

PIMA COUNTY

METAL WATCH

THE PROBLEM

As the price of copper has tripled and other metals have doubled, metal theft is an increasingly pervasive and serious problem. While direct victims of metal theft include utilities and power plants, communications providers, radio stations, construction sites, and many businesses, it is a crime that significantly impacts everyone.

ECONOMIC IMPACT:

One hundred dollars worth of stolen scrap metal can cost many thousands of dollars to replace and repair. These costs are ultimately passed on to customers. It is estimated that metal theft results in a total monetary loss of \$1 billion nationally, \$120 million statewide and according to the Tucson Police Department, there was \$2,146,000 in reported crimes from January 2012 to June 2012. It is impossible to know how much metal theft goes unreported due to concerns about increases in insurance premiums.

PUBLIC SAFETY IMPACT:

- Power interruption due to copper theft has caused hospitals, clinics and 911 dispatch operations to be interrupted
- Copper theft of power lines creates a public safety risk for surrounding areas and anyone within immediate proximity
- Theft of brass metal fittings has led to the inability for firefighters to access water to put out fires within multi-story buildings
- Weakened public infrastructure has led to a lack of community confidence and fear for public safety as park and street lighting has been impacted

PROSECUTION:

If you are a victim of metal theft, please report it to law enforcement immediately. Other steps you can take include:

- Use identifying marking technology so your property can be proven to be yours
- Note the description and license numbers of any suspicious vehicles
- Install security cameras with recording capability
- Consider using forensic security-marking products to mark metal goods to link thieves to the crime scene
- Note the description and license numbers of any suspicious vehicles
- Report anyone working after dark on street or ball field lighting and public parks

LEGISLATION:

A goal of the Metal Theft Task Force is to encourage the state legislature to allocate the appropriate funding necessary to assist jurisdictions at the State and local level to conduct sting operations to catch metal theft operations.

Understanding the threat posed to our community by this trend, southern Arizona law enforcement, business and community leaders have united to form the Metal Theft Task Force and its citizen's group, Metal Watch.

COMBAT THE PROBLEM

In order to combat the metal theft problem, the community must be united and work together.

PREVENTION:

There are a number of actions you can take to increase the security around your property including:

- Get to know your neighbors and local businesses; lookout for each other
- Post "No Trespassing" placards around the property or signs indicating the presence of a surveillance or security system to deter thieves.
- Remove access to buildings and roofs. Eliminate items that allow for easy entry to buildings, such as trees, ladders, scaffolding, dumpsters and accumulated materials such as pallets
- Remove vegetation that allows thieves to hide from view on your property
- Secure your building access with deadbolts, and door and window locks.
- Increase exterior lighting dusk till dawn security lighting
- Protect fixtures (such as AC units) with locked metal cages
- Use building and perimeter alarms
- Secure all equipment and valuable supplies in a building or a securely fenced yard
- Create a master list of all of your property
- Have adequate theft and property damage insurance
- Review the security of perimeter fencing and gates on a regular basis
- Consider planting cactus around the perimeter fence
- Where possible keep doors and gates locked
- Upgrade locks on doors and gates
- Remove any means of transporting metal away, such as hand trucks and wheelbarrows
- Consider applying anti-climb paint to drainpipes and roof guttering
- Signs that warn of forensic marking are a good deterrent and should be prominently displayed
- Replace stolen copper back flow preventers with a plastic back flow preventer

COMMONLY TARGETED ITEMS:

- Copper in wiring and air conditioning units
- Plumbing fixtures, including backflow valves
- Wiring in ball field lights and streetlights
- Vacant houses and commercial properties

PLEASE SUPPORT your local and state officials in this effort.

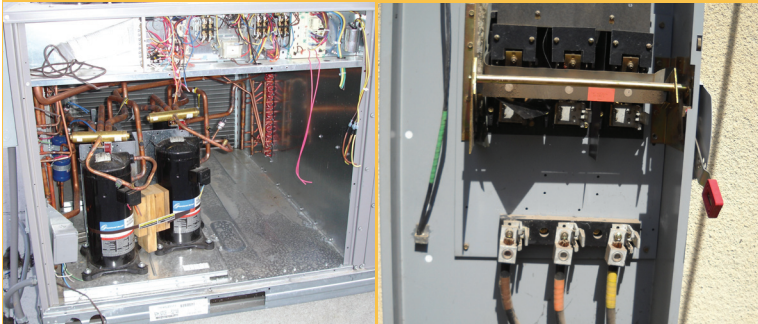
DID YOU KNOW?

- 216 metal thefts were reported in Tucson between January and May 2012
- Thefts occurred at 14 Tucson parks and recreation facilities
- Tucson Water backflow assemblies and water box covers are targets
- Over 3,000 AC units were stolen in Phoenix in 2011
- Metal theft damages total over \$30 million in 2012 in Phoenix

METAL RECYCLERS:

Southern Arizona has a significant number of licensed scrap metal facilities dedicated to providing excellent recycling services. This is beneficial for the environment and without them, our landfills would be overflowing with tons of old cars and appliances. The industry is acutely aware of the metal theft issues, and the operators often become victims themselves. The scrap metal industry is working with law enforcement agencies in a number of ways, including:

- Installing cameras that record the vehicle, seller and items being sold
- Identifying and fingerprinting sellers, and recording their information
- Developing a working relationship with law enforcement
- Advocating for the strengthening of sentencing laws



PLEASE GET INVOLVED!

We need your help to prevent the enormous damage, risks to the community and costs caused by these crimes.

Please contact your State Legislator and demand action now!

FOUNDERS AND PREMIUM PROGRAM SPONSORS



REPORT IMMEDIATELY

Call 911 immediately if you see suspicious activity around any of these facilities, particularly at night. Never approach suspects yourself.

Legitimate maintenance or repair personnel are usually in vehicles marked with jurisdictional signage and government plates.



REMEMBER

PAY ATTENTION, HELP PREVENT, HELP PROSECUTE, SUPPORT 88-CRIME

88-CRIME COMMUNITY REWARD PROGRAM

88-CRIME If you are aware of criminal activity and wish to remain anonymous, call 88-CRIME. If you wish to support the 88-CRIME program, please make a donation.

CONTACT

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IMPORTANT LINKS

<http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/police>
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endcoppertheft.com
goeyesite.com
copperwatcher.com
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<http://mpaaz.org/advocacy/copper-theft-task-force>