
Talking Points

Copper Theft Prevention

About Copper Theft:

- Copper theft is on the rise. In 2013, the National Insurance Crime Bureau reported that 32,568 insurance claims were filed for copper theft in comparison to the 25,083 claims that had been filed in 2011.
- Those who steal copper are not only risking their own lives, but also the safety and well-being of others.
- We can *all* help in deterring and reporting copper theft crimes.

How Homeowners Can Help:

- If you notice anything unusual with electric facilities, such as an open substation gate, open equipment, hanging wire, etc., contact your electric utility immediately.
- Trim shrubs, and remove excess landscaping that may allow criminals to hide from view on your property.
- For empty homes, install lighting systems that operate with a timer to make the property a less likely target. For all homes, install motion-sensor lights on the outside of the house to deter possible thieves.
- Store tools and wire cutters in a secure location, and never leave them out while away.

How Businesses Can Help:

- Report suspicious activity near common targets, which include farm equipment, air conditioners, vacant buildings, construction sites, and electric utility properties, including substations and power poles.
- Post “no trespassing” signs around property, and eliminate all external access to buildings and roofs. Remove items that allow for easy access to buildings, such as ladders, scaffolds, trees, dumpsters, and accumulated materials such as pallet piles.
- A low-cost way to take attention away from copper tubing is to paint it black. This causes the copper to look like regular, plastic tubing that no one would waste the time to steal.

- Installing security cameras and alarm systems may also deter potential thieves from your property. The location and the type of object will determine what kind of surveillance is needed. For example, for heating and cooling units there are alarms that are triggered if the unit stops working.
- In areas that contain valued objects such as air conditioners, install fences and lighting fixtures around them to deter copper thieves. The amount of copper in most commercial air conditioners is never worth a great amount, but the real cost comes from the destruction of the unit and the time it takes to replace it.
- Approximately 90 percent of all copper theft takes place during nights or weekends. Hiring staff or security personnel to monitor your facility during these periods can greatly reduce the chances of a serious loss.

The Energy Education Council is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to promoting electrical safety and energy efficiency. Established in 1952, the Council serves as a forum for diverse utility and energy organizations to collaborate on the mutually vital issues of efficiency and safety. Learn more at:

EnergyEdCouncil.org

SafeElectricity.org

EfficiencyResource.org