



UNIFORM CRIME REPORTING PROGRAM

CARGO THEFT UPDATE



When the U.S. Congress passed the *USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005*, a provision was included requiring the Attorney General of the United States 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 FBI Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) System.” The Attorney General called on the FBI to study the concern and fulfill this requirement, collaborating with the FBI’s partner law enforcement agencies around the nation. The FBI’s Criminal Justice Information Services Division began work to define cargo theft and develop the requirements to collect the data. The specifications required for capturing cargo theft data in the UCR Summary Reporting System, as well as the National Incident-Based Reporting System, were finalized in 2010. Now, several years later, while some states have reported their cargo theft incidents (see Table 1 - 2013 data below), more reporting is needed to provide a realistic picture of national cargo theft trends.

Why collect cargo theft data? A [2010 article](#), which the FBI published at the onset of the UCR Program’s cargo theft data collection, explains why it is important to gather information about cargo theft. The article asserts that the data could help measure the impact this type of crime has on both the economy and national security. The article describes cargo theft as a “gateway” crime, sometimes turning out to be one piece of a larger case such as organized crime, drug trafficking, or funding for terrorism. Earlier estimates place losses from cargo theft in the billions, but until more agencies contribute their cargo theft statistics, it will remain challenging to accurately depict losses reported to law enforcement.

What information is collected? When law enforcement agencies report cargo theft, they include at least one of 13 offenses to specifically describe the incident. For instance, if the cargo was taken by threat or force, it is a robbery. If an entire truck is stolen, it is reported as a motor vehicle theft. If the situation involves fraud, an offense such as impersonation or embezzlement would be noted. Some of the other details that agencies can report include the location of the cargo theft, the type of weapon used (if any), the monetary value and a description of the property stolen, whether the property is recovered, as well as victim and offender information.

Quality data concerning cargo theft can help us understand a threat to our nation’s economy and national security. As more agencies choose to report their incidents, the FBI’s UCR Program will be able to provide more complete information about cargo theft on a national scale. For additional information on the UCR Program’s collection of cargo theft incidents, visit www.fbi.gov.

CARGO THEFT UCR DEFINITION

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... [and] 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

Table 1 – 2013 Cargo Theft Data from Participating States

Participating state	Number of reporting agencies	Total number of incidents reported	Total value of property stolen	Total value of property recovered
Total	83	189	\$11,967,310	\$2,135,610
Delaware	2	2	12,414	0
Florida	15	56	6,074,239	463,155
Indiana	1	2	700	0
Maine	1	1	300	300
Michigan	25	56	629,252	113,493
Tennessee	26	57	3,375,857	686,160
Virginia	13	15	1,874,548	875,502