



Annual Report 2004

Welcome to the TruckPol annual report for the period 1st January 2004 – 31st December 2004. This bulletin is not protectively marked and may be distributed freely without further reference to the originators.

Introduction

In April 2003, the Metropolitan Police Service established TruckPol, an intelligence unit dedicated to collating and analysing road freight crime across the UK. TruckPol acts as a single point of contact, collating crime reports and intelligence from a variety of sources. In this way it is able to deliver a national perspective in its strategic assessment of road freight criminality. TruckPol is jointly funded with contributions from insurance, manufacturers, industry and Home Office matched fund grant.

This document relies on information and intelligence held on databases maintained by TruckPol. It should be noted at the outset that the database on which this report is based is not a definitive list of all UK road freight crime; not all crime is reported to the police and not all police forces submit all of their road freight crime data to TruckPol.

Road Freight Crime by Value

Recorded values reported in this section are published subject to the following proviso. Whilst TruckPol makes every effort to ensure that values are recorded as accurately as possible, there will inevitably be discrepancies between actual trade/retail value to haulier, shipper and insurer and values given to police at the time of reporting. Because of this, the values given below must be viewed **as a guide only**.

	Recorded Value 1 st January 2004 – 31 st December 2004	
	£ Sterling	€ Euro
Vehicle Value	36,943,313	53,354,080
Load Value	73,722,650	106,471,344
Combined Value	110,665,963	159,845,522

The average loss per incident is £32,125 or €46,397

Road Freight Crime by Incident Type

TruckPol has received 3506 reports at the time of writing, broken down into categories as follows. A full description is contained in Appendix A.

Incident Type	No. of incidents (Jan 04 - Dec 04)
Warehouse	85
Hijack	84
Theft	1886
Attempted Theft	48
Round the corner	85
Jump Up	1318
Total	3506

* Originally classified as 'other'

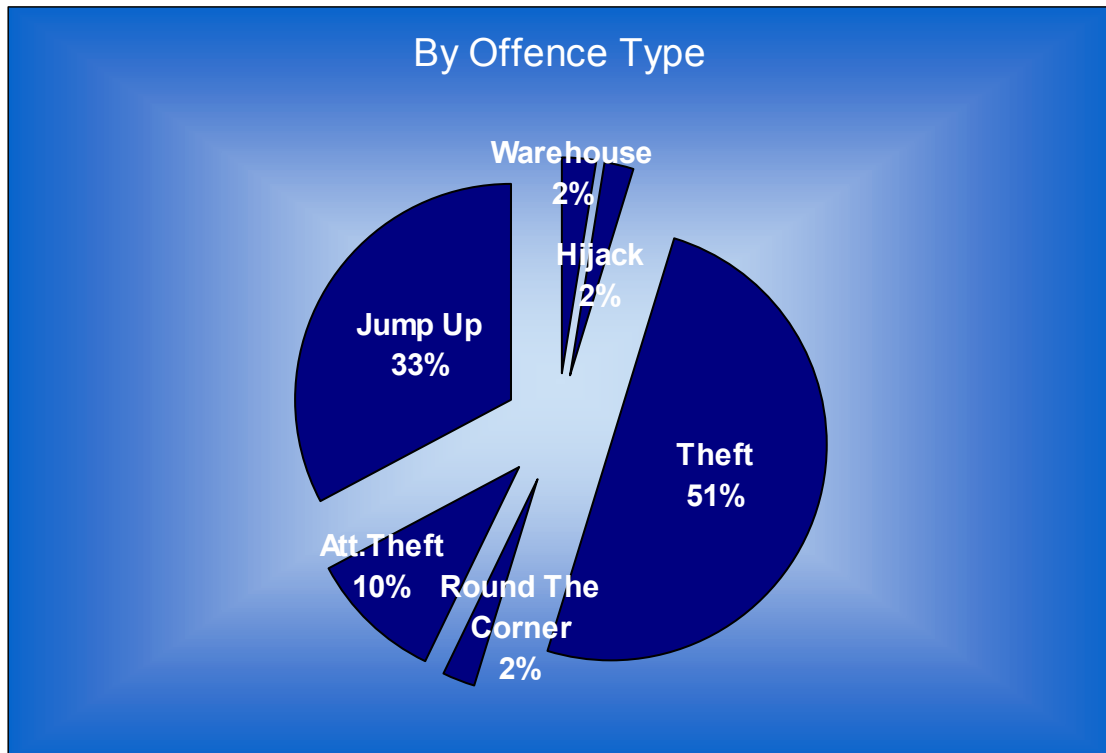


Fig. 1

Road Freight Crime by Property Type

Property is classified in seven primary categories in order to achieve a common EU standard in accordance with both Home Office recommendations and European Council of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) guidelines in a paper entitled 'Theft of Goods and Goods Vehicles' CEMT/CM(2001)19. They are;

A	Electronic / Electrical
B	Clothes and Shoes
C	Food and Beverages
D	Household Goods
E	Alcohol
F	Cigarettes
G	Miscellaneous / Other

In addition to these, TruckPol has introduced the following sub-categories to assist in analysis of thefts of commodities which are of particular interest to the UK;

A1	Computer Equipment
A2	Mobile Telephone Equipment
G1	Building / Plant / Industrial / Machinery / Automotive
G2	Art / Antiques
G3	HAZMAT / Chemicals
G4	Diesel Fuel

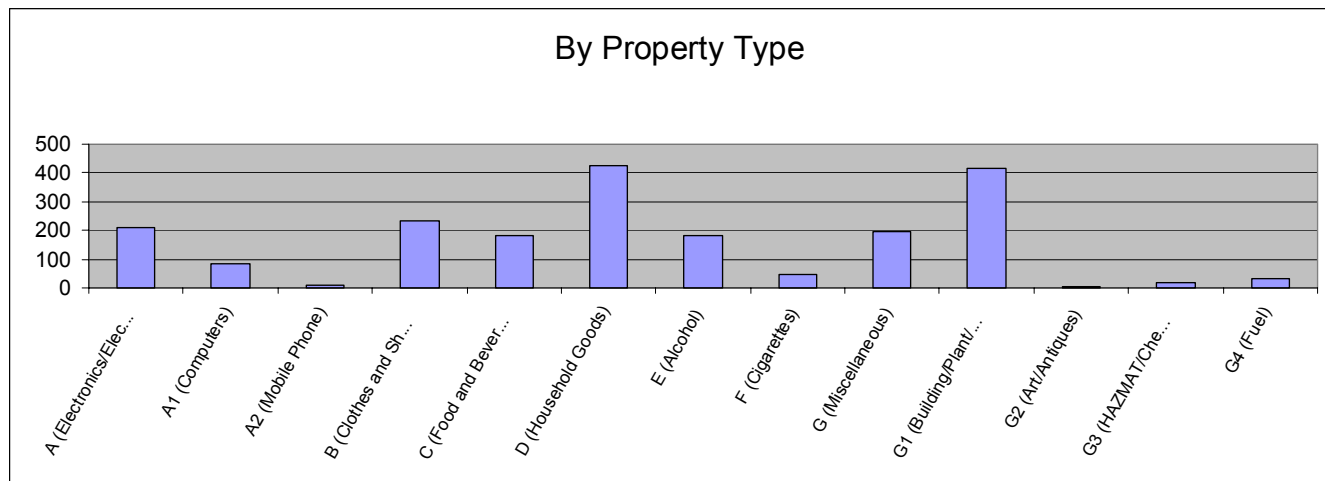


Fig. 2

Household Goods (D) are any items that can commonly be found in domestic use and include furniture, kitchen equipment, toiletries and cleaning products amongst other things.

Buildings /Plant/Machinery (G1) comprises items which are industrial/commercial and includes car and machine parts, aluminium, glass and so on.

Crime Reports by Police Area

This year has generally seen a steady flow in the total amount of information received at TruckPol (Fig. 3 below) averaging over 290 per month.

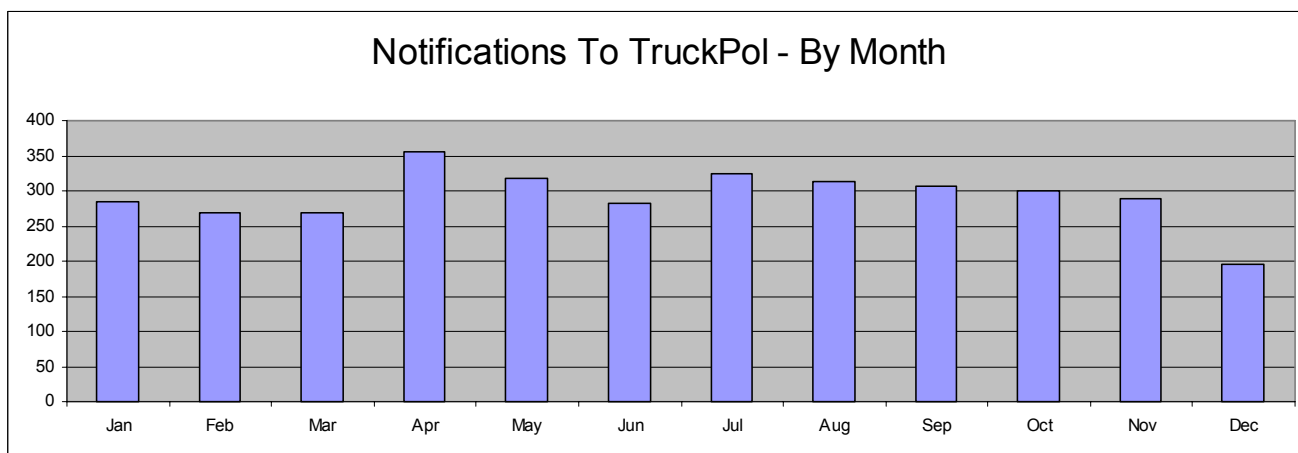


Fig. 3

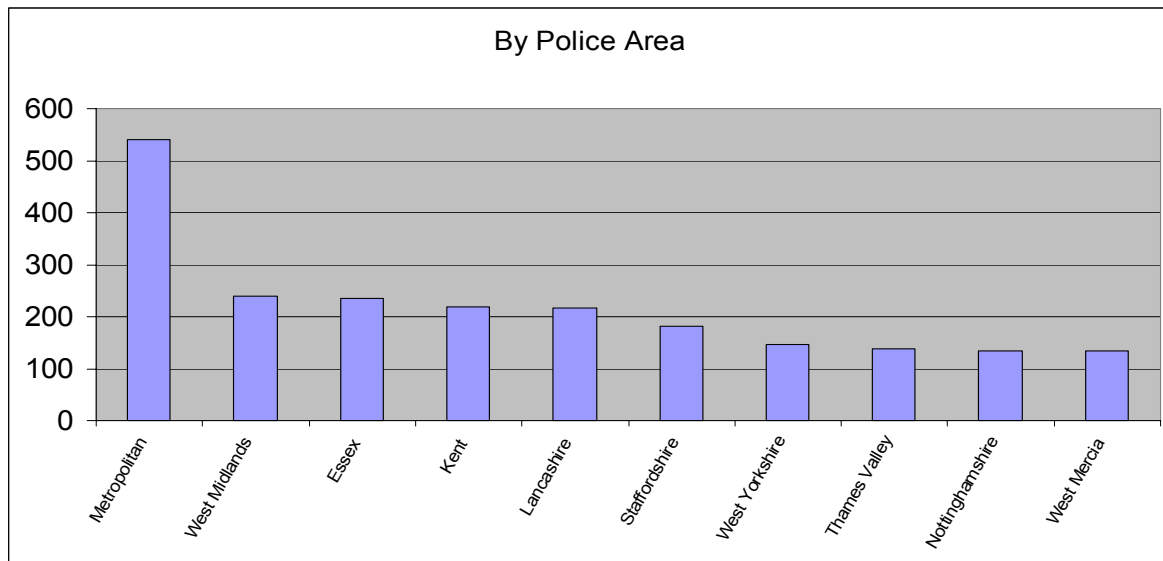


Fig. 4

Police Forces who submitted less than 120 reports to TruckPol this year are not shown above

Emerging Trends

Hijacks and attempted hijacks increased dramatically in 2004, averaging 7 per month and peaking at 15 in November, with a corresponding increase in the level of violence used by the perpetrators. Drivers and security personnel have been abducted and held captive for several hours after being threatened with firearms, knives and other weapons. Loads are becoming more attractive to criminals than the vehicle carrying them, evidenced by the fact that over half of stolen vehicles are abandoned (minus the load) within a relatively short time of the theft.

Concerns were raised about the perceived use of incapacitant gas to tranquilise drivers and facilitate the theft of a load but there has been little, if any, evidence to support this. Several reports by drivers have been discredited and no forensic evidence of this has yet been recovered. TruckPol has submitted a report to the Forensic Science Services for advice and we will be keeping a careful eye on it, as the potential for an overdose and fatality is self-evident.

Diversion thefts have increased through 2004, with a handful in the first quarter rising exponentially to over 30 in London alone in September. This is a variation on the round-the-corner game and is carried out by the simple process of telephoning manufacturers, freight forwarders, hauliers, retailers and so on and acquiring specific detail about deliveries, routes and even the mobile phone number of the driver. These will continue to happen as long as drivers are happy to hand over consignments in the street to a complete stranger with a semi-plausible story and a clipboard without first checking with their own or the consignee's transport office

Other methods of getting vehicles to stop have also been apparent. Staged accidents and calls placed to company transport offices by bogus police officers or 'good Samaritans' asking for them to call the driver and have him pull over on the pretext that trailer doors are open or that there is a defect with the vehicle have started to occur. Concerns about bogus VOSA officers appear to be unwarranted.

Conclusion

Road freight crime continues to be a problem in 2004. Vehicles are being stolen more for their loads as they afford criminals a high profit, low risk opportunity. Security weaknesses within the supply chain and logistics sectors continue to be exploited and we have seen everything from extremely high value hijacks and commercial robberies carried out by well-organised gangs with their own tractor units to opportunists stealing vehicles left unattended with keys in the ignition. Hijacks and the use of violence against drivers has risen sharply in 2004, peaking at 15 in November.

Police response has been regionalised and partially effective – multi-force operations such as Grafton (Heathrow area), Indicate (West Midlands) and Mammoth (South Yorkshire) have been very successful in driving down criminality but the evidence suggests that it is frequently displaced rather than prevented.

In conclusion, criminals clearly appear to be targeting vehicles out on the road. Security is unfortunately not given a high enough priority with many operators, particularly smaller companies who suffer the most and for whom the consequences of the theft of a single vehicle and load are often the most dramatic. Ignition keys being left in vehicles account for approximately half of all vehicles stolen. Staff, both in the office and out on the road, must be warned against discussing specific details of consignments with plausible con-men. Valuable and/or desirable loads are still being sub-contracted down to disreputable operators or are left on unattended trailers in quiet industrial estates and trailer parks, from where they are stolen and PIN container release numbers can be relatively easily obtained through remote sheds, corrupt contacts within transport offices or even on the basis of a phone call. There is much room for improvement, both within the industry to prevent losses and by the police to detect and catch those responsible, particularly cross-border criminals. Effective industry/police partnerships such as TruckPol are a step in the right direction as we endeavour to stay one step ahead of the criminals and keep people and property safe.

Contacting TruckPol

If you want to contact TruckPol you can do so at 07000 878 257 or at the following numbers

Office: +44 (0) 20 7230 7775

Fax: +44 (0) 20 7230 7774

Email: truckpol@met.pnn.police.uk