

# BUSINESSSAFE

*BusinessSafe is designed to aid businesses in protecting the safety and well-being of Florida's residents and visitors from threats. BusinessSafe provides private sector partners with open source information, analysis and resources to help protect their businesses and communities.*

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## BusinessSafe Threat Topic – Copper Theft

Copper theft has a direct impact to US critical infrastructure and can negatively impact public safety. Copper thieves target electric substations, cellular towers, railroads, water wells, construction sites, and vacant homes for lucrative profit. These thefts can potentially disrupt the flow of electricity, telecommunications, water supply, and information to emergency services and first responders. Copper thieves can work either independently or with an organized group to target copper-rich areas, then sell the contraband in their fencing activities. Copper wire scrap can sell for \$2.50 per pound if bare, or 84 cents per pound if the wire is insulated. Many times, thieves steal hundreds of feet of wire, which causes hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage. Circumstances such as economic crises will likely lead to an increase in copper theft due to it being a lucrative financial resource for criminals. For reference, the U.S. Department of Energy estimates that copper theft costs \$22 million in repairs each year.

### Criminal Actors

Copper thieves can work alone or in an organized group to gain the material they seek. Although many thieves physically work alone, many operate in association with a larger group of criminals to better coordinate specific attacks.

In a [unique circumstance](#), a copper producer was a target of a ransomware cyber-attack. Such attacks could force a delay in many copper products, affecting different infrastructure sectors.

### How to Protect Your Business or Residence

It is vital to take countermeasures to protect yourself and your business against copper theft. These countermeasures include, but are not limited to:

- Installation of physical security (personnel),
- Installation of technological security (security camera, motion sensor, etc.)-,
- Collaboration and partnerships with law enforcement and industry sectors, and,
- Keeping record of copper materials used in your business or residence.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has a [website](#) with additional information on copper theft and mitigation strategies for businesses and individuals.



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### How to Report a Copper Theft

- Report copper theft to your local law enforcement agency.
- “If You See Something, Say Something” – Report suspicious activity to your local law enforcement agency, on the FDLE website using Florida’s [See Something, Say Something Tool Kit](#) or by calling 1-855-FLA-SAFE.

### Resources

- The [Department of Energy](#) has an excellent assessment of copper wire thefts from electric utilities.



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