



SEMAPHORE

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Congested Ports Provide Theft Opportunities

Congestion being experienced throughout the global supply chain, but particularly in and around ports, is proving a significant contributory factor to a diversification of types of theft at American ports.

Such are among findings of an analysis of theft data undertaken by freight insurance specialists, TT Club, and the supply chain services and solutions team at the business improvement and standards firm, BSI.

Cargo theft data for the third quarter of 2021 in the United States has revealed that storage facilities were targeted in 45% of reported cases – up from 20% of recorded cases in the same quarter in 2020.

Hijacking and robbery of vehicles comparably fell from 67% to just 25%, offsetting the rise in the theft of cargo units in unsecured storage areas.

The changes in theft patterns highlight a trend away from “on the move” targets to those locations where cargo is temporarily stored and delivered. These locations include traditional warehouses and depots where containers and trailers are being held awaiting collection.

Due to port congestion, many temporary facilities in port areas are without adequate security regimes.

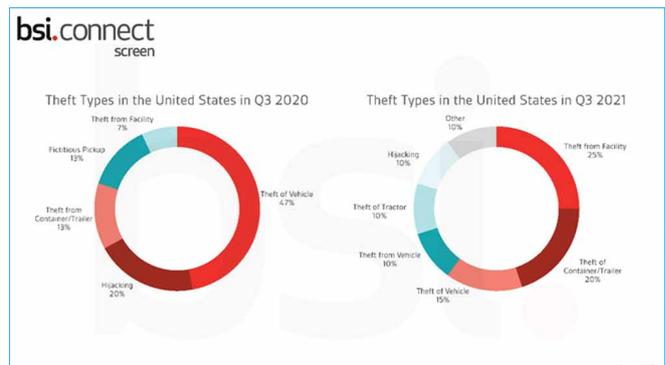
As the comparisons in the accompanying diagram illustrate, the largest rise in the methods and locations for cargo theft was from facilities – the percentage of the total increasing to 25% in the third quarter this year in contrast to just 7% in the comparable 2020 quarter. At the other extreme, theft of vehicles fell from a dominant 47% in 2020 to a surprisingly low 15%; in addition, hijackings halved from 20% to 10%.

Commenting on some of the more contrasting figures, TT Club loss prevention managing director Mike Yarwood observes: “There is little doubt that the problems of supply chain disruption that are currently bedeviling the United States freight transport system, particularly that of container congestion at ports and inland hubs, is creating increased opportunities for thieves.

“The static nature of cargo in these circumstances, often stored in temporary and less-secure facilities, leads to criminal ingenuity adapting the modus operandi of theft in a typically resourceful way.”

TT Club is understood to be keen to use the insightful data provided by BSI in identifying shifts in cargo theft trends and bring them to the attention of operators in as timely as a fashion as possible.

Those concerned with risk management in the supply chain both in the United States and throughout the world should be aware of such patterns and hopefully take measures to reduce losses, costs and insurance claims, it advises.



TT is committed to providing resources to help supply chain stakeholders to enact such mitigating measures, adds Mr Yarwood.

“Whatever the location and means of cargo theft such incidents can often be averted through straightforward due diligence, management processes and employee vetting and training.”

To this end, TT has launched a [webpage](#) dedicated to advice on improving supply chain security.

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