

Profile of HGV, Freight & Cargo crime across England & Wales 2022



Contents

- Introduction – NaVCIS, p3
- The problem of freight crime key points, p3
- Recommendations, p4
- Importance of the Freight and Logistics Sector to our Economy, p4
- Overview, p5
- Indirect costs of UK Freight Crime, p7
- Freight Crime a hidden problem, p8
- Freight crime as defined by NaVCIS, p9
- Definition of offences and methods of criminality, p11
- Other Types of Freight Crime, p20
- Freight Crime ...low risk and high reward, p21
- Offender Profiles – organised teams of thieves, p22
- Stolen cargo – Disposal methods and recoveries, p23
- Target Identification, p24
- Truck Parking provision, p25
- Truck parking – ‘safe’ vs ‘secure’ parking, p26
- Steps Forward, p28
- Truck parking –motorway service areas (MSAs), p28
- Target identification – regions, p31
- Target identification – location type, p34
- Target identification – targeted commodities, p34
- Offender profiles, p35
- Appendix A (mail/ parcel theft definition), p36
- References, p37

Introduction – NaVCIS

The National Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service (NaVCIS) is a national Police unit, reporting to the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) lead for vehicle crime. NaVCIS has a Freight team that collates, analyses and disseminates Road Freight Crime intelligence across England and Wales.

This primarily encompasses road freight crime involving Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) of 7.5 tonnes and above, as made clear in our definition section.

Throughout this report we will refer to all types of HGV, Freight & Cargo Crime by using the inclusive policing terminology of “Freight Crime” and occasionally, to keep true to contributors, the phrase routinely used by industry, which is “Cargo Crime”.

NaVCIS Freight acts as a single point of contact, collating crime reports and intelligence from a variety of sources and is able to deliver a national perspective in its strategic assessment of road freight criminality.

NaVCIS maintains a National Freight Crime Database, which is the most complete record of national Freight Crime and extends back to 2016.

The problem of Freight Crime – key points

- Estimated cost to the economy in 2021 of approximately £428Million¹, (£700M in 2019)
- Freight crime is committed by Organised Crime Groups (OCGs), prepared to travel hundreds of miles; highly skilled, determined and mobile criminals, aware of police tactics.
- Low risk and high reward crime, from which organised crime benefits tens of £Millions
- Supply sector under intense pressure from direct and indirect effects of crime; affecting viability of companies; retention of staff and loss of contracts and investment into the UK
- UK logistics disrupted by stolen and delayed cargos
- Freight crime is a long established, persistent problem
- Low on police priorities
- Limited available police resources
- No central crime category or tag has allowed this to remain largely hidden
- Lenient criminal justice outcomes following prosecutions
- Low priority for investment from government
- Transport logistics/ industry reluctant or unable to invest in infrastructure

¹ Total costs are estimated using a multiplier of x6 cargo value

- Significant lack of lorry parking facilities
- Existing parking security standards are typically insufficient to deter criminals
- Stolen medicines and food stuffs may result in a direct health risk to the public if consumed after improper storage

RECOMMENDATIONS

Parking Recommendations

- All existing truck parking provision should be upgraded to 'Secure' standards, as 'safe' or non-certified sites provide little deterrent.
- Government agencies should support a single, robust UK parking standard that is to 'secure' level; with funding to help implement.
- Regulation and planning support should be provided by government.
- Provision of, or contributions towards, secure truck parking should be a requirement for any large new industrial/ commercial developments.
- All new parking site developments should be required to meet secure standards.

General recommendations

- Creation of an NPCC lead for Freight crime
- Designate in law enforcement an agency/force to lead on Freight Crime, with appropriate funding for continuity of effort.
- Acceptance of a UK Policing definition for Freight Crime (we propose NaVCIS definition).
- Home Office to create a new Freight Crime category OR
Home Office to insist all UK police forces instigate a '#FreightCrime' tag to existing crime categories, to allow comprehensive auditing of the crimes.
- Sentencing guidance to reflect Freight crime as an aggravating factor
- NPCC and police forces to agree on minimum standards of investigation and crime recording.
- Forces with significant transport routes or infrastructure to have freight crime on their strategic assessment.
- Industry standards for Haulage Exchanges and registry of hauliers – to prevent common load frauds

Importance of the Freight and Logistics Sector to our Economy

In his foreword of the 2019 Traffic Commissioners Annual Report, Richard Turfitt pointed out the importance.

“...it is a vital sector to the existence of our islands. It is also a huge contributor to both employment and the economy and pays a huge amount into the taxation system which operates the UK. “

From the ‘Traffic Commissioners for Great Britain Annual Report to the Secretary of State 2019-2020’:

- Domestic freight (UK registered vehicles)
79% of goods moved by road
152 billion tonnes kilometres moved
- International freight (UK registered vehicles)
5.6 billion tonnes kilometres moved
Freight industry contributed £12bn to UK Economy

As the 5th largest employer, the sector employs 309,000 drivers and contributes £124bn GVA (Gross Value Added) to UK economy. There are many large national and international operators in the haulage sector, but there are also a great deal of small operators running just a few trucks. These smaller operators fill the gaps, often sub-contracting for the larger companies. *Source Road Haulage Association – Haulage Cost Movement Report 2019*

Overview

In 2016, NaVCIS commenced work to more accurately map the threat from UK freight crime. Offending patterns were heavily affected by Covid19 lockdown restrictions, with lower total losses from the peak in 2019, but broadly stable numbers of reports year on year. Offence patterns have now returned to those pre-Covid.

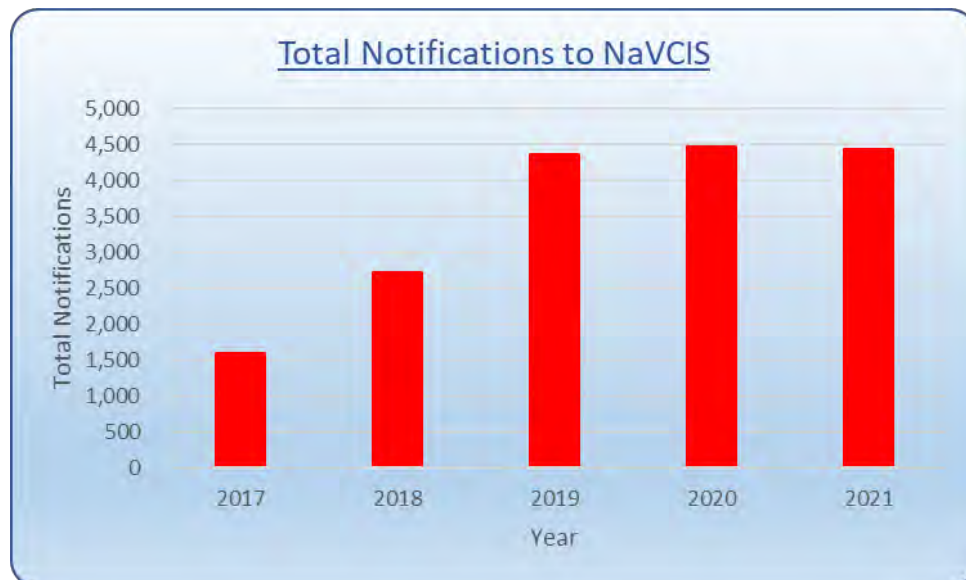


Fig 1: Graph showing Total Notifications to NaVCIS 2017 – 2021

* The large increase in NaVCIS recorded freight crimes reflects our improved collection of data from police forces and not necessarily a rapid increase in actual crimes.



Fig 2: Graph showing Total Estimated Costs to the Freight Industry 2017-2021

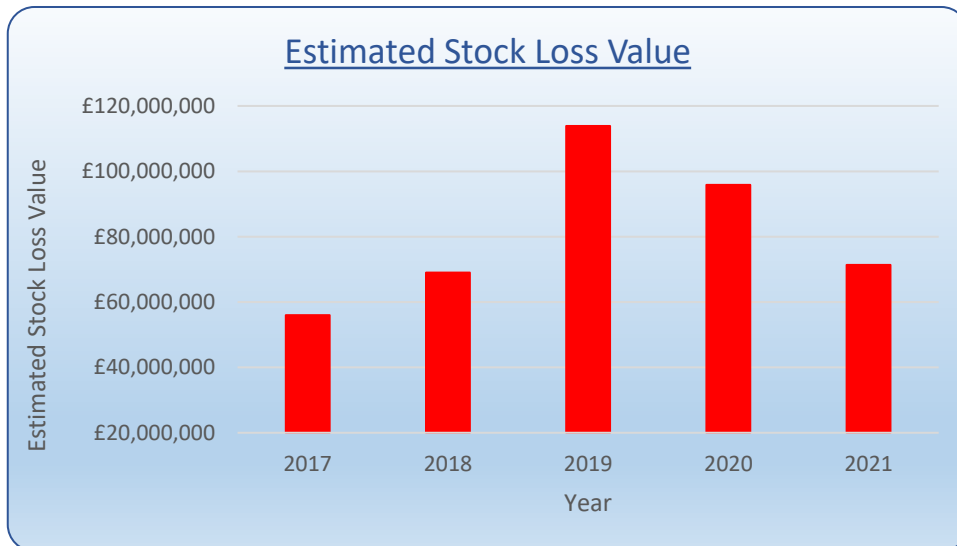
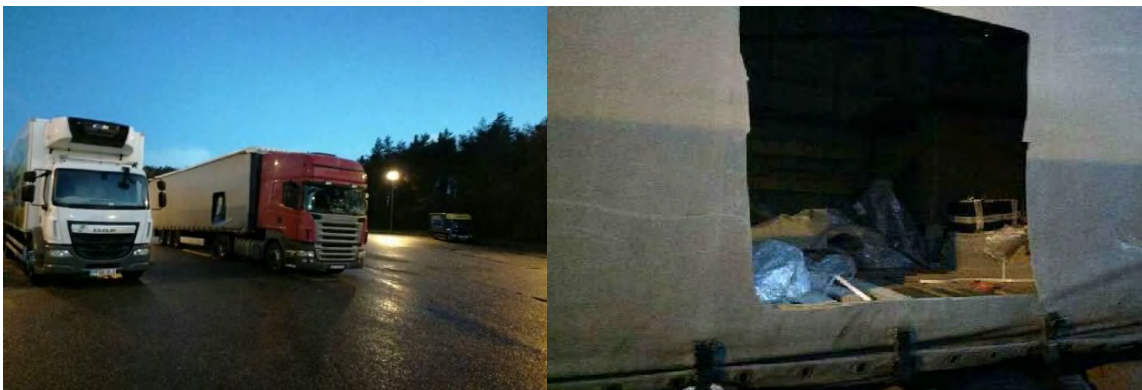


Fig 3: Graph showing Estimated Stock Loss Value 2017-2021

Freight crime involves organised teams of thieves prepared to travel hundreds of miles to commit offences, the offenders are aware of Police tactics, they understand Police surveillance; there is a sophisticated network of storage and handlers of stolen goods that will deal with large volumes of stolen freight.



August 2021, over £3m of stolen goods recovered in Bradford warehouse

The Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) understand supply chains, HGV driving hours for rest breaks and routes of freight and stopping areas for certain “theft attractive” goods. Well informed offenders will travel to specific locations to steal particular items of freight. Robbery and hijack is very rare within Freight Crime offences which mean that the offences do not score highly when assessed by Police forces for threat, risk and harm.

Unfortunately, as shown below, this is not a new problem –

“Road freight crime is a highly lucrative, low-risk criminal enterprise. Where exact load values have been reported total losses amounted to £74 million in 2003/4. In addition to the value of stolen loads millions of pounds worth of tax is lost to the UK each year. The theft of goods vehicles and their loads causes severe economic harm to those involved in the industry. This can ultimately affect the perception of the UK as a safe place to do business. Road freight crime is afforded a low priority status at a national, regional and force level.”

Source NCIS Road Freight Crime Report 2005

In 2007, the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Home Office agreed “Minimum Standard of Response & Investigation for Road Freight Crime” *source TruckPol Minimum Standard of Response & Investigation for Road Freight Crime Report 2007.*

However due to a number of contributing factors including the withdrawal of Home Office funds in 2012, and competing policing demands the resources given to and standards of investigation of freight crime offences varies widely from force to force.

Indirect Costs of UK freight crime

“In addition to the direct costs of stolen loads the loss of a goods vehicle or load is a complex issue involving various parties including the haulage company, retailer (the owner of the load), HM Customs and Excise (where bonded items are present), the insurance company and the company awaiting delivery of products, claiming for loss of merchandise and inconvenienced by loss of business. Companies also suffer consequential losses which are more difficult to quantify but just as commercially damaging. The competitive nature of the haulage industry means that many smaller firms may face bankruptcy if a goods vehicle is stolen. Repeated losses also impact on the way multinational companies view the UK as a safe place to do business. Some companies have already withdrawn their business from the UK and others have threatened to do so after sustained losses.” *Source NCIS Road Freight Crime Report 2005*

This work has been further supported in a 2020 study by Plymouth University ‘Mapping the true cost and impact of cargo crime in the logistics sector in the UK.’ which suggests the true cost of freight crime are 6 to 7 times the actual value of items stolen.

If alcohol is stolen it is not only the cost price loss value of the alcohol but also that the loser can be required to pay the duty on the alcohol to HMRC which can be substantial, often significantly more than the value of the stolen alcohol itself.

Stolen medicines/pharmaceuticals and food cargos may pose a direct risk to the public if consumed after improper storage and partial theft from a trailer will often require destruction of the remaining load, at large expense. This may increase scarcity of items, increasing consumer prices or limiting available treatments to patients.

NaVCIS has anecdotal links between a cargo of prescription drugs stolen and an increase in local drug deaths in the Carlisle area.

(NaVCIS reports the loss of medicines and significant food cargos to the relevant agencies – Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory (MHRA); National Food Crime Unit (NFCU), Food Standards Wales, Food Standards Scotland).

NaVCIS has surveyed police and industry to inform this report and 10% of logistics sector respondents directly lost business due to cargo crime.

In the retail sector, business reputation is critical and big brand companies have suffered huge losses- where existing stock cannot be sold due to the market being tainted by stolen products, or from their brand reputation spoilt by stolen items reaching the market that have been improperly handled and stored.

Freight Crime a hidden problem

There is no Home Office crime classification code, or tag in relation to freight crime which makes it difficult to assess the threat.

Since 2016 NaVCIS Freight has worked to accurately map the national threat from Freight Crime, bringing together Police and Industry data. This assessment is challenging in that there is no UK Policing definition in relation to HGV, Freight & Cargo Crime.

HGV, Freight and cargo crime, comes in many different forms (road/rail/air/sea; large and small vehicles etc.) and will be specific to the business or individual.

The thefts within the Supply Chain and Logistics industry are usually categorised as Thefts from Motor Vehicle, Criminal Damage and occasionally Vehicle Interference; however to be effective in recognising the issue we need a definition that police and industry can follow.
... £1M cargo stolen from a trailer is in the same crime category as a handbag stolen from a car seat at the shops!

Clearly these will involve entirely different offenders and sophistication and deserve different responses. Yet currently we do not see this in practice.



“Serious Crime versus Petty Theft?”

To address this problem (in the absence of a new Home Office code), we recommend all UK police forces adopt a tag for any freight crimes (#FreightCrime), this would allow a quick and easy search and retrieval of any recorded crimes, without interfering in the Home Office crime statistics.

Estimates for the impact of Freight crime run to hundreds of millions of pounds annually, it hinders the economy and affects levels of investment; and the issue is widespread across the UK – however, there is no dedicated National Police Chief Council (NPCC) lead, or designated agency with responsibility for countering it, or any central funding.

Freight crime is defined by NaVCIS as-

“Acquisitive crime, targeting vehicles with a minimum weight of 7.5 Tons and semi-trailers (laden or un-laden); when being used for the collection, transportation or delivery of goods on the road network; including theft of fuel or cargo, robbery against the driver (and associated violence/threats) and damage caused during attempted offences.”

Why this definition?

There have been many attempts to define freight/ cargo crime; in the UK and overseas. To capture every possible type of related crime or venue makes them too broad and unhelpful. To restrict heavily excludes significant risk and harm to the sector. Our definition comes from 5 years of collating and analysing crime reports and aims to capture the main areas of harm, considering the offender group.

Rationale-

‘Freight’ crime, not ‘Cargo’ crime - this is because we want to include fuel thefts, robberies against drivers, attempts/ damage on lorries/trailers; that are all inherent in this issue. It is important to have an inclusive definition that encompasses the true picture of harm to the sector.

Include crimes occurring during collection, transportation and delivery; but exclude internal petty theft at warehouses etc. - These are committed by very different offender groups.

‘Insiders’ are certainly used by organised crime to facilitate thefts, but we can be confident they are not put in place at great effort and then wasted on internal petty theft. Petty theft remedies are in the hands of the depot managers and staff, with no opportunity for proactive or pre-emptive police action.

Minimum Vehicles of weight 7.5 tons - NaVCIS data informs us about this vehicle set and we can presume substantial differences in offender groups compared to smaller vehicles. The larger vehicles require more specialist criminal skills and logistics; 7.5 ton vehicles are a visible group, whereas smaller lorries and vans are not (e.g. more support/works vehicles on

the roads); smaller vehicles do not routinely stop overnight or have the strict required rest breaks of the larger vehicles.

We use the weight term rather than HGV, to avoid confusion with light goods vehicles (LGV), Light commercial vehicles (LCV) and heavy goods vehicles (HGV).

(NB: NaVCIS receives a few secondary reports on LGV (3.5 tons) offences, from partners with mixed fleets. These are recorded, but no assessments are made on those as they are not core to NaVCIS data.)

We note that especially following the boom in online shopping, there is industry desire for smaller vehicles to be included in the definition, however the offending patterns, locations, targets and MOs are entirely different for medium and small vehicles and especially local deliveries – referred to in industry as ‘last mile’ or ‘final mile’ deliveries.

These categories are deliberately excluded from the definition as we do not have the richness of data for them and to include everything would be to dilute the possible police response and confuse messaging for target hardening and crime prevention measures. To highlight the extent of these offences, police should classify these offences using the offence ‘theft of a mail/postal packet’ (see appendix A).

Road network, not air, rail or sea. - ‘Road network’ includes all road facilities, parking and depots/distribution centres; but excludes rail, sea and air facilities... These areas are tightly controlled and offer no opportunity for general police action. Areas with restricted access imply inside offenders or highly specialised OCGs; the remedies are in the hands of the area managers.

Collection, transportation and delivery. - We exclude petty offences at depots and distribution centres and thefts, burglary and similar by employee; and we include offences by third parties such as burglary, fraud and thefts; from and of qualifying vehicles and semi-trailers within depot, distribution centre confines.

This is due to the implied different offender groups, MO, and opportunistic vs planned crimes. The remedies for internal matters rest with managers; clearly choosing a reported burglary as in or out is a judgement call, determined by the scale, organisation and target of the offence (i.e. lone offender vs OCG).

Acquisitive crimes not malicious damage - different offender groups, e.g. OCG slashing trailer curtains searching for cargo vs disgruntled resident at an inappropriate parking location, or missiles thrown from bridges.

Deception type offences to be included - Load frauds, bogus carriers, fictitious collections, diversion frauds (round the corner thefts), trailer hook up thefts - these are sophisticated offences often requiring expensive vehicles and logistics, insider knowledge and a disposal route for stolen freight.

Definition of Offences and Methods of Criminality

Types of offences that encompass UK Freight crime include:-

Freight Thefts (Stationary) – Curtain Slash – from on foot / street – cargo stolen



Organised teams of thieves attend locations including Motorway Service Stations, Layby, on street parking and industrial estates and using a “spotter vehicle” will conduct a reconnaissance visit – they are aware of Police tactics and surveillance and will approach HGVs carrying freight and make small cuts in trailer curtains and break in to trailer doors to establish what cargo is being carried – when they have identified a lorry carrying “theft attractive cargo” they will then bring in a second vehicle which will be a 7.5 tonne lorry, 18 tonne curtain sided lorry or Sprinter type van to make a large cut in the canvas curtain or TIR Cord and transfer and steal the cargo from the street to the transportation vehicle. This leaves victims / hauliers with additional costs of repair to these canvas curtains, the canvas curtains must be of a sufficient safety rating in order to move freight and trailers cannot be used until these repairs are completed. These HGV curtain slashing offences are non-confrontational, sneak up type offences and violence is very rarely used.

Freight Thefts (Stationary) – Curtain Slash – Side By Side Theft / Trojan Horse



Organised teams of thieves attend locations including Motorway Service Stations, Layby, on street parking and industrial estates and using a spotter vehicle will conduct a reconnaissance visit – they are aware of Police tactics and surveillance and will approach HGVs carrying freight and make small cuts in trailer curtains to establish what cargo is being carried – when they have identified a lorry carrying “theft attractive cargo” they will then bring in a second vehicle which will be a 7.5 tonne curtain sided lorry or 18 tonne curtain sided lorry.

The offenders curtain sided lorry will park very tightly next to the victims lorry making CCTV surveillance impossible to avoid detection. The offenders responsible for the theft will be inside the rear of the offenders 7.5 / 18 tonne curtain sided vehicle with their curtain unclipped, so they can pull back their own curtain, to cut the curtain on the victims vehicle and gain access by jumping across and lifting, dragging and stealing the victims cargo over to their lorry. Before pulling their own curtain back into position to drive away with the victims’ cargo and make good their escape. This is sometimes referred to as a “Trojan Horse Theft”. A picture of a “Side By Side Theft” is demonstrated above, this occurred during an operation that NaVCIS assisted Northamptonshire Police with in October 2018. Police were unaware of the theft until the offenders’ vehicle moved off, due to the “Side By Side” attack. The suspects were arrested following the theft attempting to make good their escape. These HGV curtain slashing offences are non-confrontational, sneak up type offences and violence is very rarely used.



The “Side By Side” offences are difficult for law enforcement and security staff to detect as demonstrated above

Freight Thefts (Stationary) – Bolt Cropping of Semi-Trailer Doors / Shipping Container Doors – cargo stolen



Organised teams of thieves attend locations including Motorway Service Stations, Layby, on street parking and industrial estates and using a “spotter vehicle” will conduct a reconnaissance visit – they are aware of Police tactics and surveillance and will approach HGVs carrying freight and will break in to trailer doors cutting seals, cutting padlocks, removing door hinges to gain access and to establish what cargo is being carried – when they have identified a lorry carrying “theft attractive cargo” they will then bring in a second vehicle which will be a 7.5 tonne lorry ,18 tonne curtain sided lorry or Sprinter type van to transfer, load and steal the cargo from the street to their transportation vehicle. During the offences involving the forcing of trailer doors – offenders will on occasion reverse their own transport vehicle up to the trailer doors of the victims lorry to remove and steal the victims cargo – this is called “trans-shipping” before making good their escape. These offences are non-confrontational, sneak up type offences and violence is very rarely used.

Freight Theft stationary – holes cut in trailer doors of hard sided vehicles



Organised teams of thieves attend locations including Motorway Service Stations, Layby, on street parking and industrial estates and using a “spotter vehicle” will conduct a reconnaissance visit – they are aware of Police tactics and surveillance and will approach HGVs and hard sided trailers carrying freight and will break in to the trailer by cutting a hole in the trailers barn door to identify “theft attractive cargo” they will then bring in a second vehicle which will be a 7.5 tonne lorry, 18 tonne curtain sided lorry or Sprinter type van to transfer, load and steal the cargo from the street into the transportation vehicle before making good escape. These offences are non-confrontational, sneak up type offences and violence is very rarely used.

Thefts from HGV (stationary) – diesel stolen / siphoned from tanks

Organised teams of thieves attend locations including Motorway Service Stations, Layby, on street parking and industrial estates using cars or vans loaded with 25 litre plastic drums. They will approach lorries on foot from adjacent farm land and wooded areas which give cover before gaining entry to HGV fuel tanks and siphoning and stealing fuel which is transferred to the offenders’ plastic drums. The siphoning of fuel is the preferred method as it allows the offender to control the flow of diesel which is being extracted. The volumes of diesel stolen in these offences can range from 100 – 600 litres of Diesel in a single offence. Another common method of stealing fuel from HGVs involves the puncturing of fuel tanks which can be costly for victims to repair. Significant additional victim costs can be incurred if the lorry “fuel sender” is damaged; damage to tanks and fuel senders can cost thousands of pounds to replace. These offences are non-confrontational, sneak up type offences and violence is very rarely used.



Diesel Theft Comment – This category includes a wide range, from the theft of diesel in small quantities stolen directly from the fuel tanks of parked lorries, to bulk diesel thefts where offenders are capable of running half a mile of pipes, with industrial pumps, to steal tens of thousands of litres from Industrial tanks at a HGV distribution centre in a HGV.

Clearly the bulk thefts are highly skilled and organised; but the small fuel tank thefts are not opportunistic or trivial either – the offenders require specific tools to pump out or puncture the fuel tanks and a suitable vehicle with containers to carry the stolen fuel. The pattern of offences show offenders will search a designated area for multiple suitable targets over the course of a night and attack as many vehicles as they need to, to fill their containers, they then have to dispose of hundreds of litres of stolen fuel.

These offenders are skilled, determined and commit high volumes of offences – an attacked vehicle may have full tanks or nearly empty, but the value of the stolen diesel is small compared to the true cost of the crime ... expensive repairs needed before the vehicle can be driven again; the likely loss of earnings due to the vehicle being immobile and expense of transferring the trailer to another tractor unit and driver.

A pair of offenders in a van might damage 10 vehicles in one night to gain a few hundred pounds in profit, but easily cause £30,000 in loss and damage.

Thefts of LGVs / HGVs

Organised teams of thieves attend locations such as distribution centres and secure yards before forcing entry, removing and stealing HGV tractor units / LGVs either via using keyless means and on-board diagnostic devices (OBD) / computer programming devices or by committing burglaries of offices / warehouses to obtain keys before making good their escape. These stolen HGVs and LGVs are then cloned with “like to Like” vehicle registration plates in an attempt to evade detection. The HGVs and LGVs are then used in the commission of other freight and cargo theft offences. These offences are non-confrontational and violence is very rarely used.



Thefts of Preloaded Semi-Trailers – Known as Hook Up Thefts



Organised teams of thieves attend locations such as distribution centres and secure yards in stolen / cloned HGV tractor units. Offenders at secure sites will either give site security bogus reasons for attending or force entry by damaging gates / barriers; before using the stolen / cloned HGV tractor unit to hitch up or “hook up” to a preloaded semi-trailer of goods and stealing the trailer. These offences often demonstrate an element of “insider” knowledge of which trailers and what goods / cargo are on the premises. These offences tend to involve high monetary loss values. In one offence of a single trailer Hook Up theft reported to NaVCIS in August 2022 involved the theft of a Preloaded trailer of goods valued at £769,000. These offences are non-confrontational and violence is very rarely used.

Theft in Transit – Jump Up Thefts



Organised teams of thieves follow national supermarket retailers HGVs leaving distribution centres and delivering to Supermarkets. These are known as “final mile deliveries” in the supply chain. NaVCIS have received notifications of large volumes of these jump up offences that national retailers are experiencing - 549 offences of jump up theft in the UK in 2021. Offenders will follow supermarket delivery HGVs whilst on route to their delivery destination. When the HGV is either held up in traffic, stationary at traffic signals, or when the driver arrives at the store and enters to inform management that they have arrived; offenders will quickly gain entry through trailer doors, either forcing / drilling locks, cutting seals or using generic trailer keys to enter and steal Tobacco and Cigarettes products. These offences are generally non-confrontational and violence is very rarely used. However if challenged by drivers or retail staff offenders are known to make threats of violence on occasion. (NB: Targeted vehicles includes both HGVs and smaller vehicles. Data is collated by NaVCIS where possible.)

Moving Cargo Thefts



Organised teams of thieves follow moving lorries – the lorries targeted tend to be HGVs that are concerned with delivering high value parcels containing mobile phones / electronic devices. Five or six vehicles will follow and surround the lorry in convoy whilst one vehicle

moves immediately behind the targeted lorry. This is usually a car with a sunroof, from which an offender will climb out of and bounce down on the front of the moving car and reach forwards to angle grind the locks or unhitch the HGV or Trailer rear door. Then jumping inside the moving HGV or Trailer the offenders throw the cargo back to their vehicle, before climbing back across the bonnet of their car.

These thefts are also known as “Romanian Rollover” thefts, due to where they were first seen in Romania. These offences are extremely dangerous and have the potential for death or serious injury. NaVCIS received notification of 30 UK Offences in 2020 into 2021. These offences are non-confrontational, sneak up type offences and violence is not used, the driver is usually unaware until arriving at the delivery destination.

Robbery / Hijack offences

Robbery and Hijack offences using violence / threat / force is the most distressing of all cargo crime incidents. Robberies and Hijacks are very rare in the UK when compared to other areas in the World such as South America and South Africa.

Our assessment is that many of the few robberies that have occurred, resulted from resistance offered by a driver and we would advise compliance over violence.



UK Cargo crime offences involving violence / threat / force:

12 Offences – January 2022 to August 2022

11 Offences during 2021

35 Offences during 2020

Consideration should be given that the criminals understand how Police Forces respond and investigate offences under the THRIVE matrix. The OCGs realise that if any driver comes to harm, Police will respond with the appropriate response and so the majority of offenders that are committing the majority of offences tend to prefer the sneak up, non-confrontational theft as they realise that for some Police forces thefts from motor vehicles are deemed Low Priority.

Load Fraud – Fraudulent Collection

The principal carrier of the goods will provide instructions by email to release specific trailers to a subcontractor – who provides details of unique reference numbers which must be quoted by the specified subcontractor upon collection.

Organised criminals will obtain these unique reference numbers via “insider information” and will send a stolen or cloned HGV to attend to collect the Trailer and cargo, purporting to be from the specified contractor. The collecting driver and HGV will be bogus and the goods are collected and never reach the delivery location and are stolen. These offences tend to involve high value preloaded trailer of goods and are non-confrontational, deception offences and violence is not used.

Load Fraud - Bogus Haulier

A genuine business will use an on-line freight exchange to advertise the required delivery of a particular trailer and cargo from a specific location to a specified delivery location. This allows independent HGV Drivers and smaller transportation companies to obtain business and undertake “backloads” or “return loads”.

(This is when a haulier’s vehicle has delivered to an area and rather than driving back with no trailer or an empty trailer, instead they can complete a delivery for another party and at least cover the cost of the fuel.)

Organised thieves will use the freight exchange to purport to be from a genuine haulage company, take over a genuine company in financial difficulties, or use the identity of a business that has ceased trading, in order to collect goods. Upon arrival thieves will use a HGV tractor unit on cloned or false plates; a bogus operators’ licence and a bogus Insurance policy document as proof of identity to steal a trailer and cargo.

This method is enabled by a general lack of due diligence checks made across this section of the industry (checks can be difficult due to personal data protection regulations and a lack of an industry staff database). These offences tend to involve high value preloaded trailer of good, and are non-confrontational deception offences, where violence is not used.

Load Fraud – Diversion Frauds - “Round the Corner Thefts”

Organised thieves will purport to be an employee of the receiving company usually wearing company issue clothing or a clipboard and whom will flag down and divert the driver of the HGV and trailer with a bogus cover story. Bogus cover stories include a flood in the warehouse, lack of space in the specified delivery warehouse, faulty loading bays; that the goods need to be offloaded quickly to meet demand, long queues within the distribution centres etc. The bogus employee will direct the driver to an alternative delivery location “round the corner” whereby they will be unloaded. Offenders using these bogus tactics are usually relaxed and friendly so not to arouse any suspicion. The goods are unloaded and stolen, with the victims not being aware until they question a missing delivery. These offences tend to involve high value preloaded trailer of goods and are non-confrontational, deception offences where violence is not used.

(Outside the focus of this profile) Other Types of Freight Crime offences also include:-



E-Commerce – Light Goods Vehicles under 3.5 tonnes. The boom in online shopping has driven a huge increase in small vehicles used to deliver to homes; alongside several large delivery fleets, many of these vehicles are used by independent operators.

Offences against these are typically opportunistic and simple grab and run thefts from unattended vehicles or simply orchestrated through watching (or arranging) deliveries to flats. No logistics or skill is needed and trends indicate these are geographically described, with a different offender profile. Occasionally courier drivers are exposed to violence and robbery in order to steal parcels. An analogy might be that these are a lucrative alternative to shoplifting for low tier criminals.

The Courier industry working with the National Business Crime Centre (NBCC) in the Metropolitan Police have pushed for these to be classified as offences of “Theft of Mail”, to make this category more visible.

(See appendix A for definition of theft of mail.)

Loss in transit – goods reported as not delivered; lost and presumed stolen at some point during importation or transit. Items are usually added to NaVCIS database, but not the crime due to lack of details. UK insurers are often subject to non-delivery claims for these goods.

European Distribution Fraud / Bogus Hauliers / Fictitious collections / Load Frauds – dealt with by means of Action Fraud referrals – tend to be high value



European Distribution Frauds (EDF)

European Distribution Fraud occurs when fraudsters purporting to be from well-known retailers, supermarkets, manufacturers or businesses make an order for goods. The fraudsters use an email address which looks similar to a genuine company email address and also use the company logo to make high value orders of expensive goods. The ordered goods are not paid for as they use bogus or fake bank transfer confirmation forms or alternatively give the genuine companies address to be invoiced. Upon making an order the fraudsters request that the HGV Delivering the goods is sent to either an address that doesn't belong to the company, or they will initially give the genuine company address for the delivery, but contact the driver whilst enroute and then change the delivery address. The fraudsters will give a cover story as to why the address for delivery has been changed. The delivery is then made to the fraudsters without any payment being made. These offences are difficult to investigate because they tend to involve criminals based in one country who will make an order in a different EU member state before having the goods delivered to a different country. The Fraudsters will develop the bogus business and email address, often taking several months to build up a rapport with the victims, and then make several orders from different victims to be delivered to the same bogus address before moving on to a different location. These offences tend to involve high value preloaded trailer of goods and are non-confrontational, deception offences and violence is not used.

When Hauliers and business make a report of becoming victim of Load Fraud / Deception – these incidents are dealt with by means of a National Action Fraud referral and are rarely investigated.

NaVCIS has been unable to obtain details from the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) / Action Fraud, on Load Frauds.

Freight Crime ... Low risk and high reward

Freight crime is seen as attractive to criminals due to the “Low risk and high reward” – criminals are exploiting a high demand for products and fuel; the rewards are high; cargos are exposed with very little security whilst in transit; the main transport routes provide ample targets to choose from; and relatively low wages across the sector and high levels of transient or temporary staff provide opportunities for OCGs to embed insider operatives to pass on information on specific cargos or routes.

An offender robbing a bank can expect a haul of a few thousand pounds, and if caught faces many years in prison; but an OCG can steal an entire trailer of cargo worth hundreds of thousands and if caught will be prosecuted for theft from a vehicle and expect a much shorter sentence. (£1.2M of cosmetics were stolen at Warwick Services in late 2020 and the offence simply does not meet the same level of threat and risk for police forces to invest significant resources.)

Robbery and hijack occurs internationally but is very rare in the UK, with less than 1% of freight crimes in 2021 involving violence. We assess this is due to the criminals rightly limiting the attention given to their offences – the offences if dealt as a standalone theft are categorised as a theft from motor vehicle, so they do not feature high on risk when it comes to Police forces scoring them on the THRIVE risk matrix and when it comes to proportionality the investigations are screened out despite the high values of cargo stolen.

Additionally, when Police obtain successful prosecutions there are no sentencing guidelines that reflect the gravity and magnitude of the offending and criminals are aware of this. In May 2022 members of an OCG from Leeds were caught red handed stealing £30k of cargo in Gloucestershire, using multiple vehicles and another lorry. The prosecuting judge called it a 'sophisticated operation', yet the offenders were released with a suspended sentence.

Standards of investigation for freight crime vary widely, this was addressed in 2010 when police forces agreed and adopted a minimum standard for cargo crime investigation; but due to competing Policing demands this has since been lost.

As a result, some forces don't investigate these offences and frequently no details of the stolen cargo is recorded on the crime – leaving no later opportunity to identify stolen goods.

There are however examples of good police work in this area too; notably Operation BARRIC – a large and established operation to counter Cargo Crime Offences in the East Midlands covering several counties; and efforts by West Yorkshire police, who have helped identify organised teams of thieves based in and around Leeds and Wakefield, and then map them as an OCG (chart the individual connections and relationships in the group).

These teams are prepared to travel hundreds of miles to steal Freight cargo; there are more than 300 individuals linked to these groups, with assessments suggesting around 40 to 50 offenders active at any one time.

Unfortunately, there are intelligence gaps and our assessment is that many of these teams of thieves have not been mapped as an organised crime group and so are largely avoiding disruption measures.

Typically police responses to freight crime are reactive, being prompted by crimes of note and they lack the sustained effort needed to be fully aware and effective in combatting this crime.

Offender profiles – Organised teams of thieves

The majority of UK Cargo crime is very well organised and only on occasion "opportunistic". The Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) committing HGV Crime are invariably from, or include persons with a HGV and supply chain background and they understand HGV drivers routes for certain goods, driving hours, stopping locations.

Rest areas are a vital means of supporting EU Drivers' Hours legislation, which requires regular breaks (at least 45 minutes after no more than 4 hours 30 minutes driving) and a minimum number of rest hours per day. Appropriate facilities ensure that drivers have locations where they can park their vehicles and rest. (*Source DFT – European Union (EU) rules on drivers' hours and working time*).

The OCGs understand Supply Chains, exploit known weaknesses and travel to areas to target freight.

The two principle threats come from Curtain Slashing offences and Trailer Hook Ups. We have identified two Yorkshire based OCGs principally responsible for a large proportion of the Curtain Slashing offences recorded. A West Midlands based OCG is suspected of being the lead in HGV Trailer Hook Up thefts.

Though these two threat areas have been highlighted as of principle concern, other groups are active, with both Essex and Merseyside based OCGs involved in freight crime. London OCGs are often involved in Jump-Up Thefts from vehicles delivering in and around Central London, with offenders stealing high value and easily sold items, such as tobacco. Occasionally, we have also seen moving cargo thefts in the UK (aka 'Romanian Rollovers' – as these offences are more common in the EU and having been linked to Romanian nationals). Following multiple arrests in 2020 by the MET police of a Romanian group, these occurrences are very rare.

The OCGs involved are organised teams of thieves that will travel 200 miles to commit offences. They demonstrate a good awareness of Police tactics and will employ anti-surveillance measures, such as using stealth plate technology to attempt to evade ANPR Cameras.

They have been observed typically operating in teams of 6 or 7 and will use a well-rehearsed MO. One vehicle, usually a saloon car, will travel 30 minutes ahead of the main body, to conduct reconnaissance and select a target lorry to attack, sometimes cutting lorry curtains and bolt crop trailer doors to identify the cargo. This advanced party will then put in calls to handlers to discuss Cargo that are available to be stolen. When a lorry has been identified and certain commodity has been chosen they will bring in a HGV Transport vehicle to offload the stolen goods onto. The transport vehicle is usually a 7.5 Tonne or 18 Tonne Lorry with other individuals on board. The OCGs have their own supply chains and storage facilities to house stolen cargo and a network of handlers of stolen goods.

Stolen cargo – Disposal methods and recoveries

The stolen goods and cargo re-enter the supply chain through different outlets such as eBay, Gumtree, Facebook Buy Sell and Swap social media sites, Car Boot Sales, Sunday Markets, Small and Medium Retail outlets, back street cash and carry premises, Car Boot Sales and E-Fulfilment Centres. This means that innocent members of the public are unwittingly

purchasing stolen goods. Also from historic investigations it has also been known for stolen pharmaceutical goods to be sold via the Dark Web.

Cargo crime is different than other vehicle crime types in that the 'slaughter' (disposal) of goods is common as soon as practicable after the initial theft and subsidiaries will sell smaller quantities of cargo and commodities.

The recovery of Stolen Cargo is more problematic and resource intensive than other crime types in that once the thieves have "slaughtered" and divided up the stolen bulk cargo into much smaller quantities, it loses much of its identity; the stolen cargo then re-enters the supply chain in multiple selling arenas which is a challenge to recover stolen goods.

In July 2019, notification was received of a lorry having its cargo stolen in Kent. The stolen cargo was a high-end perfume with a value of around £300,000 (wholesale) - £1 million + (retail), the perfume had not been released in the UK and was in new branded packaging. Within 48 hours research evidenced that there were multiple eBay sellers of the stolen perfume. It was clear to see that the stolen perfume had been rapidly "Slaughtered" and sold on as there were more than ten sellers of the perfume across Watford, Luton, Essex and East London. The list of eBay Sellers grew again in the following days and after four of five days further sellers of the stolen perfume also came online based in Birmingham in the West Midlands.

This provides Police with a real challenge when there are as many as fifteen to twenty sellers of these products across numerous different counties.

Target Identification

Year on year the broad offender patterns are largely the same - this makes sense given that the freight sector must use the same transport network to deliver to established distribution centres.

Our assessment is that offenders target a general location based on predicted rest points for drivers and followed up by reconnaissance teams who direct in others to take the cargo. Arrests and proactive police work have established that organised crime groups are prepared to travel the length of the country and do not stay in one area. This provides them with lucrative targets and dilutes the policing concern and response.

Individual high value cargos have been attacked using more sophisticated planning and likely insider knowledge. This insider knowledge could be an active member of staff feeding them live information, or more simply be an ex-employee with a good knowledge of routes, cargos and routines.

Truck parking provision

The Department for Transport (DfT) National Lorry Parking Survey 2022 conducted analysis across the entire Strategic Road Network (SRN), as well as all lorry parking sites within 5km of the network. During the month long survey: A total of 4,396 parking sites were visited, these were made up as follows:

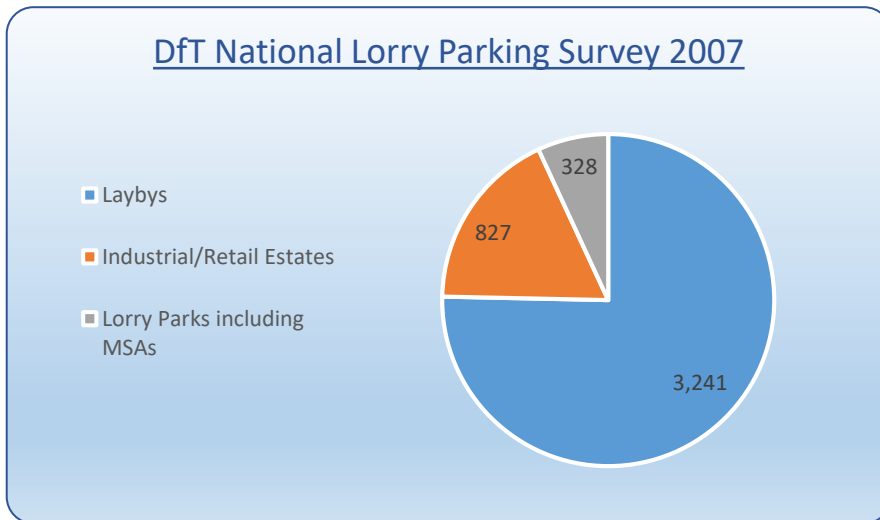


Fig 4: Pie chart showing DfT National Lorry Parking Survey 2007

21,234 vehicles parked overnight across England. Total capacity of on-site parking (Lorry parks/MSAs) of 16,761 leaving an excess of 4,473 vehicles without onsite parking.

35% of vehicles had to park off-site;

27% of overnight stops were foreign registered.

Regions with parking capacity that barely matches or fails to meet demand - East Midlands (92% utilisation), East of England (95% utilisation), South East (94% utilisation).

The same survey reported 92% of drivers believed truck crime has increased in the last 5 years.

Source AECOM / DfT National Survey of Lorry Parking 2022. (NB: critical utilisation agreed by DfT is 85%)

A European Commission study on 'Safe and Secure Parking Places for Trucks', concluded in December 2018.

Key findings (for Mainland Europe):

- A common standard and rating system for security and service.
- Auditing responsibilities and guidelines to ensure reliability.
- Comprehensive maps indicating at which locations 'Safe and secure truck parking areas' (SSTPAs) are needed.
- Recommendations for the basis of a common application program interface (API) for the exchange of dynamic data between SSTPAs and information platforms.
- Manuals to support the preparation of business plans for the setup of SSTPAs.

Source EU – European Commission – Study on Safe and Secure Parking Places for Trucks (SSTPA) 2019 Report

European Secure Parking Organisation (ESPOrg) are an Organisation in Europe for all parties interested in secure truck parking and navigation. ESPOrg have developed an EU Parking Standard which makes it clear at a glance what drivers and operators can expect when parking at a location. The ESPOrg Parking Security Standards are ranked as Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum. ESPOrg members and partners are currently working updating 28 sites in Europe using EU Funding to upgrade Safe and Secure Parking sites across Europe – these ESPOrg members and partners are involved in eight projects across Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Romania and Spain – this work is being funded on a regional and national level across Europe using the infrastructure programme Connecting Europe Facility (TEN-T) which provides considerable financial support for secure truck parking area projects. Source <https://www.esporg.eu/eu-parking-standard/>
In addition there is the Transported Asset Protection Association (TAPA) secure parking standard, which is also widely used across Europe.

However, in contrast the UK has a significant shortage of truck parking (lacking 4,473 places as judged by the 2002 National Survey of lorry parking; and by as many as 11,000 places according to consultation with the *Road Haulage association*), and that is compounded by a lack of central oversight, management and funding. There is no equivalent to the ESPOrg and the UK does not have the wide adoption of secure parking standards. The typical standards that are used, are to a much lower security level and we deem these to be ineffective against the determined criminals active in the UK. The term ‘safe’ parking is far from the security standards needed to be called ‘secure’ parking. (NB: BPA standards introduced in Sept 2022 are a big improvement.)

Businesses in the freight sector have faced the continual driving down of costs; and the resulting smaller profit margins for hauliers means even modest parking costs are significant and most be seen as a worthy expense, or else drivers will continue to use unsafe parking, enabling easy targets for criminals.

Truck parking – ‘Safe’ vs ‘Secure’ parking

Secure Parking Provision

The Transported Asset Protection Association (TAPA) have implemented TAPA Parking Security Requirements (PSR) which consist of a full programme for HGV Parking with three levels of security certification, independently audited.

Certification gained for TAPA Parking Security Requirements (PSR) are valid for 3 years.

PSR Level 1 - highest security protection

PSR Level 2 - mid-level security protection

PSR Level 3 - lowest security protection.

Currently in the UK two Truck Parking Sites carry this level of secure certification - Formula Services; M56, Ellesmere Port; and Red Lion Truckstop, M1, Northamptonshire; which are TAPA Level 3 certified HGV Secure Parking locations.

NaVCIS data shows the Red Lion site experienced typical levels of crime prior to the upgrade and only 1 offence in 3 years afterwards; and the Formula Services site, designed from the outset to be secure, has never reported an instance of Freight crime, despite being in a high crime area.

This demonstrates that the right measures will be effective.

Safe Parking Provision

The British Parking Association (BPA) currently has 16 lorry parks with 'Safer Lorry Parking' under the existing Safer Parking Scheme (SPS) and Park Mark award.

This is a police-backed crime reduction and prevention focussed award, with some additional reporting relevant to truck parks.

The Park Mark® Safer Parking Scheme is a Police Crime Prevention Initiative (Police-CPI) and is aimed at reducing both crime and the fear of crime in parking facilities.

Mandatory criteria for SPS and Park Mark include: Incident reporting and customer complaints / Cleaning and maintenance regime / Crime recording and statistics / Boundaries and perimeters / Vehicle access and egress controls / Pedestrian access / Parking areas / Surveillance / Signage / Lighting levels / Security lighting

Park Mark Freight was launched on 23rd September 2022 and with this the BPA will provide Lorry Park accreditation for sites that meet its criteria. These robust standards are a big improvement and very welcome, NaVCIS would always encourage the highest measures to be implemented, to be effective against determined criminals.

Parking areas at the lower end of the security spectrum - these 'safer' measures - are very welcome and certainly improve the parking environment for the drivers, but they fall far short of that needed to hamper the determined criminals operating in the OCGs. Our assessment is the current measures would be effective against opportunistic and 'amateur' offenders, but ineffective against the skilled OCGs, for which the more stringent 'secure' standards are needed.

It is acknowledged that any new developments require lengthy and costly planning and design applications, and are often unpopular with local communities; these factors are significant in slowing improvements and priority should be given to upgrading existing sites to secure standards.

Freight crime impacts the wider UK economy, across many sectors and funds broad criminality, it should not be only a burden on businesses.

To be as prompt and effective as possible and to counter predictable expense of upgrading existing facilities, government should both support and drive these changes through all means available – funding support, assistance with planning issues and regulation where appropriate.

Steps forward.... Credit should be given to the government and responsible agencies for a recent increase in prioritisation.

It is notable that (as of October 2022) there is an increased central push for improved parking security and conditions for drivers; largely featuring good work from the British Parking Association, Dept. for Transport and the National Highways agency.

Provision of £32.5M (from DfT) and £20M (from National Highways) in match funding is hoped to encourage site owners to improve existing locations, aimed at reducing crime and increasing driver retention within the sector.

The Dept. for Transport announced on 24th November the new push for parking security and driver welfare standards and invited bids for the available funding.

“Hauliers and drivers are critical to keep our economy motoring. But for decades, our truckers have had a raw deal when it comes to decent roadside facilities.

This is why I’m so proud that our government is going to provide match funding support to the industry to boost drivers’ welfare, safeguard road safety and make sure driving an HGV is a really attractive career option by providing the facilities and respect our lorry drivers deserve.”

Roads Minister Richard Holden 24th November 2022

The central funding and new parking security standards are a very welcome addition and NaVCIS is supporting these initiatives with data and advice.

Truck parking – Motorway Service Areas (MSAs)

The UK has a network of 145 motorway service areas (MSA) which are categorised as safe truck parking sites- being on the network, having hard standing, adequate lighting, site perimeter fencing; and some have additional CCTV cameras and Automatic Number Plate Recognition Systems and onsite security.

The completeness and effectiveness of these measures, however, varies widely across the sites.

MSA sites face the added complication of typically being open to the public and the challenge this brings of site control.

The MSA sites are categorised as Safe Truck Parking sites as opposed to Independent Road Parking (IRP) Locations² which would be categorised as Unsafe Parking Locations.

Any on-site parking location is deemed preferable to off- site locations.

² Dept. for Transport uses the terms ‘on – site’ and ‘off – site’.

On-site includes – Independent truckstops, local authority truckstops, MSAs, Trunk road service areas.

Off- site – Industrial estates, laybys etc.

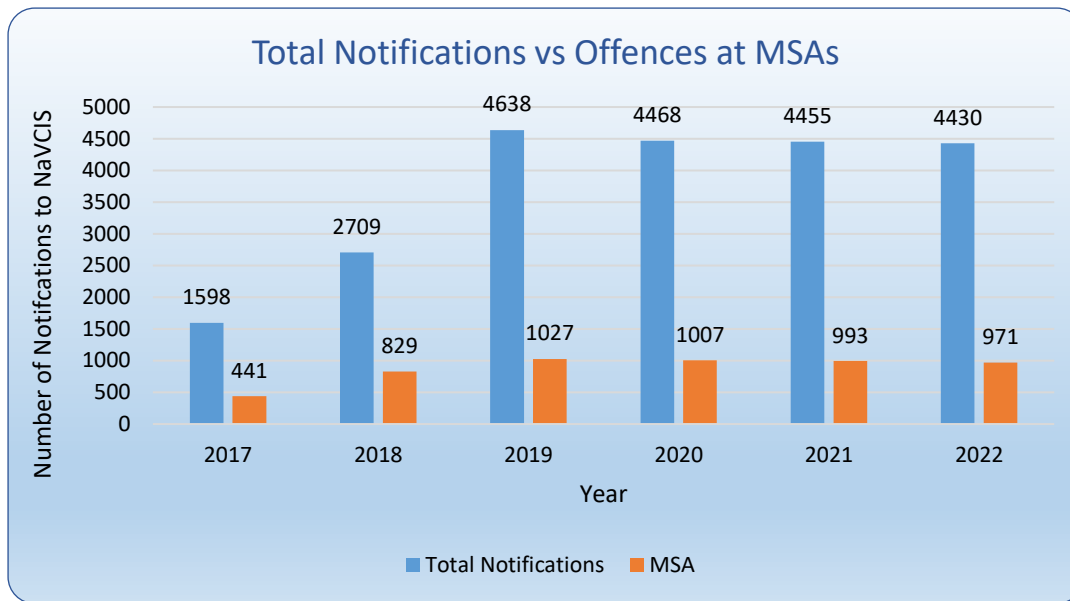


Fig 5: Graph showing Total Notifications vs Offences at MSAs

The investment needed to upgrade security at existing parking sites can be significant and the site owners (whether large MSA operators, or smaller single sites), have typically lacked the resources or commitment to improve their sites to a secure level.

The reasons behind this reluctance are confidential to the companies involved; but we surmise that the return on investment isn't clearly made out when the general lack of truck parking is suppressing true competition and ensures a steady stream of customers to even poorly provisioned sites.

However, our data on two UK sites that have upgraded from 'safe' to 'secure' parking standards, shows these sites negligible levels of freight crime afterwards.

With parking costs rising (£30 per stay is common, with top end of £60) the expectations on facilities are increasing and the successful reduction in crime should be a strong selling point for the sites and protect them as the marketplace changes.

In some welcome good news, the Department for Transport and Highways Agency have in summer 2022 announced central funding of £52.5M to help existing truck parking operators upgrade their HGV driver facilities and security. The DfT will match fund up to 50% of capital cost of an improvement project for small operators and up to 25% for larger operators. These central funds are very welcome and we are already seeing interest from some big MSA operators. The expectation is that as more sites are 'secure' it will drive further provision across the sector.

The assessment of NaVCIS is that these site upgrades need to be carefully considered and driven to 'secure' standards rather than those referred to as 'safe' currently; and unless robustly applied these funds could be a missed opportunity.

MSA sites are already better than off-site parking (layby, industrial estates, on road parking – which we consider unsafe), but the MSAs still experience a significant proportion of

reported freight crime (approximately 23% annually). Only moving to a consistent 'secure' standard across the country can we drive down these offences.

Even prior to the current available funds, we have seen good examples of joint public and private initiatives, successfully lowering crime rates at specific sites and even the wider locality.

For example Northamptonshire Police and Roadchef jointly funded ANPR cameras at Watford Gap and Northampton Services, M1. The sites had significantly reduced levels of crime, as did the wider area apparently benefiting from the installations.

In the last 12 months NaVCIS have been involved in discussions with private partners, exploring opportunities for sharing parking facilities at sites such as football stadium carparks, which are usually unused outside of match days; and also in the possible joint use of distribution centres.

These efforts are very welcome, but it remains that the UK infrastructure requires help to develop and expand to meet demand for secure parking.

Driver conditions

There is industry concern that fear of crime will exacerbate the shortage of lorry drivers, as recently evident in the UK and Europe.

The sector has an aging workforce and the fear of crime, together with the general lack of suitable parking, often with poor facilities for drivers; makes the sector less appealing to join. The central provision of £52.5M in match funding is expected to improve both security and driver facilities at parking sites.

'Rest areas are a vital means of supporting EU Drivers' Hours legislation, which requires regular breaks (at least 45 minutes after no more than 4 hours 30 minutes driving) and a minimum number of rest hours per day. Appropriate facilities ensure that drivers have locations where they can park their vehicles and rest'. Source DFT – European Union (EU) rules on drivers' hours and working time

Terrorism

As a general principle it is accepted that proceeds of crime are channelled into other crimes by the offender groups, and Freight crime is no exception; we have seen intelligence suggesting the profits are funnelled into various other types of serious criminality, including support for terrorist groups.

Attacks worldwide demonstrate goods vehicles are also under threat from terrorist organisations as a target or possible weapons.

There are other and more detailed reports on terrorism and ‘vehicles as a weapon’; and this document will not replicate that material; however, it is inescapable that efforts to improve the security of the Freight sector, will also help the fight against terrorism.

As such decision makers should not consider them separate issues.

For further information, see the 2021 DfT BSI guidance on preventing vehicles being used as weapons – link in references.

Target Identification– Regions

Region	2020	2021	Change	Region	2020	2021
East	1052	1052	↔	East	£ 19,429,326.98	£ 16,699,543.33
West Midlands	452	650	↑	West Midlands	£ 17,257,050.90	£ 10,180,328.20
South East	872	647	↓	South East	£ 12,898,334.37	£ 9,046,415.88
Yorkshire & Humberside	644	624	↓	Yorkshire & Humberside	£ 12,528,277.10	£ 14,221,688.54
East Midlands	489	565	↑	East Midlands	£ 15,855,024.00	£ 10,174,856.80
North West	275	286	↓	North West	£ 9,293,284.56	£ 5,116,645.42
Metropolitan/London	225	251	↑	Metropolitan/London	£ 3,285,195.48	£ 2,682,455.00
South West	149	160	↑	South West	£ 2,022,800.00	£ 1,233,900.00
Wales	135	86	↓	Wales	£ 697,100.00	£ 485,900.00
North East	132	74	↓	North East	£ 1,528,000.00	£ 1,169,600.00

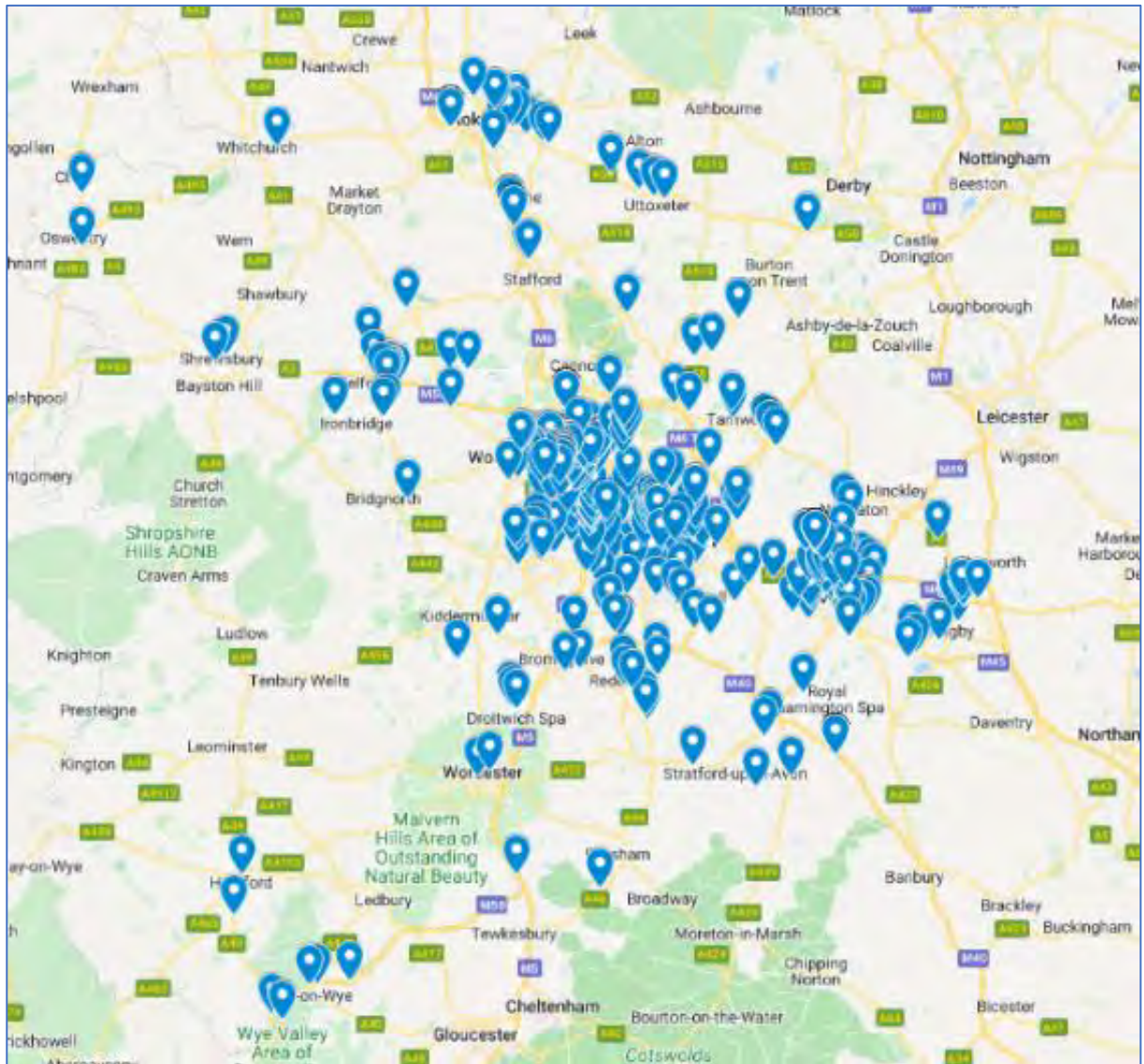
Fig 6: Table showing number of reported offences and the estimated loss values by Force Region 2020 v 2021

Repeat Postcode	2020	2021	Change
NG9 3PL/ NG9 3PG (Trowell Services, M1, J25-26, Nottinghamshire)	28	49	↑
DE55 5TZ (Tibshelf Services, M1, J28-29, Derbyshire)	15	36	↑
NN4 9QY/NN4 9QS (Rothersthorpe Services, M1 J15A, Northamptonshire)	8	13	↑
LE3 3GB (Leicester Forest East Services, M1, J21-21A, Leicestershire)	33	2	↓

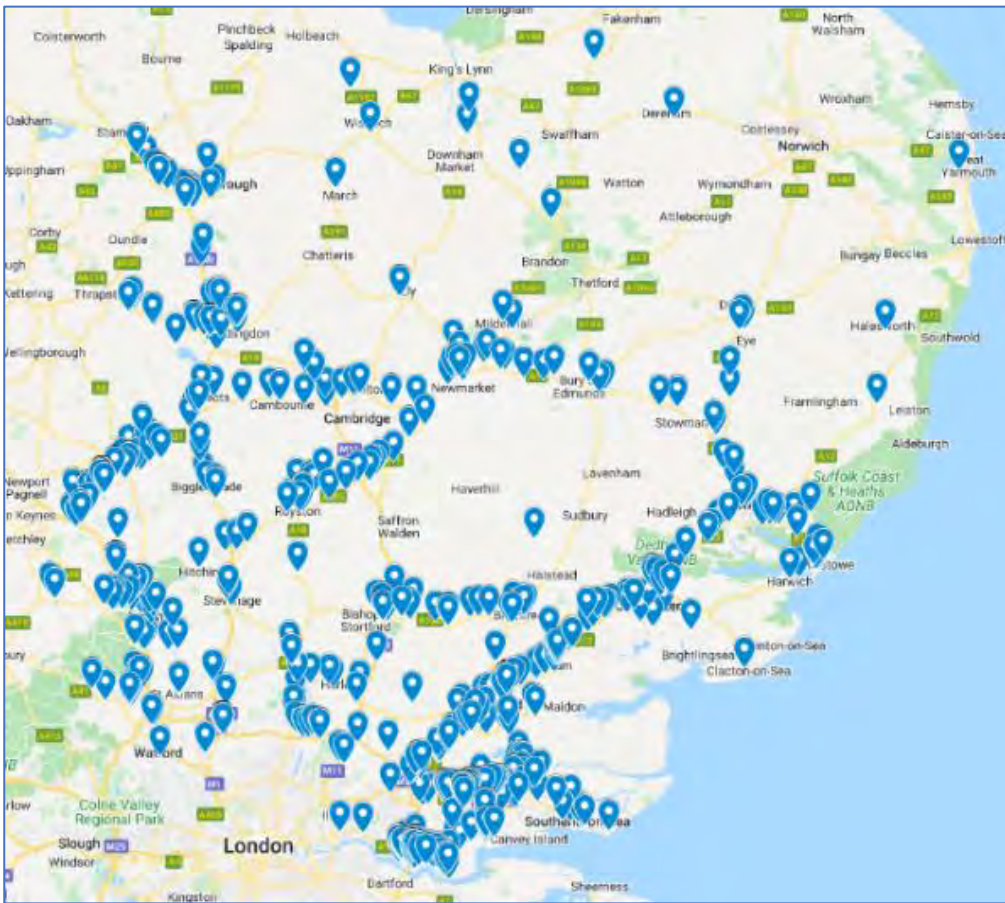
Fig: 7 East Midlands Region – Repeat Locations by Postcode

The top 5 Regions all contain the major arterial routes connecting the main distribution centres to the main sea and air ports, therefore they are likely to remain the top 5 Regions to be affected by Freight crime.

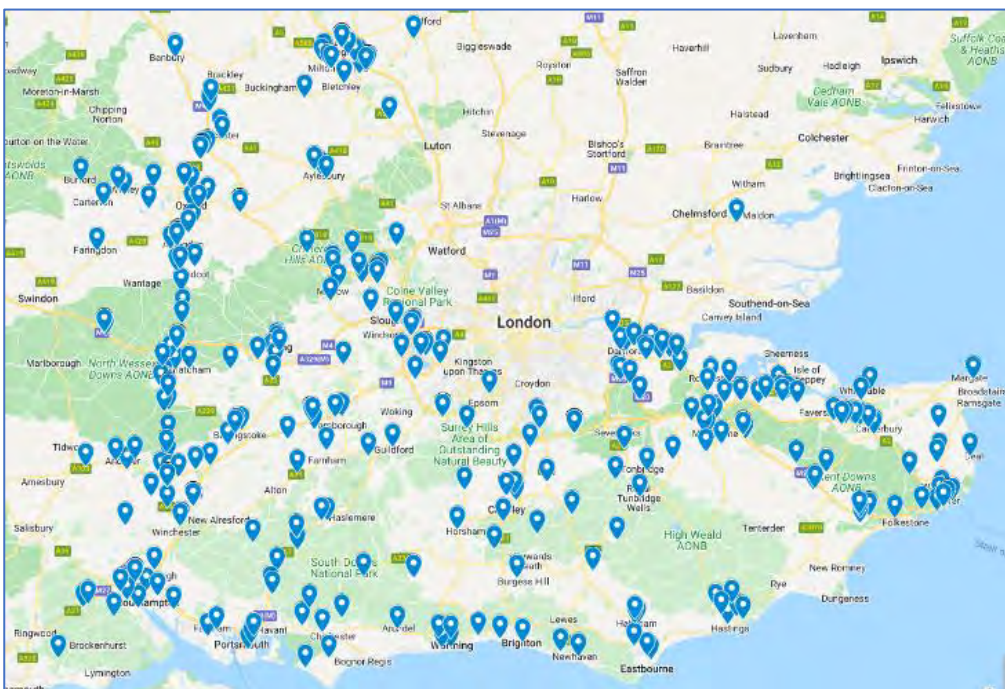
Map showing all offences in the West Midlands, during 2021



Map showing all offences in the East Region during 2021



Map showing all offences in the South East Region during 2021



Target Identification – Location Type



Fig 8: Graph showing number of reported offences at various theft locations 2020 v 2021

Independent Road Parking (IRP) (off-site) and Motorway Service Areas (MSA) (on-site) are the locations where the majority of Freight Theft occurs due to the volume and vulnerability of vehicles parked overnight at these locations. The majority of HGV vehicles attacked at IRP location tend to be the foreign registered vehicles – foreign drivers do not necessarily know the roads of the UK and where the nearest service station is when looking to park up due to driver hours being reached. The criminal fraternity also take advantage of this fact as IRP locations are normally quite deserted late at night, poorly lit and due to the likelihood that the foreign driver has poor command of the English language, the theft will make it difficult to report. It is anticipated that due to the language barrier, there may be a large proportion of freight crimes that go unreported.

Anecdotal accounts suggest foreign drivers given cash for parking, may be subsidising low wages by using IRP sites and keeping the money.

Target Identification – Targeted commodities

Fuel remains the most stolen property – it is a low risk and high reward commodity and with the current rise in fuel prices this likely will remain the top stolen commodity in the future, especially as the winter nights approach. The criminals do not need to utilise large lorries or HGVs in the commissioning of this crime but use cars or transit vans to transport the stolen fuel. Tobacco is the next highest commodity stolen – a large majority³ is from ‘Jump up’ offences targeting National supermarket lorries during deliveries to their stores and smaller outlets. Tobacco again is a low risk, high reward commodity which is easily disposed of in pubs, market stalls and on online and social media selling sites.

³ In 2021 this was 368 of the 403 offences reported to NaVCIS.



Fig 9: Graph showing stolen property 2020 v 2021

Offender Profiles – Organised Crime Groups (OCGs)

The majority of UK Freight Crime is very well organised and only on occasion opportunistic. The Organised Crime Groups (OCG) committing Freight Crime invariably include members from an HGV or Supply Chain background and they understand HGV drivers routes for certain goods/ driving hours/ rest locations, and commodities stolen vary by region and season. They target the main road links between UK with Europe (via the sea ports) and OCGs may travel hundreds of miles to commit offences; they are aware of Police tactics, conduct anti-surveillance and use Stealth Plate technology in an attempt to evade ANPR cameras.

The biggest known threat of Freight Crime comes from two main OCGs:

- West Yorkshire OCG : Curtain Slashing
- West Midlands OCG: HGV Trailer Hook-up
- Other groups are, but not limited to:
 - Merseyside OCG
 - London OCG: Jump Up Thefts
 - East Midlands OCG

For more information please visit our website at <https://navcis.police.uk/>

Or for law enforcement enquiries email us at freight@navcis.police.uk

Appendix A

Theft of mail bag / postal packet - Contrary to section 1(1) and 7 of the Theft Act 1968.

Section 14 of the Theft Act 1968 extends the scope of theft and robbery to mail that is in transit outside England and Wales, but within the UK.

14(1) Where a person -

a) steals or attempts to steal any mail bag or postal packet in the course of transmission as such between places in different jurisdictions in the British postal area, or any of the contents of such a mail bag or postal packet; or

(b) in stealing or with intent to steal any such mail bag or postal packet or any of its contents, commits any robbery, attempted robbery or assault with intent to rob;

then, notwithstanding that he does so outside England and Wales, he shall be guilty of committing or attempting to commit the offence against this Act as if he had done so in England or Wales, and he shall accordingly be liable to be prosecuted, tried and punished in England and Wales without proof that the offence was committed there.

14(2) In subsection (1) above the reference to different jurisdictions in the British postal area is to be construed as referring to the several jurisdictions of England and Wales, of Scotland, of Northern Ireland, of the Isle of Man and of the Channel Islands.

WITH THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS AND CONTRIBUTORS –

DEPT. for TRANSPORT - NATIONAL HIGHWAYS - ROAD HAULAGE ASSOCIATION (RHA) - BRITISH INTERNATIONAL FREIGHT ASSOCIATION (BIFA) - AVIVA INSURANCE - TT CLUB - NORTHERN MARINE UNDERWRITERS (NMU) - CLIPPER LOGISTICS - KUEHNE & NAGEL - FUEL THEFT SOLUTIONS - ANTEVORTE - MOTORWAY BUDDY - MITIE SECURITY - ROADCHEF - MOTO HOSPITALITY - WELCOME BREAK – WINCANTON - CISCO GLOBAL SOLUTIONS - WESTCOAST - FET LOGISTICS – NMU INSURANCE - BLUE DIAMOND SECURITY – DHL – M&S – NEXT PLC – EC3 MARINE LTD – EXTRA SERVICES – ISA - XPO LOGISTICS – LYMM TRUCK WASH – JD SPORTS – SEGRO – CLARK WOODWARD HUNGATE & CO (CWH) – WOODLAND GROUP – KAMMAC PLC – GOLDSTAR TRANSPORT – PLADIS GLOBAL – AECOM – EXERTIS – CWH JOHNSONS INTERNATIONAL – FLAGSHIP PARTNERS – MAPLE FLEET SERVICES – COVERT INVESTIGATIONS & SURVEILLANCE LTD – DSV – WKW SERVICES – UNITED BISCUITS – MARINE REPORTING – GREGORY DISTRIBUTION – AM DARK LTD – ASOS

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