

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.

Florida Fusion Center 22-109

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BusinessSafe Threat Topic: Cargo Theft

Cargo, also known as freight, refers to goods or produce being carried from one point to another by air, land, or water. This movement of goods is essential to the successful functioning of the supply chain. In 2020, the Department of Transportation recorded nearly 4.5 million tons of cargo moving within the United States with approximately 55% of that cargo transported by truck, 33% by rail, 12% by water and less than 1% by air. Cargo theft may lead to a ripple effect through the distribution supply chain in addition to causing financial harm. The majority of cargo theft is attributed to organized criminal syndicates with a smaller percentage being pilferage (e.g. individual(s) stealing merchandise from an open container). The year 2021 saw 1,285 theft incidents reported nationally with electronics and household goods at the top of the list for targeted commodities. Florida ranks third for reported incidents with California and Texas, the top domestic trading partners for Florida, topping the list. The total loss value was nearly \$58 billion with the average loss per cargo theft being approximately \$172,000.

Common Method of Attack

Opportunistic crime typically consists of criminal actors breaching a trailer and grabbing items from inside, similar to smash and grab thefts. These attacks have little to no organization and are often chaotic. Additionally, little is done to hide the crime from the public eye. However, approximately 80% of cargo thefts are committed by groups that are considerably methodical and organized. Attacks typically involve stealing the entire truck and trailer or just the trailer itself with the goods onboard. Trucks are typically targeted once they are parked somewhere, such as a truck or rest stop.

Potential Signs & Indicators

- An automobile that has followed the truck from the pickup location to an isolated area or a temporary but possibly prolonged stop (e.g. truck stops, rest stops, repair shops).



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- A common ploy of robbers is to lightly hit the back of the trailer, forcing the driver to stop the truck and exit the vehicle.
- Unfamiliar vehicles which only appear for a short moment before leaving the area, yet are seen on multiple occasions.
- Unfamiliar persons taking pictures of the facility or of the trucks and trailers.

Mitigation Strategies

- Always be aware of your surroundings, taking note of any vehicles that depart from a location at the same time as you.
- If you experience a “light tap” traffic incident, examine the conditions (i.e. time of day or the amount of traffic on the road) before exiting the vehicle. It may be necessary to call the police before exiting and engaging the other driver.
- Note the make, model, color and plate number of vehicles that seem familiar but don’t have an obvious purpose to be at the location.
- Install security cameras and place prominent signage announcing that the property is being monitored.
- Consider changing routes periodically, which can potentially disrupt a criminal actor’s plan to follow a truck and prevents routes from becoming predictable to those who may be observing you.

Ways Victims Can Report

- CargoNet offers a [website](#) where individuals or companies can report a theft incident.
- The National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) offers a [website](#) to report a theft incident.
- “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. In an emergency, call 911.

Resources

- The NICB offers a [website](#) with tips, ways to report incidents and additional resources.
- Travelers Special Investigation Group offers a [website](#) with information regarding attack tactics and mitigation tips.
- Freightwaves offers several [articles](#) with information, statistics, trends and theft prevention tips.



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