



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 1, Download Excel](#)

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 2, Download Excel](#)

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 3, Download Excel](#)

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 4, Download Excel](#)

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

[Table 5, Download Excel](#)

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.