

Welcome to this edition of BOLO News. BOLO News is a monthly newsletter for law enforcement to share success stories and other information that may be pertinent in the ongoing fight against metals theft.

Partnering with Reputable Recyclers Offers Best Solution to Combating Metals Theft

Metals theft is not a crime that can be legislated out of existence. Piling compliance requirements on reputable recyclers (which constitutes the vast majority) only serves to relocate the crime; at least the selling of stolen metals. It is not uncommon for ISRI to hear the phrase, *if you didn't buy it, they wouldn't steal it*. But, there will always be a fence or rogue dealer who will buy stolen metals. Just because a thief may not be able to sell locally does not mean s/he cannot steal locally. Rather than drive out or severely handicap honest recyclers, why not join forces?

Recyclers understand that compliance checks are a requirement of doing business. Should deficiencies be spotted by law enforcement, business owners will in most cases make immediate corrections. However, compliance checks should be across the board, not just on those recyclers registered as required by law. Rogue recyclers exist and should face the same scrutiny as honest business owners. Thieves know which businesses require proper identification and record all details of a transaction and they know which businesses do not.

There is no excuse for a recycler to knowingly accept stolen material with the intention of profiting from it. When the honest recycler turns away stolen goods, very likely they will have captured the identifiers of the seller and vehicle information. In the unlikely circumstance when the recycler buys items later found to have been stolen, they will have complete records and details of the transaction. The rogue recycler will not. In both cases, the records are available to law enforcement.

Another commonly heard phrase is, *they (recycler) had to know it was stolen*. This may be true if the material is a manhole cover with the name of the municipality stamped on it or a bronze grave marker, received from an individual not authorized to sell the material. However, with other nondescript items it is not always easy to tell. Copper wire is copper wire and copper pipe is copper pipe, unless marked with identifiers. A 1,000 foot spool of thin copper wire weighing more than 100 lbs may have been stolen, but it is not often the thief will take the entire spool to a recycler in the trunk of his car. More than likely, the spool is cut into much shorter segments and taken to multiple recyclers. An individual bringing similar wire or pipe to a recycler might possibly be a thief, or might be a homeowner or contractor recouping some money from the leftovers of a remodeling job.

Working with reputable dealers can be an effective way to fight



Reader Poll

Does your municipality have compliance requirements in addition to those imposed by the state?

VOTE

Last month we asked readers **Have you ever investigated the theft of cell tower or electrical substation back-up batteries?**

Here are the results:

Yes	57%
No	43%

In the News

[Urn Thefts Made Felony to Deter Crime Without 'Closure'](#)
Indiana Gazette, July 16, 2016

metals theft. ISRI members and other honest recyclers are doing their part. Even in states where electronic recording or photos are not required, many reputable recyclers will do so if for no other reason than their own protection and in their efforts to be part of the solution and work with law enforcement in curbing metals theft.

ScrapTheftAlert.com

Those of you in law enforcement reading this column are doing so because you are registered with ScrapTheftAlert.com, a proven tool provided by ISRI members at no cost to you or your departments to help in the fight against materials theft. Help recyclers help you by spreading the word and encouraging your colleagues to use the system. Have a question or comment about the system? Please contact [Brady Mills](#), director of law enforcement outreach.

A Free Training Video on Metals Theft

Working with the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the National Sheriffs Association, ISRI produced a video aimed to help local law enforcement combat metals theft. The six-minute video entitled [Fighting Metals Theft: Perspectives from Law Enforcement and Industry](#) focuses on the importance of recognizing the dangers associated with metals theft and how local law enforcement agencies can use existing resources to combat the crime. We encourage you to use this video as a training tool with your staff in an effort to help them better understand the crime and its impact on your community.

[IID: Copper Theft Back On the Rise In Coachella Valley](#)
The Desert Review, July 15, 2016

[Rural Police Unit Harvests Good Will](#)
Your Observer, July 6, 2016

Questions?



Contact ISRI
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