontractors and site management: In the UK, gaps in responsibility and communication are a key driver of security failures. Clear ownership, defined processes and regular alignment across all parties help close vulnerabilities and reduce opportunities for opportunistic crime.

Ten Questions You Should Answer Now

1

Is the construction site clearly demarcated?

Are fences, barriers and access points designed to make unauthorised entry difficult?

6

Are all staff members familiar with the safety rules?

Are teams and subcontractors informed about safety measures and have they been trained accordingly?

2

Is access controlled?

Are there clear rules regarding who has access to the construction site, for example through access controls, ID cards or documented deliveries?

7

Are machines and equipment secured?

Are machines locked, keys removed and mobile equipment safely stowed away after work?

3

Are valuable materials secured?

Are materials such as copper, cables or tools stored securely or locked away outside working hours?

8

Are risks assessed regularly?

Do regular safety checks take place, particularly during new construction phases or when materials are delivered?

4

Are there visible deterrents in place?

Are there camera towers, warning signs or lighting that can deter potential offenders?

9

Are security service providers involved?

Are security providers informed of changes on the construction site, such as new storage areas or construction phases?

5

Is the construction site monitored outside working hours?

Are there solutions for monitoring at night or at weekends, such as CCTV or security services?

10

Is there a clear emergency plan?

Has it been established how to respond to theft, vandalism or security incidents, and who needs to be informed?

Looking Ahead

What Needs to Happen Now

The findings of the BauWatch Crime Report 2026 highlight that construction site crime in the United Kingdom is becoming a structural challenge for the industry.

While overall perception of crime has stabilised slightly, the underlying risks are becoming more complex. Crime is increasingly affecting workers directly, shifting towards more mobile and opportunistic targets, and evolving through digital and seasonal patterns. At the same time, declining security measures and growing budget pressure are creating additional vulnerabilities.

Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated and forward-looking approach.

1 Construction companies must recognise that security is not only about protecting assets, but also about protecting people.

The growing financial and professional impact on workers makes security a critical workforce issue.

2 Companies need to close the gap between risk awareness and implementation.

While investment intentions are increasing, the decline in key security measures suggests that execution remains inconsistent.

3 Security strategies must evolve in line with changing criminal tactics.

This includes addressing digital threats, improving access control and adapting to seasonal risk patterns.

4 Construction site security should be seen as a core component of project success.

The cost of crime, including delays, workforce disruption and supply chain instability, often exceeds the cost of preventive measures.

By taking a proactive and integrated approach to security, construction companies in the UK can better protect their projects, their employees and their long-term business performance.

5 Improving construction site security is not only about reducing losses

It is about ensuring safe working environments, maintaining reliable project delivery and supporting the resilience of the UK construction industry.

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BauWatch, your partner for modern construction site security

BauWatch supports construction companies, project developers and infrastructure operators in protecting construction sites effectively and identifying risks at an early stage. Our approach combines visible deterrence with advanced monitoring technologies and data-driven analysis. Solutions such as mobile camera towers, temporary fencing systems and intelligent video surveillance help prevent theft, vandalism and unauthorised access.

By working closely with construction companies and industry partners, BauWatch develops flexible security concepts tailored to different project types and phases. Together, we can help make construction sites safer and strengthen the foundations for a resilient and future-ready construction industry in the UK.



Survey Results



The survey for the BauWatch Crime Report 2026 was conducted in February 2026 by the market research institute OnePoll. The sample comprised 4,100 industry experts from the construction industry. The respondents came from Germany, Austria, Italy, the United Kingdom, Spain, France, Belgium, Poland, the Netherlands, and Ireland. The sectors examined include Commercial Construction (39%), Commercial Real Estate Management (7%), Energy (15%), Homebuilders & Renovation (33%), and Infrastructure (6%).

In your opinion, has construction site crime increased or decreased in the past year?



Despite a slight year-on-year decline, the perception of rising construction site crime in the UK remains clearly above the European average. This indicates that concerns about security are firmly embedded in the operational reality of the sector and continue to shape decision-making on site.

What are the most common items stolen from construction sites in your experience?

Item	Percentage
Small & power tools, handheld equipment	57 %
Copper	44 %
Cable & Cable drums	34 %
Bricks or blocks, Roofing tiles	24 %
Pipework/ducting	23 %
Fuel	21 %
Steel	20 %
Personal effects (e.g., phones, PPE)	18 %
Household appliances (e.g., boiler, cooker) & Fixtures and fittings (e.g., bath/toilet, curtain rails)	17 %
Heavy machinery (e.g., digger/excavator)	17 %
Timber	16 %
Vehicles (e.g., vans or cars)	11 %

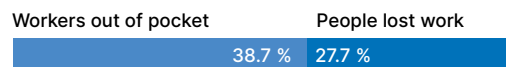
Tool theft is the most common form of crime on UK construction sites and occurs significantly more frequently than across Europe. This reflects a growing focus on mobile, easy-to-resell assets and underlines the need for improved storage, tracking and access control.

In which ways has construction site crime impacted subcontractors that work with your company?



Crime is increasingly affecting not only individual sites, but also broader project structures. The high rate of subcontractor replacement indicates that incidents can disrupt timelines, coordination and overall project stability.

In which ways has construction crime impacted a project that you were doing?



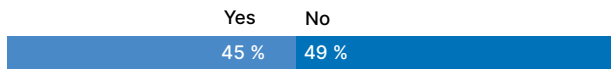
The UK stands out for the disproportionate impact of crime on individual workers. Financial losses and job insecurity affect employees far more than in other European markets, highlighting a shift from company-level risk to personal consequences.

What security measures are used on sites that you work on?

Measure	2025	2026
Fixed CCTV systems	48 %	41 %
Warning signs	45 %	39 %
Perimeter fences	36 %	34 %
Alarms	41 %	32 %
Floodlights	30 %	32 %
Fire safety	29 %	27 %
On-site guards/security personnel	36 %	26 %
CCTV towers	31 %	24 %
Access Control (e.g., pass card entry, pedestrian and vehicle management, staffed gate for deliveries)	28 %	23 %
Equipment inventory checks	27 %	21 %
Keyholding Response	15 %	16 %
Trackers	17 %	14 %
Other types of camera surveillance	17 %	12 %
Digital inventory management (e.g., recording deliveries virtually)	13 %	12 %
Guard dog	19 %	12 %
Hoarding systems	14 %	11 %
Drones	7 %	7 %
PIDs/PODs modular systems	8 %	5 %

The decline in key security measures contrasts with persistently high crime levels. This suggests that budget pressure and operational constraints may be limiting the ability of companies to maintain effective protection, potentially creating new vulnerabilities.

Have you experienced cyber-related threats to construction site operations?

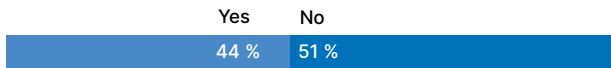


Which cyber-related threats have you experienced on a site you've worked on?

Method	
Data breaches (e.g., unauthorised access to sensitive information)	33 %
Cloning or fraudulent use of digital access credentials	31 %
Hacking or compromise of equipment management or operational systems	30 %
Digital sabotage (e.g., intentional system disruption)	30 %
Hacking or compromise of digital access control systems	25 %
Phishing or social engineering attacks	23 %
Coordinated cyber attacks	22 %
Ransomware attacks	20 %

The UK shows above-average exposure to advanced digital and hybrid threats. Criminals are increasingly using technology not only to attack systems, but to gather information and exploit access points, making incidents harder to detect and prevent.

Have you ever been approached by individuals or groups offering "protection" for your construction site?

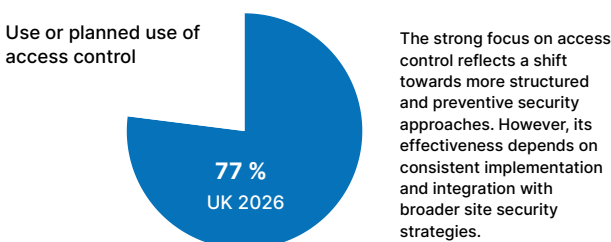


What measures do you or your company plan to implement in the next 12 months to help combat construction crime?

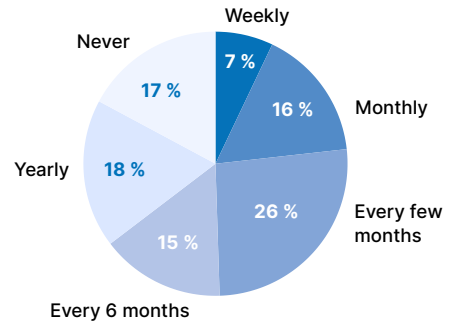
Measure	
Increase security personnel	33.6 %
Increase security systems	32.2 %

UK companies are responding to rising risks by planning higher investment in security compared to the EU average. This indicates growing awareness, although implementation gaps remain a key challenge.

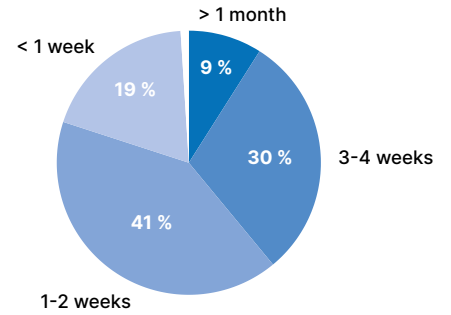
How much of a priority has access controls on the construction sites you've worked on?



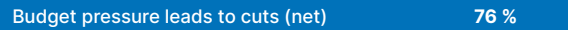
How often do you experience theft on sites you have worked on?



If a project you worked on has been delayed by crime, how long was it delayed by?



Why do you think site security has not been a high priority on sites you have worked on?

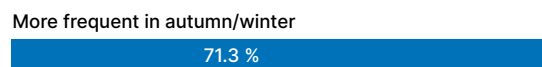


Financial constraints play a significant role in shaping security decisions in the UK. The high share of respondents reporting budget-driven cuts highlights a structural challenge where cost pressures directly increase exposure to risk.

What do you believe are the biggest reasons security fails on construction sites?

Reason	
Human error or complacency among workers or management	32 %
Budget constraints during planning phase	32 %
Poorly designed perimeter or access control measures	30 %
Poor coordination between contractors and site management	30 %
Lack of clear ownership or accountability for security	29 %
Weak enforcement of security protocols	28 %
Inadequate monitoring or slow incident response	27 %

In your experience of construction crime, is it more or less frequent in autumn and winter?



Seasonality plays a major role in construction site crime in the UK. The strong increase during autumn and winter highlights how environmental factors such as reduced visibility and longer nights directly influence criminal activity.

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