

## Health and safety considerations

Many of the sites mentioned within this document have inherent dangers, such as moving trains on the railway and danger of electrocution in electricity sub-stations, unlicensed premises will have incorrectly stored chemicals such as battery acid, petroleum products and anti freeze. Pre-arranged visits should be properly conducted by the person in charge of the site who will be responsible for visitors' health and safety. In advance of entering such premises in an operational situation you should consider how you can familiarise themselves with likely risks and should take your own health and safety into account when assessing the need for immediate, unaccompanied entry.

## Legislation

Legislation can be found on the Police National Legal Database (PNLD) by using the quick search facility and entering the reference code:

S1 - Theft Act 1968

S11 - Criminal Damage Act 1971

S118 - Scrap Metal Dealers Act 1964

S477 - Proceeds of Crime Act 2002

D11316 - Police Reform Act 2002

## Scene attendance

On attending or discovering an unlicensed scrap metal dealer you have identified a crime scene therefore the **STEELS** process is the minimum standard for investigation.

**S Safety and Supervision** - Scrap metal premises contain jagged sharp metals, chemicals and machinery - think before you act! You will need to carry out a dynamic risk assessment to ensure your safety and those attending. Consider contacting your supervision to ensure that you receive the appropriate level of resources and support. If entering premises as part of a planned operation the operational risk assessment must prescribe the correct personal protective equipment for all staff.

**T Traders** - Take a full suspect description including the details of vehicles, known associates and employees. Take positive action through the initial investigation to trace any suspects and record your actions. On arrest remember to secure and preserve evidence, recover suspect's clothing/footwear and where appropriate conduct thorough searches at the place of arrest and at the home address of the suspect under section 18/32. Consider searching for tools and equipment used to carry out thefts. Secure and preserve these for forensic examination. Interview all persons present at scene. Obtain intelligence on associates, vehicles, property re POCA for intelligence and ANPR.

**E Evidence** - Preserve evidence for forensics, high tech and POCA e.g mobile phones and computers. Recover/note CCTV locations at or nearby the scene.

**E Everyone** - Work as a team with partners to ensure that all lines of enquiry have taken place in a timely manner. Make a note of witnesses at the scene and where appropriate take statements. Obtain first descriptions and make a documented record. Provide all potential witnesses with your contact details. Record their potential for VIPER.

**L Log** - Obtain full details of the offence. Record details accurately on NICHE or a similar crime recording database describing exactly what enquiries have been made during the initial investigation to meet common minimum standards of investigation. Remember the importance of correctly seizing, exhibiting and securely storing all property (refer to local force guidance for full details of cash seizure).

**S Scene** - Any investigation begins at the point of discovery. It is important that you adopt the golden hour principles for scene management (identify/secure/preserve). This will include scene preservation, Scene of Crime Officer attendance and supervisory control. Remember to record your observations and actions in your pocket note book. Consider conducting enquiries with people who live or work around the premises. Your searches should not be confined to the scene and consideration should be given to searching adjacent land and outbuildings. When examining scrap metal consider the use of UV torches which help to identify marked property. You should always examine vehicle parts to check serial numbers and registration plates. Checks on vehicles parked nearby may lead to further valuable intelligence. Remember POCA guidance and advice.

# METAL

# THEFT

# TOOLKIT



# Metal Theft

## Neighbourhood Policing Toolkit

Theft of metal such as cable, lead and redundant railway assets costs the British economy an estimated £770 million per year. Over recent years the price of metal has risen considerably driven by various global economies and increased demand. This guide provides an overview on the issue for all police officers.

### What metal is being stolen?

No metal is immune from being stolen; but a combination of value, demand, quantity, uses and ease of theft makes some metals more prone than others.

Specific metals being targeted are:

- copper (electrical uses)
- lead (waterproof flashings on buildings)
- iron and steel (construction industries)
- aluminium (construction, electrical uses)
- platinum and other valuable metals (used in catalytic converters)

### Where is the metal being stolen from?

Locations being targeted by metal thieves include:

- hospitals and schools
- residential properties and building sites
- scrap yards storage yards, depots, builders' yards and merchants
- stately homes and other historical sites
- cemeteries and war memorials
- farms
- faith buildings
- railway lines and infrastructure
- electricity high voltage sub-stations (400kV-11kV) and electricity pylons
- telecommunication systems and communication masts
- water and sewage works

### Who is committing these offences?

There is no one group in particular committing these offences. Thefts range from local Level 1 offenders, Level 2 offenders and Level 3 organised crime groups. Intelligence also suggests that some offences are committed or facilitated by workers within targeted industries.

### What is the impact?

Dependent upon the victim/location of the theft, the impact varies:

The effects of metal theft are wide-reaching. It may impact on the confidence that communities have in the local police. The impact on local industries will range from local safety issues, transport delays and powercuts.

Faith premises may be targeted for the lead on their roofs and precious items and memorials. Theft of this nature is likely to have a significant impact on public confidence.

It is important that as a member of a neighbourhood policing team, response team or a detective you are aware of the serious nature of metal theft and that your actions are given the considerations contained within this toolkit.

### Working with other agencies?

Other enforcement agencies are likely to have an interest in workplaces from which scrap may be stolen and in scrap dealers who may process stolen metal. You must liaise with agencies during the planning stage of any operational initiative to check for additional intelligence about potential targets, to ensure that operations do not conflict with other planned activities, and to ensure that other agencies have not already engaged in enforcement with potential targets in a way that may cause future legal procedural difficulties. Relevant agencies include:

Environment Agency [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

Health and Safety Executive [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

Local Authority Trading Standards

Local Authority Environmental licensing team