

Operation Identification

Key Information

Operation Identification (Operation ID) is a crime-prevention strategy that captures information about valuables before property crimes are committed.

Law enforcement professionals know that having detailed information about stolen valuables is vital when investigating property crimes. That information must be included in crime reports, but often isn't because people don't keep records of the make, model and serial numbers of their property. Evidence of this problem sits unclaimed in police storerooms, overflowing with unidentifiable stolen property.

Improve citizen-police relations by explaining how Operation ID can help law enforcement solve property crimes. Operation ID works for individuals, homeowners, churches, small businesses and municipalities. It also works for equipment on farms, ranches, outbuildings and hunting cabins.

[Operation Identification – Wikipedia](#)

Easy, 3-step process

Operation ID requires all of the following steps:

- **Mark valuables with traceable Identifications**
- **Record the make, model and serial numbers**
- **Post warning signs on doors and windows**

For Operation ID to be successful, citizens must be encouraged to capture information about their valuables before a crime is committed — the OAN (see below), make, model and serial numbers.

The OAN on the NCIC

The property-crime page of the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) has a dedicated field for the owner-applied number (OAN) — a globally unique and traceable ID — along with the make, model and serial numbers of lost, missing and stolen property.

Operation Identification is endorsed by police, sheriffs and the FBI

[Operation Identification: Police Sheriff - Google](#)

History

Operation ID was developed in 1963. In 1978, basic standards were established and published in the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*:
[National Committee on Operation Identification Prescribes Basic Standards](#)



The U.S. Department of Justice rolled out Operation ID nationally in 1979:

[GGD-79-54 Department of Justice Should Explore the Feasibility of a Uniform Identification System for Marking Personal Property](#)

Police explain Operation ID

This short video by the Plano, Texas, Police Department explains Operation ID and the OAN:
[Plano PD Operation ID – YouTube](#)

Subject-matter expert

Jon Shelness is a subject-matter expert on Operation ID. He has a background in criminal justice and has experience working with at-risk youth. Jon is a board member of his neighborhood association in Des Moines, Iowa, and is also a board member of Central Iowa Crime Stoppers.

Jon has made presentations on Operation ID to the following groups:

- [California Crime Prevention Officers' Assoc.](#)
- [Florida Crime Prevention Association](#)
- [Rural Livestock Enforcement Association](#)
- [Ohio Crime Prevention Association](#)
- [Citizens' Crime Watch of Miami-Dade County](#)
- [National Property Management Association](#)

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