

# Self-Storage Security Guidebook:

**3 Proven Ways to Outsmart  
Theft, Protect Your Reputation  
& Your Bottom Line**



**noke smart entry**  
no key. no problem.  
BY JANUS INTERNATIONAL



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## OVERVIEW OF SECURITY CHALLENGES & SELF-STORAGE INDUSTRY DATA



Ask any operator in the self-storage industry what their biggest concern is today, and most will list theft and break-ins at or near the top of the list after seeing a rise in criminal activity at facilities over the last 5 years. In fact, according to a recent survey by MSM, **85%** of self-storage owners, operators and managers are worried about theft and break-ins, and **57%** report that they're dealing with repeated break-ins—which includes multiple units being broken into at once or repeated break-ins occurring at multiple times and/or multiple days. One staggering recent example was reported by KTVU Fox 2 in San Jose, California, where 4 suspects were recently arrested trying to break into a self-storage facility, after already stealing \$400,000 in musical equipment and other property from multiple break-ins at multiple facilities throughout the area. But large cities like San Jose are far from the market types at risk for seeing an uptick in unit level break-ins.

### OWNER CONCERNS



# 85%

of owner-operators  
are concerned about  
**theft and break-ins.**

### REPEAT OFFENSES



# 57%

have dealt with  
**repeated break-ins**

In the town of Osceola, Indiana, with a population under 3,000, ABC 15 News reported that thieves had been targeting units at a facility in this rural town, where they broke the exterior gate and then broke the unit locks to steal cherished items from renters. "As soon as we pulled in, I was like, 'Oh no. Oh no.' And it was evident that it was clearly broken into," explained one renter who was frustrated by the loss of all her belongings in a place she thought would be safe.

**But it doesn't have to be this way.** This white paper explores the primary security challenges owner-operators are facing today, what makes self-storage facilities so vulnerable to break-ins and other crimes, and how and where it's happening according to industry survey data. Most importantly, you'll learn **what crime is costing your business, how you can remedy it with 3 of today's smartest technology tools, and why you won't want to wait.**

## » WHAT ARE THE PRIMARY SECURITY CHALLENGES FACING OWNER-OPERATORS TODAY

There are two camps of criminals presenting modern-day security challenges to self-storage. The first are thieves who use quick and simple tactics that require minimal skill. These typically include:

- Cutting latches and padlocks
- Prying off latches
- Bending and kicking in roll-up door panels
- Climbing over unit walls and cutting through wire to access adjacent units
- Accessing the property by tailgating and then performing any of the above



The second group of criminals are a savvier bunch who infiltrate internally, usually in the form of current tenants breaking into units that don't belong to them. Think about it: tenants know the property well, including:

- **When managers are on site**
- **Where expensive items are stored**
- **What units contain high-dollar items**

They can use a bolt-cutter to quickly clean out a unit that is housing tools, cars, motorcycles, electronics, ATVs or other high value items and some of these thieves are even clever enough to attach a replacement padlock before anyone is the wiser. With each of these types of break-ins, the traditional security equipment we've grown accustomed to in self-storage—padlocks, security cameras, gates and keypads—is no longer enough to deter the crime.



## » WHAT MAKES SELF-STORAGE PROPERTIES SO VULNERABLE

There are 5 common reasons why some facilities are targeted for break-ins and other crimes.



**Trouble spots.** Though no area is immune, and break-ins appear to be increasing in many areas and in all market types, some states have higher rates of self-storage theft with Colorado, Tennessee, Kentucky, Texas and California ranking at the top.



**Soft targets.** Many self-storage facilities are in industrial areas or on the outskirts of town, which makes them an easy target for criminals who want to operate in locations where they won't be noticed.



**Windows of opportunity.** Many facilities provide 24-hour access to their tenants, which gives criminals more opportunities to case facilities during off hours. Because most self-storage facilities don't have the same type of heavy traffic flow and on-site staff as other property types, like multifamily, retail, and office space, criminals are able to spend more time at storage facilities without being interrupted, or in many cases even detected. One alarming trend that has been reported is criminals renting a unit so they can check out the facility to determine any security lapses on the property. Once they identify a weakness, they hit it hard multiple times, which is why many facilities **(57%)** report multiple break-ins.



**Lack of deterrent.** This leads to many criminals not being arrested or sentences being light. When criminals aren't afraid of prosecution, there's no deterrent to stop.



**Lack of sophistication.** The safety and security measures at many self-storage facilities haven't kept up with the criminals in terms of sophistication, with many owner-operators opting to invest their capital in improvements like landscaping or solar panels but now realizing that it's time to catch up on security.

## SELF-STORAGE SECURITY CHALLENGES BY MARKET TYPE

Crime overall is up, including a **21%** increase in the robbery rates in urban centers across the country over three years. And those stats from the National Crime Victimization Survey hit close to home when it comes to the self-storage industry—as law enforcement from coast to coast report an uptick in burglaries at self-storage facilities in 2024.

*“We’ve never seen it happen at this level before,”*

reports Sgt. Brett Cohn of Colorado’s Arapahoe County Sheriff’s Office. The department reports that thieves are getting smarter by using fake identities to rent units and then breaking into the other units to steal from those legitimate customers. In some cases, robbers have been caught on camera with the luxury of 6-8 hours of uninterrupted time to target multiple units and steal hundreds of thousands of dollars in goods. And while crime is more common and frequent in urban areas, it’s happening everywhere.



### WHERE'S IT HAPPENING

And while crime is more common and frequent in urban areas, it's happening everywhere.



#### RURAL MARKETS

25%



#### SUBURBAN MARKETS

25%



#### URBAN MARKETS

44%

#### LEVEL OF WORRY ABOUT BREAK-INS

CONCERNED

EXTREMELY CONCERNED

owner-operators

**75%**

who are in **urban** areas are concerned

owner-operators

**72%**

who are in **suburban** areas are concerned

owner-operators

**25%**

who are in rural markets are extremely concerned

## » WHY OWNER-OPERATORS SHOULD CARE

Whether it's the old-school way of criminals cutting through fences and padlocks or savvy schemes that circumvent your gate access, surveillance cameras, and layers of locks, there's never been a greater need for greater security measures on your properties.

That's because crime is costing self-storage more than people might think in terms of lost revenue and reputational damage. In fact, many experts believe that break-ins have become the biggest threat to the industry right now, not only because of the substantial cost of time and money from claims but also the long-term cost to the industry's overall reputation. And many self-storage owner-operators have started feeling the impact, with **81%** reporting that they believe crime can cause reputational damage. Read on to see that there's a lot you can do about it, including installing higher security doors and smart locks.



### IMPACT ON IMAGE

# 81%

believe theft and break-ins cause reputational damage.

## » HOW TO OVERCOME THESE SECURITY CHALLENGES

The biggest boost to combat crime in the self-storage industry comes from putting the latest security technology in place to move beyond detection to deterrence.

**If you look at the statistics:**

### OWNER-OPERATORS

# 92%

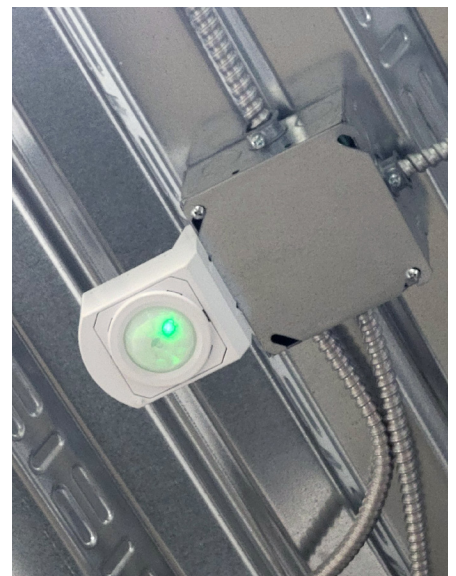
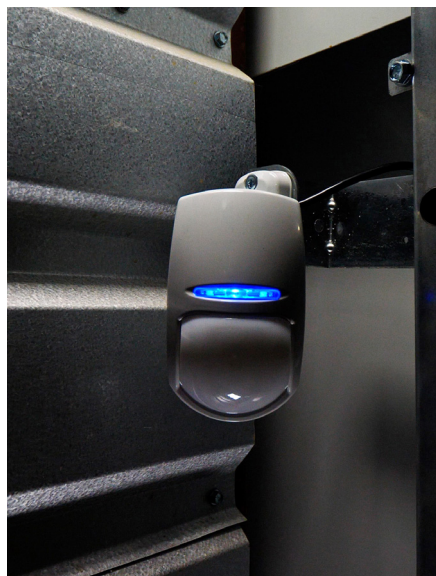
report using security cameras

### OWNER-OPERATORS

# 71%

use digital access control keypads for entry points

So, what security improvements on the market should you choose when planning for new project construction or upgrading existing facilities? Janus International has been on the forefront of developing innovative solutions to combat this major issue facing the industry. These include award-winning enhanced security doors, industry leading smart-lock systems, access control and surveillance, and interior and exterior lighting for optimal security at your facility.



## TOP 3 WAYS TO GUARD AGAINST SELF-STORAGE SECURITY CHALLENGES

### #1 UNIT DOORS, GATES & PERIMETER SECURITY

**High quality, industry-leading doors.** When you're considering the doors to your self-storage facility, they need to be top quality to stand up to the threat of crime. And there's no higher quality door than the award-winning steel roll-up doors from Janus that are manufactured to last with a maintenance-free dead-axle design. These doors have led the industry for more than two decades with a full line of roll-up and swing storage unit doors in varying sizes for all types of self-storage facilities.

**Enhanced security doors.** The wrong roll-up or swing doors leaves you vulnerable to burglary and other crimes because they're easy for criminals to break into by pulling on the handle on the bottom bar to pull the curtain out of the track or tie a rope onto that and use a vehicle to force the door open. That's why we've manufactured a higher-level security door that elevates your unit door security to combat theft and provide the ultimate in protection for your tenants' valuable possessions.

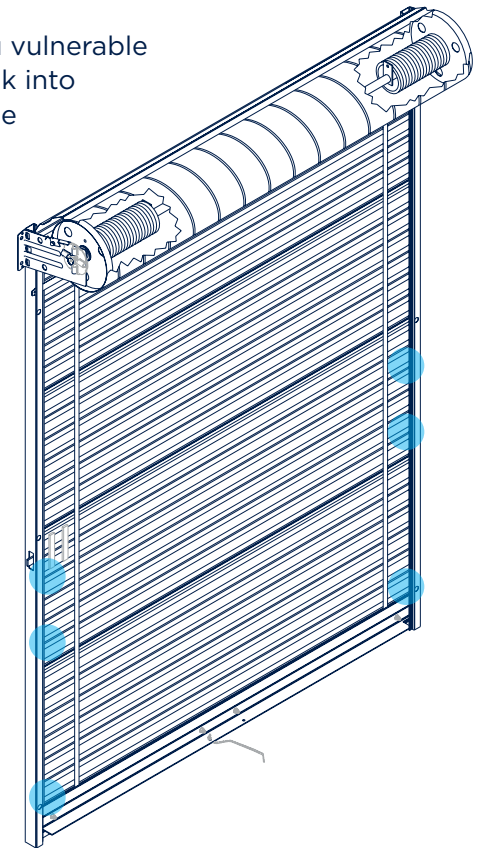
**NS+Door.** With the enhanced design in our NS Series for either new construction or door replacements, you'll find enhanced stability and support. Here's what's new:

- Added **six 9-gauge security clips** to the sides of the doors that extend fully into the guide. These clips secure the door to the guide much more effectively, making it far more difficult to pull the door off the track
- Anchored 14-gauge support angles into the floor, which provides additional protection against attempts to kick in or pull out the door
- Removed a point of leverage by removing the middle handle on the bottom bar
- Reinforced the bottom bar with galvanized steel

**NS Retrokit.** And when you're seeking to upgrade your security on existing doors, you'll want to look for an option that's easy and economical. At Janus, we offer a NS Retrokit that's made for the job. Like our NS+ Door, you get the same robust specifications at a lower cost.

Even if you have doors that are 8-feet wide or larger, there are solutions to fit the bill. For example, the Janus NS+ Door and NS Retrokit include a secondary reinforcement angle to support the bottom bar and prevent bending caused by extended spans.

**Touchless gate access.** Your first line of defense is the entrance to your facility, so putting state-of-the-art gates and fences in place is crucial to help prevent unauthorized access to your property. And by installing smart access control systems, like Nokē, you can take your security up another notch to further reduce the worry of tampering. Our Access Control Technologies division offers premium gate manufacturing, access control and low voltage installation and integration, as well as access control and gate system service and repair.



## #2 NOKĒ SMART LOCKS

**Smart unit locks.** Another common way criminals have broken into facilities in the past is using a bolt cutter to cut the lock or by cutting through or grinding off the hasp entirely. But that threat is eliminated with Nokē Ion, the industry's only hardwired, customizable smart lock that secures all your units, including vacant ones, through inside-the-door lock mounting, automated overlocking and the use of digital keys.

And there's proof that the solution is highly effective against crime with **+95% of owner-operators reporting fewer break-in claims using our Nokē smart locks versus traditional padlocks.** That's money in your pocket with facilities **saving up to 25% on commercial insurance and in many cases increasing their tenant insurance or property protection up 75-80%, which could translate to \$15,000-\$20,000 of additional revenue annually.** In addition to improving the security of your individual self-storage units, many owner operators are improving security while managing properties virtually. That could mean **\$20,000-\$55,000** in on-site labor expenses while maintaining and even enhancing security and visibility into onsite activity.

**Nokē™ Ion** is a hardwired door lock designed with the lock inside the door for an additional layer of protection that maximizes your site's security. The smart-locking system is magnetic with constant power and automatic overlocking, and the cloud-native software portal gives you greater visibility into lock health and facility security.

**Nokē™ ONE** is a battery powered smart lock that fits on the outside of the individual self-storage unit door—and can even be factory installed on all Janus roll-up and swing doors, saving you time and money on installation cost.

**Smart entry point security.** You can protect your investment while also making your customers' lives easier with a Bluetooth electronic lock and total access control system that allows your customers to easily access your self-storage facility and their unit from their smart device. That means saying goodbye to the frustration and inefficiency of customers losing their keys or not being able to remember their gate codes.

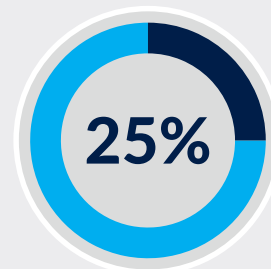
### BY THE NUMBERS

**+95%** 

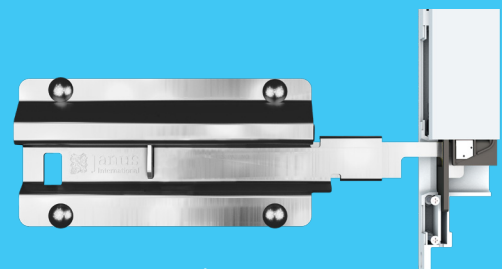
#### FEWER BREAK-INS

reported by owner-operators on Nokē smart units versus traditional ones.

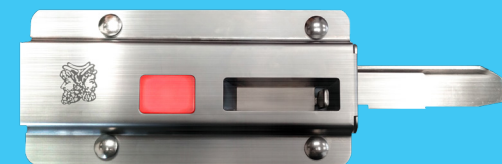
### OWNER OPERATORS



savings on  
commercial insurance



Nokē™ Ion



Nokē™ ONE



**Enhanced monitoring and security grade motion.** There are also options to add security grade motion sensors to identify motion in a unit and LED lights on the outside of units act as powerful visual deterrents to potential thieves with standard tools like bolt cutters and grinders. By customizing Noke Ion with thermal motion sensors and LED light indicators you can up the ante on crime prevention and attract more business from consumers who expect their facility to have cutting-edge technology in place.

## #3 TRAINING AND OTHER SECURITY BASICS

**Training and partnerships.** Employees are your first line of defense, so proper training is essential. Prepping your on-site managers includes training on how to deter criminals, what to look for in a walk-through such as open locks on a unit or broken gates, and who to contact if something's suspicious.

You'll also want to partner with tenants to encourage them to keep their eyes out for unusual activity and report anything suspicious; with nearby competitors to share information about break-ins; and with law enforcement so they get to know your property physically and your people personally.

**Cameras.** Capturing criminal activity on camera is key to helping law enforcement capture and prosecute criminals, and this security component can also serve as a deterrent. Today's innovations include AI security surveillance cameras and alarms that include motion-activated, infrared night vision and sound-enabled cameras.

**Lighting.** Turning up the visibility on your property can turn away criminals, and today's lighting has also gone smart for added security. By connecting lighting to an app, for example, you're able to make sure there's always proper lighting throughout your facility.

## » WHY ACT NOW

Typically, businesses may not opt to take action in purchasing new technology because of the cost. But in this case, the cost of doing nothing to fortify your facility is too high to ignore—especially because the return on investment of smart technology is so strong in deterring crime and reinforcing public confidence in your business and self-storage overall.

# 25%

## SAVINGS

Facilities can **save** on average up to **25%** on commercial insurance



Owner-operators can generate up to **\$15,000-20,000** in additional tenant insurance and protection plan revenue share annually because Nokē is so secure.



More robust security solutions give owner operators the opportunity to **charge higher rental** rates and stay ahead of the competition.

## HERE'S WHAT A FEW OF YOUR PEERS HAVE EXPERIENCED SINCE INSTALLING NOKĒ.



*"There are so many benefits to Nokē. We've seen significant time and costs savings, better customer and manager experiences—and what's big for us are the reduction in break-ins and the fact that our Nokē facilities rent faster and 'are more occupied than our traditional self-storage facilities.'"*

**Don Clauson, President & CEO of Strat Properties**



*"All of our facilities have been converted to Nokē Smart Entry, so we have just over 5,000 that are now smart units. And we've had zero break-ins. The bottom-line impact of Nokē was a \$300,000 investment for a \$3-million return over 18 months."* **Travis Morrow, President of National Self Storage**



*"We wouldn't build or buy another facility without adding Nokē."*  
**AJ Osborne, Owner of Keylock Storage**



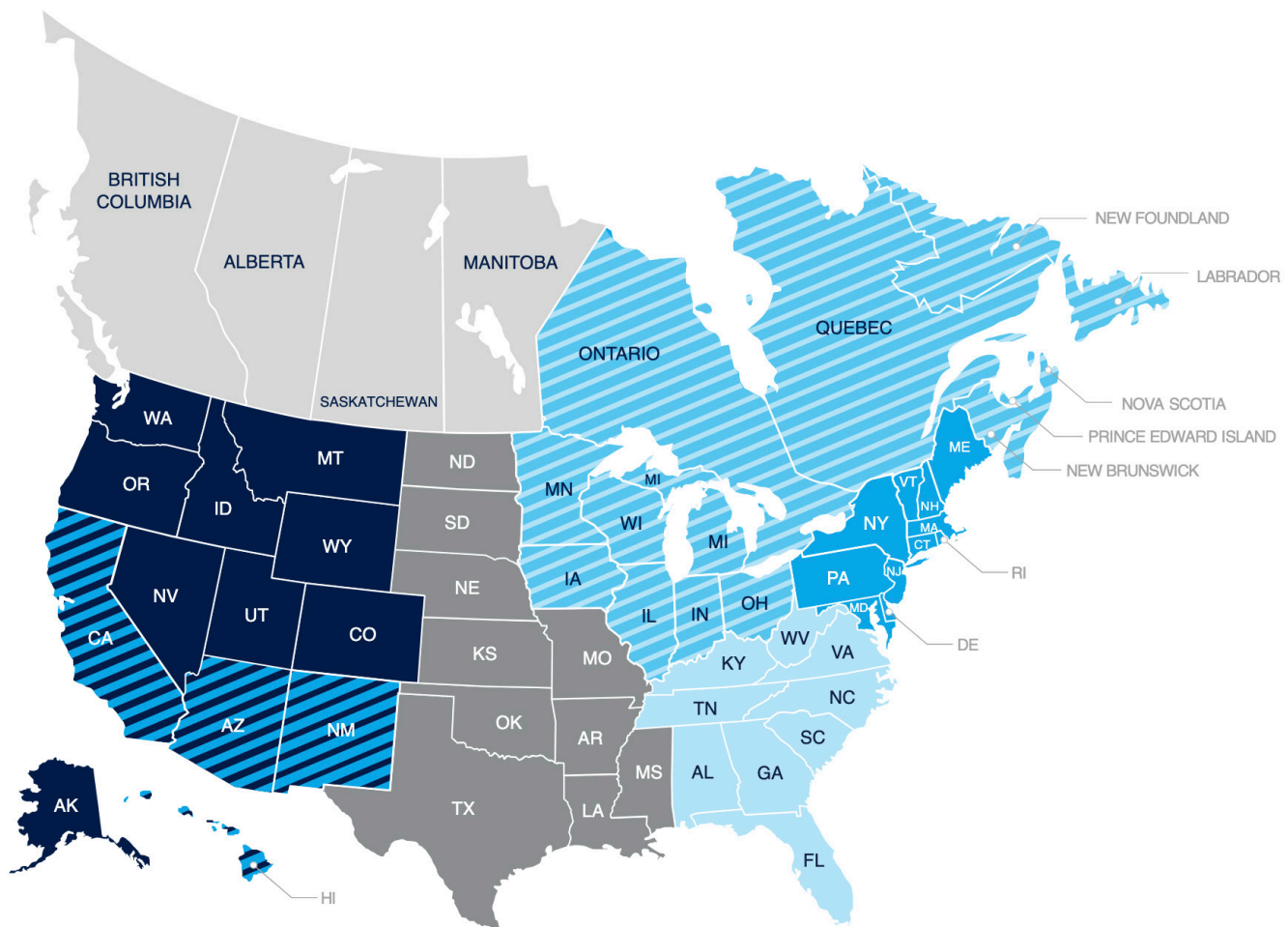
*The Nokē locking system for each of our doors is fantastic to make our facilities more secure, and our costs lower."*  
**Kelly Gallacher, Owner of Gallacher Development**

# MORE SECURITY. MORE BUSINESS.

By taking these steps to a safer self-storage facility, you're not just keeping your property secure. By making these moves, you're also securing the future of your business. You stay competitive by investing in the latest smart technology, like Nokē One, Nokē Ion and NS doors, that consumers expect—and that translates into more business for you.



**Detering theft and protecting your reputation is critical, and we can help.**



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**to book a demo.**

