Northern Ireland Assembly

Research and Information Service
Briefing Note

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Update of PSNI Metal Theft Figures

The following tables provide an update of the figures previously provided by the PSNI in the research paper *Scrap Metal – theft and regulation of the industry* (July 2012)[1]. A new addition of figures provided for 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012 shows 951 incidents, a significant increase from 553 incidents for the similar period in 2010/11.

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[1] http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/RaISe/Publications/2012/environment/11912.pdf

Recorded burglary, robbery and theft offences where the property stolen was metal

Financial Year	Recorded Incidents
2007/08	210
2008/09	253
2009/10	231
2010/11	553
2011/12	951

Source: PSNI Statistics Branch

PSNI informed that these figures are based on information taken from a live crime recording system and will be subject to change. Figures are based on each financial year and have been broken down as far as the database can go at this stage.

According to the PSNI, their Statistic Branch does not record actual prosecutions but reported incidents. Their database enables them to record metal theft by the type of offence that occurred (e.g. general theft, theft in a dwelling etc.). They are currently looking into new ways of compiling metal theft information, in fact, according to a House of Commons Research paper "at present most forces are recording metal theft under the crime code of 'theft-other'[2]. However, for the purpose of this paper, the PSNI were able to provide a breakdown of theft by metal type for the calendar year 2011 as shown in the following table:

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[2] HOC Research (July 2012) *Metal Theft http://www.parliament.uk/Templates/Br...ages/BPPdfDownload.aspx?bp-id=SN06150 Filename:SN06150.pdf*

Recorded burglary, robbery and theft offences where the property stolen was metal by metal type

Number of recorded offences where the stolen property was:	Calendar Year 2011
Lead	396
Copper	408
Scrap	64
Brass, Ferrous & Non-ferrous	20
Aluminium	18
Unknown	40
Total number of offences	**933**

Source: Statistics Branch, PSNI

Please note: These figures are based on information taken from a live crime recording system and will be subject to change. The total number of offences will not add up to the number of offences recorded by property type as there were 12 offences where more than one type of metal was stolen.

The financial year figures provided for 2011/12 of 951 (Table 1) would average out a 79 offences per month, while the calendar year figure provided for 2011 of 933 (Table 2) would average out at 78 offences per month.

PSNI Operations

Through the information provided by the PSNI, it is apparent that they have carried out a number of operations against metal thieves, and that they have provided a substantial amount of crime prevention advice in relation to metal theft over the past few years. Earlier this year PSNI arranged for a metal theft 'Crimestoppers' campaign '*Crush Metal Theft in Your Community*'[3] to be commenced; this was officially launched in March 2012 by the Justice Minister David Ford.[4]

Last year PSNI established and lead a Northern Ireland interagency working group on metal theft, including Department of Justice (DOJ) and Department of Environment

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[3] The Campaign leaflet can be viewed at http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/media-centre/news-archive/march-2013/crush-metal-theft-in-your-community-leaflet-march-2012.pdf
[4] DoJ Press Release (March 2012) http://www.dojni.gov.uk/crush-metal-theft-in-your-community-ford

(DOE) officials, industry representatives from a broad range of businesses, and the recycling industry. PSNI are also members of the UK wide Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) working group on metal theft, and also attend regular meetings with the Garda in relation to cross border metal theft.

According to the PSNI, a number of measures are being taken forward by the NI working group to address the issue of metal theft. These include both police and DOE enforcement operations, measures to address illegal recyclers and the introduction of a voluntary code by recyclers.[5] Metal recyclers have now agreed to follow the voluntary code from the beginning of September which requires:

- an enhanced use of CCTV on their premises;

- evidence of identification (ID) from non-regular customers whose identity is not known, by producing valid ID before a payment is made. Failure to produce ID will result in no transaction being made;

- a record of vehicle registrations; and

- prominent display of posters describing the scheme.

The PSNI stated in their response that the voluntary code combined with other preventative work, and a focus on enforcement at the District level, demonstrates they are tackling the issue effectively and proactively in partnership with the community, Government and business.

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[5] To view the Voluntary Code see http://www.recyclemetals.org/files/downloads/bmra_acpo_code_of_practice_final.pdf