



Cargo Theft, 2015

The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program collects cargo theft data to inform the law enforcement community, federal and state legislators, academia, and the public at large about this particular crime. The data can be used to create awareness and to measure the impact cargo theft has on the economy and potential threats to national security. Often cargo theft offenses are part of larger criminal schemes and have been found to be components of organized crime rings, drug trafficking, and funding for terrorism. The UCR collection of cargo theft data is quite new with only 3 years of data published, but the number of agencies reporting cargo theft incidents has increased each year. As more agencies participate, future versions of this cargo theft report will depict a more complete account of the occurrences of cargo thefts in the United States.

Background

Due to the significant economic impact that cargo theft has on the United States economy, and the potential for use by terrorist organizations, H.R. 3199, the "USA Patriot Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005," was mandated by Congress on March 9, 2006. It required the Attorney General to "take the steps necessary to ensure that reports of cargo theft collected by Federal, State, and local officials are reflected as a separate category in the Uniform Crime Reporting System, or any successor system, by no later than December 31, 2006." In response to this mandate, the Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Advisory Policy Board approved a definition for collecting Cargo Theft in December 2006. Creation of the data specifications required to capture cargo theft data in the UCR's Summary Reporting System as well as the National Incident-Based Reporting System were finalized in 2010 with the first publication of cargo theft data in 2013.

What is cargo theft?

Cargo theft is defined as "The criminal taking of any cargo including, but not limited to, goods, chattels, money, or baggage that constitutes, in whole or in part, a commercial shipment of freight moving in commerce, from any pipeline system, railroad car, motor truck, or other vehicle, or from any tank or storage facility, station house, platform, or depot, or from any vessel or wharf, or from any aircraft, air terminal, airport, aircraft terminal or air navigation facility, or from any intermodal container, intermodal chassis, trailer, container freight station, warehouse, freight distribution facility, or freight consolidation facility. For purposes of this definition, cargo shall be deemed as moving in commerce at all points between the point of origin and the final destination, regardless of any temporary stop while awaiting transshipment or otherwise."

This definition was developed, not as a legal description for prosecutorial purposes, but to capture the essence of the national cargo theft problem in the United States. The legal elements of knowledge and intent were intentionally omitted.

Participation

Participation in the UCR Program is voluntary, and states or agencies may choose not to participate. In 2013, seven states participated in the first release of cargo theft data from the national UCR Program. In 2014, a total of 29 states and the Bureau of Indian Affairs submitted cargo theft data to the UCR Program. In 2015, a total of 31 states and the Bureau of Indian Affairs participated in submitting data to the UCR Program, although only 19 states were able to verify data submitted as publishable. Participation in the cargo theft data has gradually increased; however, several factors have been identified having a direct impact on this important data collection:

- States may not have the resources required to make the necessary technical changes or to align their local and state statutes with federal requirements.
- States may not have the necessary resources to conduct data quality checks on reported incidents associated with cargo theft, which could result in inaccurate data.
- States may not have adequate resources to train participants on how to recognize and properly record cargo theft incidents.
- States may not perceive cargo theft as a priority or a significant problem within their states and make decisions based on their immediate needs regarding resources allocation.

Quality data concerning cargo theft can help us better understand this crime and the threats associated with it. As more agencies choose to report their incidents, the FBI's UCR Program will be able to provide more information about cargo theft on a national scale. For additional information on the UCR Program's collection of cargo theft incidents, visit <https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/ucr-program-data-collections>.

Table 1
Cargo Theft by State
 by Incidents, and Stolen, Recovered Values, 2015

| State | Number of agencies reporting an incident | Number of incidents reported | Value of property | | Percent recovered |
|--------------------|--|------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | | | Stolen | Recovered | |
| Total | 121 | 628 | \$27,872,130 | \$5,492,273 | 19.7 |
| Alaska | 1 | 2 | 4,100 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Arkansas | 1 | 1 | 220 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Colorado | 4 | 5 | 88,562 | 1 | * |
| Florida | 9 | 53 | 6,367,291 | 1,676,760 | 26.3 |
| Georgia | 2 | 3 | 9,387 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Indiana | 3 | 9 | 194,457 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Maine ¹ | 1 | 1 | | 0 | 0.0 |
| Michigan | 10 | 14 | 478,598 | 96,000 | 20.1 |
| Montana | 3 | 3 | 1,799 | 1 | 0.1 |
| North Dakota | 1 | 1 | 105,000 | 105,000 | 100.0 |
| Oklahoma | 1 | 1 | 1,606 | 0 | 0.0 |
| South Dakota | 1 | 1 | 118,600 | 3,600 | 3.0 |
| Tennessee | 24 | 237 | 6,010,901 | 419,571 | 7.0 |
| Texas | 51 | 279 | 13,697,853 | 2,901,340 | 21.2 |
| Utah | 1 | 2 | 1,431 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Virginia | 4 | 4 | 481,601 | 290,000 | 60.2 |
| West Virginia | 1 | 1 | 1,200 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Wyoming | 2 | 2 | 250,889 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Guam | 1 | 9 | 58,635 | 0 | 0.0 |

¹ The stolen property value was reported as unknown.

* Less than one tenth of 1 percent.

Table 2
Cargo Theft Property Stolen and Recovered
 by Type and Value, 2015

| Type of property | Value of property | | Percent recovered |
|---|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | Stolen | Recovered | |
| Total | \$27,872,130 | \$5,492,273 | 19.7 |
| Alcohol | 594,747 | 221,435 | 37.2 |
| Automobile | 586,601 | 156,000 | 26.6 |
| Bicycle | 2,500 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Building materials | 379,126 | 35,000 | 9.2 |
| Camping, hunting, fishing equipment, supplies | 469 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Chemicals | 30,571 | 30,400 | 99.4 |
| Clothes, furs | 678,303 | 30,180 | 4.4 |
| Computer hardware, software | 3,687,931 | 30,050 | 0.8 |
| Consumable goods | 2,331,996 | 919,275 | 39.4 |
| Credit, debit cards ¹ | 0 | 0 | |
| Crops | 301 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Drugs, narcotics | 606,403 | 1,231 | 0.2 |
| Farm equipment | 14,000 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Firearms | 34,184 | 500 | 1.5 |
| Fuel | 95,340 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Household goods | 1,121,209 | 690 | 0.1 |
| Identity documents ¹ | 0 | 0 | |
| Industrial equipment | 1,090,076 | 6,000 | 0.6 |
| Jewelry, precious metals | 376,249 | 45,939 | 12.2 |
| Lawn, yard, garden equipment | 11,326 | 320 | 2.8 |
| Livestock | 4,200 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Medical, medical lab equipment | 3,502 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Merchandise | 406,800 | 549 | 0.1 |
| Metals, nonprecious | 596,317 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Money | 23,542 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Musical instruments | 1,400 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Negotiable instrument | 1,000 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Office equipment | 524,661 | 7,809 | 1.5 |
| Other | 4,491,982 | 543,300 | 12.1 |
| Other motor vehicles | 80,500 | 60,750 | 75.5 |
| Pending inventory | 1 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Photographic, optical equipment | 5,672 | 300 | 5.3 |
| Portable electronic communications | 2,775,131 | 42,981 | 1.5 |
| Purse, wallet | 17,515 | 65 | 0.4 |
| Radio, TV, VCR | 1,314,365 | 3,331 | 0.3 |
| Recreational vehicle | 201,500 | 171,500 | 85.1 |
| Recreational, sports equipment | 1,606 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Structure, storage | 42,000 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Tools | 20,801 | 371 | 1.8 |
| Trailers | 2,009,289 | 824,502 | 41.0 |
| Trucks | 3,397,001 | 2,355,795 | 69.3 |
| Vehicle parts | 312,013 | 4,000 | 1.3 |

¹ According to Uniform Crime Reporting guidelines, the value of property stolen and/or recovered must be zero for this property description.

Table 3
Cargo Theft by Location, 2015

| Location type | Total locations |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Air/Bus/Train Terminal | 13 |
| Bank/Savings and Loan | 1 |
| Bar/Nightclub | 1 |
| Church/Synagogue/Temple/Mosque | 1 |
| Commercial Office Building | 59 |
| Construction Site | 4 |
| Convenience Store | 39 |
| Department/Discount Store | 5 |
| Dock/Wharf/Freight/Modal Terminal | 76 |
| Drug Store/Doctor's Office/Hospital | 1 |
| Farm Facility | 4 |
| Field/Woods | 5 |
| Gambling Facility/Casino/Race Track | 1 |
| Grocery/Supermarket | 9 |
| Highway/Road/Alley/Street | 64 |
| Hotel/Motel/etc. | 9 |
| Industrial Site | 22 |
| Jail/Prison | 1 |
| Parking Lot/Garage | 222 |
| Rental Storage Facility | 4 |
| Residence/Home | 14 |
| Rest Area | 3 |
| Restaurant | 3 |
| School/College | 1 |
| School – Elementary/Secondary | 1 |
| Service/Gas Station | 17 |
| Shopping Mall | 1 |
| Specialty Store (TV, Fur, etc.) | 6 |
| Other/Unknown | 60 |

Table 4
Cargo Theft by Victim Type, 2015

| Victim type | Total victims |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Business | 534 |
| Financial | 3 |
| Individual | 116 |
| Law Enforcement Officer | 1 |
| Other | 2 |
| Society | 2 |
| Unknown | 2 |

Table 5
Cargo Theft by Offense, 2015

| Offense | Number reported |
|--|------------------------|
| Grand total of offenses | 672 |
| Cargo theft applicable offenses | |
| All other larceny | 228 |
| Burglary | 22 |
| Credit card, automated teller machine fraud | 1 |
| Embezzlement | 21 |
| False pretenses, swindle, confidence game | 2 |
| Motor vehicle theft | 84 |
| Robbery | 5 |
| Theft from building | 54 |
| Theft from vehicle | 239 |
| Total cargo theft applicable offenses | 656 |
| Other offenses occurring with cargo offenses | |
| Counterfeiting, forgery | 1 |
| Destruction of property | 5 |
| Drug equipment violation | 1 |
| Drug narcotics violation | 1 |
| Simple assault | 1 |
| Stolen property offense | 6 |
| Theft of motor vehicle parts or accessories | 1 |
| Total other offenses occurring with cargo offense | 16 |

Data Declarations and Methodology

Table 1
Cargo Theft by State
by Incidents, and Stolen, Recovered Values, 2015

The FBI collects these data through the Uniform Crime Reporting Program's Summary Reporting System and National Incident-Based Reporting System.

General comment

This table presents by state the total number of agencies that submitted data about cargo theft incidents, the number of incidents reported, the reported value of stolen property, and the value of recovered property. The table also lists the percentage of recovered value for each submitting state.

Methodology

The data used in creating this table were from all law enforcement agencies submitting one or more cargo theft incidents for at least one month of the calendar year. The published data, therefore, do not necessarily represent reports from each participating agency for all 12 months of the calendar year.

Table 2
Cargo Theft Property Stolen and Recovered
by Type and Value, 2015

The FBI collects these data through the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program's Summary Reporting System and National Incident-Based Reporting System.

General comment

The value of stolen and recovered property, and the percentage of recovered value of each property type is reflected within this table.

Note: Based on the UCR guidelines, the property descriptions of credit/debit cards and identity documents must be submitted with zero value for stolen and/or recovered.

Methodology

The data used in creating this table were from all law enforcement agencies submitting one or more cargo theft incidents for at least one month of the calendar year. The published data, therefore, do not necessarily represent reports from each participating agency for all 12 months of the calendar year.

Table 3
Cargo Theft by Location, 2015

The FBI collects these data through the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program's Summary Reporting System and National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS).

General comment

Cargo theft is the criminal taking of any cargo including, but not limited to, goods, chattels, money, or baggage that constitutes, in whole or in part, a commercial shipment of freight moving in commerce, from any pipeline system, railroad car, motor truck, or other vehicle, or from any tank or storage facility, station house, platform, or depot, or from any vessel or wharf, or from any aircraft, air terminal, airport, aircraft terminal or air navigation facility, or from any intermodal container, intermodal chassis, trailer, container freight station, warehouse, freight distribution facility, or freight consolidation facility. For purposes of this definition, cargo shall be deemed as moving in commerce at all points between the point of origin and the final destination, regardless of any temporary stop while awaiting transshipment or otherwise.

This table presents the number of location types reported in cargo theft incidents.

Note: In the NIBRS, a location may be entered for each offense; therefore, an incident may have more than one location code reported.

Methodology

The data used in creating this table were from all law enforcement agencies submitting one or more cargo theft incidents for at least 1 month of the calendar year. The published data, therefore, do not necessarily represent reports from each participating agency for all 12 months of the calendar year.

To arrive at the totals provided, the UCR Program counted one for each offense location reported in an incident.

Table 4
Cargo Theft by Victim Type, 2015

The FBI collects these data through the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program's Summary Reporting System and National Incident-Based Reporting System.

General comment

This table presents the number of victim types in each of the cargo theft incidents reported to the FBI.

In the Cargo Theft Program, the victim of a cargo theft may be an individual, a business, an institution, or society as a whole.

Methodology

The data used in creating this table were from all law enforcement agencies submitting one or more cargo theft incidents for at least one month of the calendar year. The published data, therefore, do not necessarily represent reports from each participating agency for all 12 months of the calendar year.

The UCR Program counted one for each victim type reported in an incident.

Table 5
Cargo Theft by Offense, 2015

The FBI collects these data through the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program’s Summary Reporting System and National Incident-Based Reporting System.

General comment

Cargo theft is the criminal taking of any cargo including, but not limited to, goods, chattels, money, or baggage that constitutes, in whole or in part, a commercial shipment of freight moving in commerce, from any pipeline system, railroad car, motor truck, or other vehicle, or from any tank or storage facility, station house, platform, or depot, or from any vessel or wharf, or from any aircraft, air terminal, airport, aircraft terminal or air navigation facility, or from any intermodal container, intermodal chassis, trailer, container freight station, warehouse, freight distribution facility, or freight consolidation facility. For purposes of this definition, cargo shall be deemed as moving in commerce at all points between the point of origin and the final destination, regardless of any temporary stop while awaiting transshipment or otherwise.

Because cargo theft has been defined as “the criminal taking of any cargo . . .,” there are specific crimes against property that are applicable to cargo theft. The applicable crimes against property include:

- 120 = Robbery
- 23D = Theft from building
- 23F = Theft from motor vehicle
- 23H = All other larceny
- 26A = False pretenses, swindle, confidence game
- 26B = Credit card, automatic teller machine fraud
- 26C = Impersonation
- 26E = Wire fraud
- 210 = Extortion, blackmail
- 220 = Burglary, breaking & entering
- 240 = Motor vehicle theft
- 270 = Embezzlement
- 510 = Bribery

In addition, cargo theft is not considered an offense by itself, all offenses that happen within a cargo theft incident are reported. Cargo theft data is derived by capturing the additional element of “theft of cargo” in incidents that contain any of the applicable offenses.

This table shows the number of offenses specific to cargo theft and the number of additional offenses reported within a verified cargo theft incident.

Methodology

To arrive at the totals provided, the UCR Program counted one offense for each offense type reported in an incident.