



## NaVCIS CARGO CRIME ANNUAL UPDATE 2020

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### INTRODUCTION

The aim of this report is to analyse the cargo crime data in relation to all cargo crime notifications received by NaVCIS, during the year of 2020, in order to provide an overview and assessment of the scale and nature of thefts nationally.

NaVCIS manage a UK National Cargo database and receive cargo crime notifications from a number of sources namely Police, Industry, Hauliers, Insurers, Cargo Surveyors, Trade Organisations, the Road Haulage Association, and the British International Freight Association. Reported cargo crime data is received regularly from 40 UK police forces.

### PARTNERS

The work undertaken by NaVCIS Freight Crime would not be possible without the assistance & funding from our financial partners.



For more information, please contact us at [freight@navcis.pnn.police.uk](mailto:freight@navcis.pnn.police.uk)

### OBJECTIVES

This analysis and overview will serve to inform risk and opportunity to help prevent cargo crime by considering the following:

1. Where are the offences occurring?
2. What commodities are being stolen?
3. How are they gaining access to the goods?
4. When are the offences taking place?
5. What are the highest offence types?
6. Prevention opportunities/ recommendations



## OVERVIEW

During 2020, NaVCIS have received 4468 notifications of HGV, Freight and Cargo crimes.

This is a 5% increase in the number of notifications received compared with 2019. However, improvements in the communication and recording of the data may contribute to this increase.

**4468**  
notifications

The highest number of notifications received during 2020 was in February (510), whilst the cost price value was highest during March (£15,452,168.00). The combined cost price value of all cargo crimes during 2020 is £95,704,265.39, but retail values would be at least four times greater.



Figure 1 – Cargo Crime notifications and value



During 2020, the average number of daily theft incidents was 12.2 per day.

*During 2020, NaVCIS assisted and supported 259 arrests*



## Offence Locations

Figure two shows the top force areas (200 or more offences), during 2020. Essex is the top force area, accounting for 7.5% of all cargo crimes during 2020, followed by Thames Valley (7.3%) and Kent Police (6.3%).



Figure 2 – Top force areas

Within Essex force area, the cost price value of goods stolen was £7,323,107.92, accounting for 8% of the total cost price value of goods stolen during 2020. April saw the highest number of offences (56) in this force area, followed by December (54) and September (43).

However, during April, 22 offences were reported on the same night of 20/04/2020 at Thurrock Services, M25. These were all vehicle interference offences, where the offenders unknown have approached an attended HGV and gained entry to the semi-trailer by cutting curtains and no products were stolen.

A further 16 vehicle interference offences were reported on the same night of 16/04/2020 at Thurrock Services, M25, using the same method of entry. A total of 76 offences occurred at Thurrock Services during 2020. Another repeatedly targeted location in the Essex force area was Birchanger Green Services, M11 (43 offences). These two top locations accounted for 36% of all cargo crime offences within the Essex force area during 2020.

*During 2020, NaVCIS Freight assisted and supported 50 HGV  
Crime operations*



## TOP 2 FORCE AREAS – OVERVIEW

### (1) ESSEX

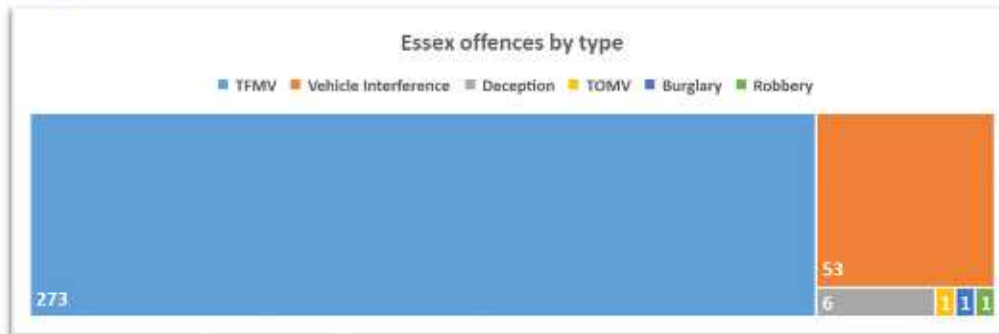
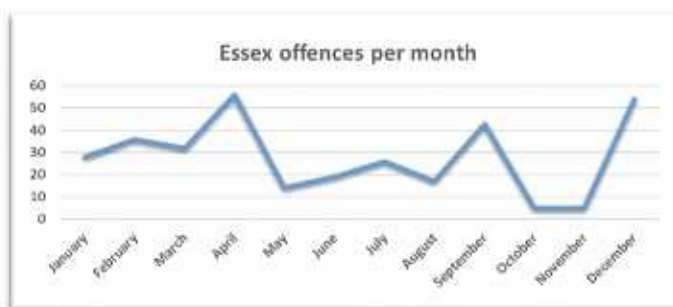


Figure 3 – Essex offences by type



Top 3 Repeat Locations by Postcode	Number of offences
RM16 3BG	78
CM23 5QZ	54
RM19 1TS	12

Figure 4 – Essex offences by month

### (2) THAMES VALLEY

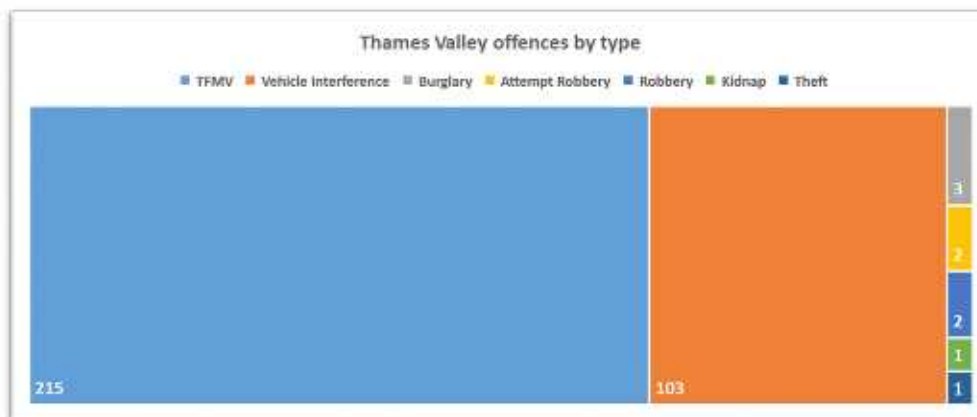
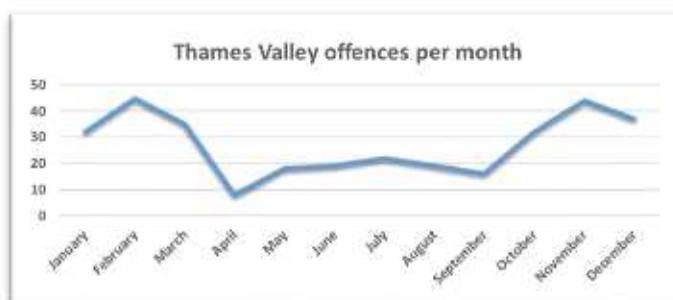


Figure 5 – Thames Valley offences by type



Top 3 Repeat Locations by Postcode	Number of offences
OX27 7RD	34
MK16 8DS	30
HP9 2SE	23

Figure 6 – Thames Valley offences by month



In terms of Motorway Service Areas (MSA's) across all force areas, Thurrock Services is the most vulnerable MSA location during 2020, accounting for 8% of all offences at MSA locations, followed by Clacket Lane Services, M25 (7%) and Toddington Services, M1 (4%).

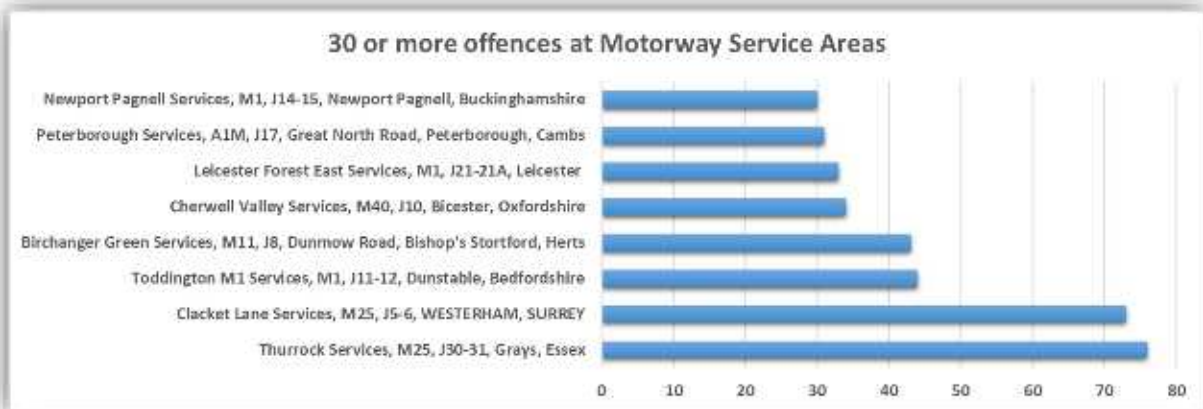


Figure 7 – 30 or more offences at MSA's

**Fuel was the most frequently stolen commodity at MSA's (20%)**

The most frequently stolen commodity at Thurrock Services during 2020 (excluding unknown) was fuel (7%), followed by clothing and shoes (5%). Fuel was also the most frequently stolen commodity (excluding unknown) across offences at all MSA's during 2020 (20%), followed by Food & Drinks (13%).

The combined cost price value of goods stolen at MSA's during 2020 is £16,307,402.90. The highest value of goods stolen was at Warwick Services, M40 (£1,748,000.00), which was mainly attributed to theft of cosmetics on 26/11/20.

*During February 2020, NaVCIS were contacted in relation to 700 cartons of cargo recovered following arrests. NaVCIS conducted research using their National Freight Crime Database to highlight stolen cargo from HGV at Leicester Forest East Services, M1. The goods valued at £185,000.00 were returned to a UK national retailer.*



Figure eight shows the location types across all offences. The most frequent location type during 2020 is Independent Road Parking (IRP), accounting for 50% of all offences, followed by Motorway Service Areas (MSA) (22%).

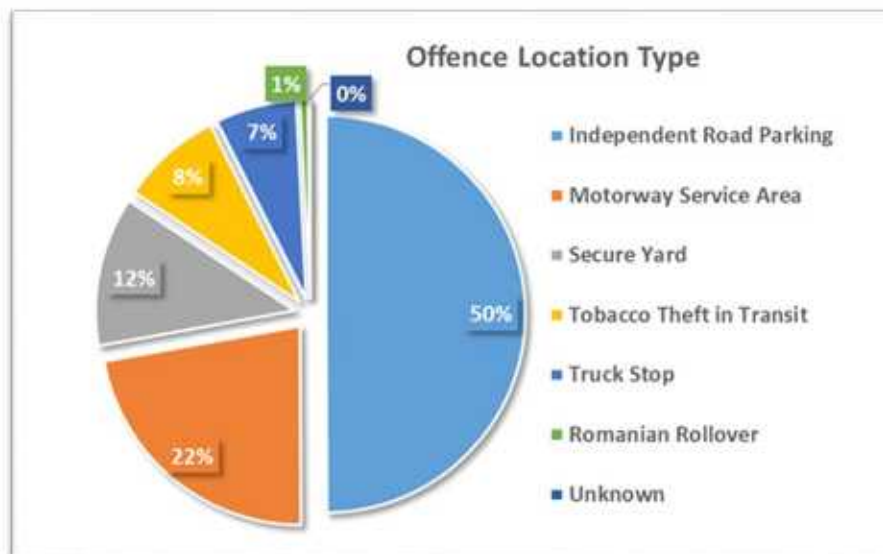


Figure 8 – Offence Location Type

NaVCIS received 2231 notifications of cargo crimes at Independent Road Parking locations during 2020. The top force areas for IRP offences are South Yorkshire (11%), followed by Kent (10%) and Bedfordshire (8%). The most frequently stolen commodity at IRP locations is fuel (35%), with a combined cost price value of £1,339,400.00.

**2231  
notifications of  
cargo crimes at  
IRP's**

***In order to minimise risk of becoming a victim at MSA's and IRP locations, NaVCIS subject matter experts recommend:***

- \*Secure Your Vehicles with up to date load area access locking systems.
- \*Consider using Tamper Proof Seals to indicate if the load has been compromised.
- \*Consider your company security policy and responsibilities.
- \*Keep details of your Whereabouts, Cargo & Location private.
- \*Plan Ahead to ensure you have sufficient driving hours to reach intended location.

***During 2020, NaVCIS handled 500+ Police enquiries***



## Commodities Stolen

During 2020, the most frequently stolen commodity (excluding unknown) is fuel, accounting for 24% of stolen commodities overall, followed by Tobacco (7%) and Miscellaneous (5%).

### Fuel

- **1060** offences
- Top force areas - Bedfordshire (168) & Kent (164)
- Top location type - IRP (790) & Secure Yard (155)
- Total cost price value - **£2,074,000.00**

### Tobacco

- **328** offences
- Top force areas - Metropolitan (169) & Hertfordshire (28)
- Top location type - Tobacco theft in transit (299) & IRP (15)
- Total cost price value - **£7,174,297.36**

### Miscellaneous

- **210** offences
- Top force areas - Essex (27) & Leicestershire (23)
- Top location type - IRP (102) & MSA (44)
- Total cost price value - **£6,816,788.27**

*The highest number of fuel thefts occurred during February (16%), with the majority of these occurring at IRP locations (81%).*

The warmer months saw a drop in fuel theft offences, but lower numbers were also recorded during December 2020.

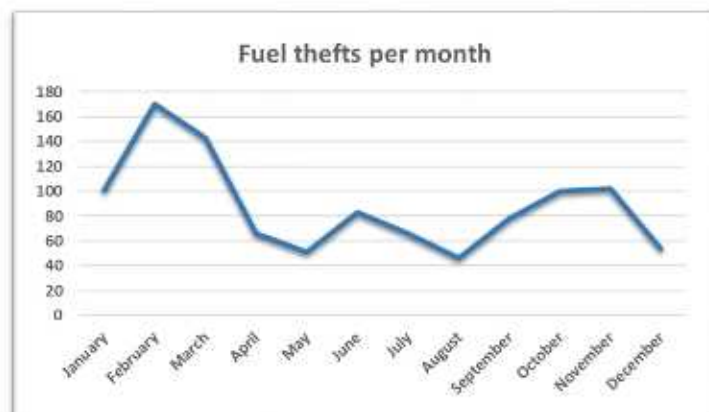


Figure 9 – Fuel Thefts by month

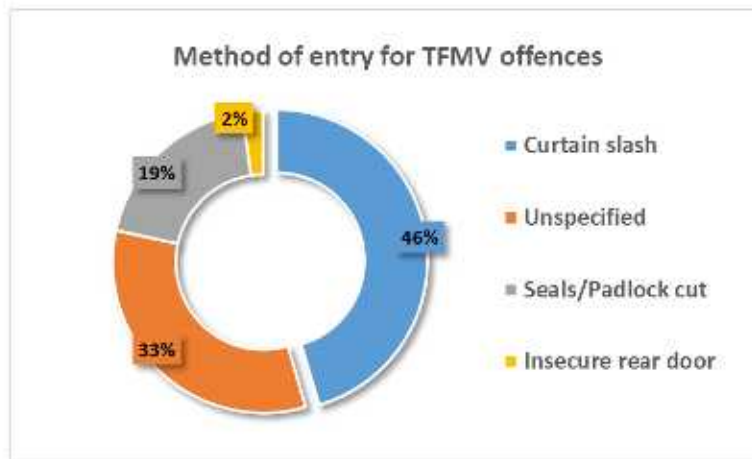
***In order to minimise risk of becoming a victim of fuel thefts, NaVCIS subject matter experts recommend:***

- \*Consider use of Anti-Fuel Siphoning Devices.
- \*Consider use of Fuel Tank Alarms.
- \*Consider a Fuel Management System to detect any skimming of fuel or fuel thefts.
- \*Defensive Parking – park in a way that blocks or shields access to Fuel Tank.
- \*Defensive Parking – park in a way to ensure that Fuel Tank is visible to passing traffic or members of the public to expose any Fuel thieves.



## Gaining access to the goods

Figure ten shows the method of entry to trailer for all Theft From Motor Vehicle (TFMV) offences during 2020. The most frequently reported method of entry to trailer (excluding 'not applicable'), was curtain slash, accounting for 46% of all TFMV offences.



*The top location for the 'curtain slash' offences was Independent Road Parking (54%), followed by MSA's (35%).*

*For all 'curtain slash' offences, 'miscellaneous' was the top commodity group stolen (excluding unknown) (11%), followed by 'Food & Drinks' (9%).*

Figure 10 – MOE for TFMV offences

There were seven repeat postcode locations for 'curtain slash' offences, which were all MSA's, with Birchanger Green Services being the most vulnerable. For these seven repeat locations, the highest frequency of offences occurred in August (14%), followed by December (13%). This was different for 'curtain slash' offences overall, with January having the highest number of 'curtain slash' offences (14%), followed by February (9%).

***In order to minimise risk of becoming a victim of 'curtain slash' offences, NaVCIS subject matter experts recommend:***

- \*Consider use of a hard side vehicle when transporting vulnerable loads.
- \*Consider Alarm systems to indicate unauthorised Trailer access.
- \*Consider Re-enforced Trailer Curtain systems.
- \*Consider use of TIR seals and cables.

*During 2020, NaVCIS handled 100+ Insurers enquiries*



## Time of offences

Using 'earliest date' of offence, the highest number of offences occurred on a Wednesday (19.9%), followed by Thursday (19.7%) and Tuesday (18.3%). However, 58% of offences were recorded across a number of days (amount of days between earliest and latest date of offence). The number of days ranged from one to 215 days.

However, due to the uncertainty of the exact time of the offence, in many incidents, the time of day can only really be analysed for those offences occurring on a specific date.



*Of those offences, which had the same earliest and latest date, the majority of offences occurred during the early hours (47%), followed by daytime (32%) and evening (21%).*

However, NaVCIS subject matter experts are clear that cargo at rest is cargo at risk. Therefore, to minimise the risk, NaVCIS subject matter experts advise that you follow the recommendations previously described for parking at MSA and IRP locations.



Cargo at rest  
is  
Cargo at risk

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*During 2020, NaVCIS handled 150+ Cargo Surveyor enquiries*

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## Offence Type

During 2020, over half of offences were Theft From Motor Vehicle (TFMV), accounting for 70% of all Cargo crime notifications received. As would be expected, the combined cost price value of the TFMV offences was also the highest (£54,094,430.10).

**70% were  
TFMV  
offences**

Independent Road Parking (IRP) was the most frequent location for TFMV offences (58%), followed by Motorway Service Areas (MSA) (18%).

**£54,094,430.10  
Combined  
cost price  
value (TFMV)**

During 2020, there were 29 deception offences, of which 21% (6 offences) occurred within Essex force area and 14% (4 offences) within West Yorkshire force area. The combined cost price value of the deception offences was also the highest for the Essex force area (£719,200.00). However, the stolen value of one of these offences was £500,000.00, which was the theft of metal products in June 2020.

The most frequently stolen commodity from all deception offences is 'food and drinks' (28%), followed by 'miscellaneous' (17%) and 'household goods' (10%).

Bogus identification/ documentation are largely used to deceive the driver or staff and steal the goods.

***In order to minimise risk of becoming a victim of Cargo Diversion Fraud or Deception Theft, NaVCIS subject matter experts recommend:***

- \*Have Clear Procedures for deliveries and collections, especially if the delivery location changes at short notice.
- \*Use thorough background checks on companies collecting goods, especially if using unfamiliar businesses / carriers or using Haulage Exchanges.
- \*Consider CCTV in the area where the delivery is being collected from, so that the collecting driver can be identified (if high value load consider obtaining photograph of driver).
- \*Obtain written confirmation and complete due diligence if delivery location changes.
- \*Never transfer load into another vehicle away from the proposed / intended delivery location.
- \*If diverted to another delivery location, check with the Transport Operations manager to check that premises is linked or associated to the intended business.

***During 2020, NaVCIS handled 300+ Road Haulage sector enquiries***



## Prevention opportunities/ Recommendations

Thefts from HGV's are a consequence of a more sophisticated network of Organised Crime Groups and Organised teams of thieves, who see cargo theft as low risk and high reward.

Additionally, lack of provision of HGV parking nationally, particularly the lack of 'secure' Truck Parking, provides increased opportunities for thieves to target vulnerable vehicles.

Improved awareness of cargo crime, along with the increased notifications received by NaVCIS for the freight crime database however, improves the understanding of cargo crime, to highlight prevention opportunities.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Consider increased security at vulnerable MSA's and Cargo theft prevention solutions. For example adequate security fencing makes offender egress difficult and is unattractive to Organised Teams of thieves.

Consider any alternatives to using soft-sided trailers to transport commodities or look at ways to improve the security of the soft-sided trailer. For example, use slash resistant tarpaulins and padlocks.

Plan journeys to include stops for breaks at secure parking places and check tarpaulins at each stop.

When parked, keep trucks locked and in a well-lit, secure facility.

Drivers should stay alert, particularly in high risk areas when parked.

Use Safe or Secure Parking whenever possible.

*To find out how to join our sponsorship team and how we can work together to assist in combating Freight & Cargo crime – please contact: [freight@navcis.pnn.police.uk](mailto:freight@navcis.pnn.police.uk)*