

Problems of Copper Theft

(45 states/provinces responded)

(May, 2013)

State	Experience of Theft	Increasing Concern	Comments on what AASHTO could do	Opinion of DOT	Contact
Total	31	22			
Alabama	N	Y	To act as a clearinghouse of anti-theft BMPs that have been effective in various states	Experienced an increase in theft of other metals (eg : inlet grates) over the last year or so. There have been no reports of any significant theft of copper except fiber optic cables and conduit damage	George H. Conner
Alaska	N	N		Not issue in Alaska	Michael Coffey
Arizona	Y	Y	AASHTO can create a research project - Identify low cost solution that DOT can implement - Test the solution - Recommend preferred mitigation measures	Theft frquencies have recently increased to the point that disturbed maintenance Many approaches to mitigate problem were implemented like burying pull boxes	Jennifer Toth Joe McGurik
Arkansas	Y	Y		Has had a few instances of stolen copper wire on illumination systems	Frank Vozel
California	Y	Y	AASHTO could lead an effort to obtain information on "best practice" available to deter or prevent wire theft and develop guidelines to design systems for long-term installations and develop a tool boxe of options available to prevent wire theft	Huge issue in California, since January, 2013, has sustained \$50 Million worth of wire theft	Tony Taravas Salazar Victor
Colorado	Y	Y	Some group in AASHTO could develop a better standard or a retrofit to prevent the theft	Several incidents of copper wire theft has happened This issue goes way back to 2004 when world metal commodities spiked due to China	Timothy Harris Charles E. Meyer
Connecticut	N	N		Not currently experiencing any problems	Lewis S. Cannon
Delaware	N	N		Not aware of this type of issue	Natalie Barnhart
District of Columbia					
Florida	Y	Y	Share what other states are doing to curb this type of theft, securing system, increased law enforcement involvement and proposed legislative remedies	Have also significant issues with theft of batteries and surveying equipment, so the contracting industry has sponsored legislative changes at recycling facilities Recently two guys were arrested for copper wire theft, which was reported by the newspaper(<i>Miami Herald, Apr. 26, 2013</i>), they were spotted by CCTV	David A. Sadler (News article)

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Georgia					
Hawaii	Y	Y	Not sure how AASHTO can help aside from facilitating the sharing of best practices	It's a significant problem in Hawaii. Tougher laws, applicable to both thieves and recycling centers, along with increased enforcement of recycling centers seems to have helped.	Blaine K. Kawamura
Idaho	N	N		Not experienced any problems	Frances J. Hood Tom E. Cole
Illinois	N	N		Nothing in Illinois	Matthew R. Hughes
Indiana	Y	N	The only thing would be a best practice guide	Experienced this problem occasionally, but it's not currently a common issue	Mark A. Miller Gregory G. Pankow
Iowa					
Kansas	Y	Y	Sharing best management practices and what other states have done	Happened at the ITS project and wiring serving lighting Took some steps to make it difficult to access boxes and pull the wires from the conduit	Susan K. Darling Jerome T. Younger Sandra Tommer
Kentucky	Y	N		Police reports have not led to arrest or recovery of the material, DOT couldn't determine a solution	Nancy B. Albright
Louisiana	Y	N		Only minor issues at this time, and this seems to be isolated occurrences	Allen Alden
Maine	Y	Y	Cannot think of how AASHTO could help this situation, these are simply people stealing	It has certainly increased in recent years, but don't have any data to show	Brian T. Burne
Maryland	Y	N		Has happened before with copper, aluminum, etc. Working with local law enforcement and state police to watch and Police has good system of working with scrap metal dealers	Steven Marciszewski Douglas H. Simmons
Massachusetts	N	N		Not aware of any problems	Michael A McGrath Thomas F. Broderick
Michigan	Y	Y	Not sure what AASHTO could do, but possibly a toolbox of deterrent measures and some public information support such as fact sheet, talking points, etc. could be helpful	It's huge problem in MDOT Currently developing a 'Copper theft Matrix' that includes options/ideas such as locking hand holes and various re-designs to deter theft The legislature and governor are also looking to address the more general scrap metal theft issue in the near future	Brenda O'Brien Mark Geib

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Minnesota	Y	Y	Nationwide best practices on how to minimize copper theft issues Compiling where thieves have been striking and how..	The Copper theft, while not significant, does occur In the past three years, approximately 5-10 instances occurred on the maintenance, construction sites and tower facilities	Bernard J. Arseneau Steven M. Lund
Mississippi	Y	Y	AASHTO would be a good resource to publicize this problem	If other states have experienced the theft of steel as well (steel piling, guardrail)	Mark McConnell
Missouri	Y	Y	AASHTO could facilitate the sharing of best practices which have been implemented nationally for theft reduction	Have experienced significant increase over the past 3 years and made adjustments to the pull box connections to limit the access to copper wire	David D. Ahlvers
Montana	Y	N		One incidence of a contractor's hot plant being stripped of all wiring, other than that not aware of any other issues within the state	Dwane Kailey
Nebraska	Y	N		A few contractors have reported copper theft, but overall nothing too unusual	Moe Jamshidi Michael R. Mattison
Nevada	Y	Y	AASHTO could share techniques for securing and develop strategies that improve security while maintaining ease of maintenance	Now considering this in design	John M. Terry Anita Bush
New Hampshire					
New Jersey					
New Mexico	Y	N		Some cases of copper theft and aluminum bridge railing. It occurs sporadically and has not developed into state wide concern as yet	Dennis Oritz Armando Armendraiz
New York	N	N		Has not encountered any significant issues with this yet	James Tynan
North Carolina					
North Dakota	N	N	AASHTO could make people aware of the types of thefts that are occurring	Not yet on transportation facilities, but there have been reported thefts from electrical companies	Cal J. Gendreau
Ohio	Y	N	Alert to state DOT	Ohio has some minor, sporadic theft issues, but at this time, it's not a concern There has been a couple of instances from highway lighting	Thomas Lyden Gary E. Angles
Oklahoma	Y	N	Not sure what AASHTO could do other than the information sharing	It's the Occasional isolated problems	George T. Raymond

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Oregon	Y	N	Not sure what AASHTO can do to help with this	Oregon is not having a big issue about copper theft	Bruce Erickson Lucinda M. Moore
Pennsylvania	Y	Y	Public awareness and it should focus on the illegality and that scrap yards have an obligation to report	Not in general(2 copper thefts occurred), but it's concern. Also experiencing other metal thefts - inlet grates, sign posts, etc. from the roadway, as well as construction sites (plastic pipe, equipment, etc.)	Rebecca Burns
Puerto Rico					
Rhode Island	N	Y	Not sure what if anything AASHTO could do at this time to prevent this	No recent issues with copper, but recently have seen an increase in thefts of cast iron frames, grates and covers, and aluminum over the past few years	Frank Corrao Joseph D. Baker
South Carolina	N	N		Have not any issues with copper, but have drop inlet grates, guardrail ends and aluminum signs stolen	Jim Feda
South Dakota	N	N		Not aware of any incidents	Scott Rabern
Tennessee	Y	Y		It is currently more of an issue with vertical construction	Greg Duncan
Texas	Y	Y	AASHTO could provide awareness on regarding the magnitude of the issue, the consequences of these thefts and sharing successes states have seen in deterring	Have experiences of copper thefts in illumination system installations and traffic signals	John A. Barton
Utah	Y	Y	AASHTO could probably provide a summary of theft prevention techniques with ratings on each for overall effectiveness Also report on new technologies in regard to lighting network monitoring systems Facilitate the sharing of ideas among the states as to how they combat the problem and deter such incidents	This issue has been a regular and continuing concern Currently over 35,000 feet wire were stolen in a single incident from the freeway median, it was reported by the news (Salt Lake City's Deseret News) And becoming more bold, not only hidden areas, but any location including bridge-mounted conduit, centerline high mast circuits and major interchanges It's a significant issue in UTAH and now working with local and state law enforcement as well as scrap yards	Neeley Lloyd Kevin Griffin Ahmad Jaber (News article)
Vermont	N	N		Not having problems with this	Wayne Gammell
Virginia					

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Washington	Y	Y	<p>Serve an information clearing house on topic such as ;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recent state legislation related to metal property theft along with best practices in prevention - Examples of WA State would be helpful <p>Please share information of WA Sate with members of the Subcommittee on Construction and Maintenance and Standing Committee on Highway</p>	<p>WSDOTs were ongoing efforts during 2008 and 2009 after which thefts seemed to stop until around June 2011.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div> <p>Over the past 2 years thefts are on the rise. Have been exploring motion detection cameras and third party monitoring services in effort to "video verify theft in progress" with immediate communication to law enforcement.</p> <p>\$200k in wire theft over the past year and \$500k in metal property theft from 2006 to 2008</p>	<p>Ted Bailey</p> <p>(WA State Legislation in Progress related to Metal Property Theft)</p>
West Virginia	Y	Y	Sharing any innovative ideas that states are implementing to deter theft	It seems to be relatively consistent	Cindy Cramer
Wisconsin	N	N	Baseline what support services are already in place (e.g., talk to law enforcement groups)	Have not seen any known instances of copper theft, however there have been some isolated incidents of aluminum or steel theft	Anne L. Reshadi
Wyoming	Y	N		Copper theft has not been a big problem in Wyoming, but have a problem with solar panels and batteries	Delbert McOmie Andy Long
British Columbia	Y	Y		<p>Mostly on the electrical infrastructure and increased over the past few years</p> <p>Have adopted measures to mitigate the problem, i.e., installing tamper-proof hardware, burying junction boxes, and/or moving to aluminum wiring. These counter-measures appear to be helping</p>	Nicole Pharand-Fraser