

Risk Control Guide RCG453

# Security of Cargo in Transit

This best practice guidance is aimed at assisting logistics service providers to help reduce the risk of cargo theft while in transit.

This guide makes reference to guidance and best practice published within the United Kingdom but can be applied to non UK locations.

## Introduction

UK Border Agency statistics show that road freight crime costs the UK economy up to £250M every year. With over 4000 notifications of HGV and cargo crime reported every year to the UK law enforcement team National Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service (NaVCIS).

Cargo is most at risk when it is parked/stopped outside of a secure location.


## General measures

Some general management measures that can help to reduce the risk of cargo theft are as follows:

- Where possible, appoint a single person within your company to be responsible for security issues.
- Take care when sharing information relating to load or journey details. These should be on a “need-to-know” basis, to avoid information falling into the wrong hands.
- Protect transport documents (in the office and in the cab).
- Avoid pre-loading vehicles for early morning starts or leaving the vehicle loaded and unattended in the yard out of working hours.
- Consider whether the vehicle and/or trailer offer suitable security for the type of cargo carried.
- If a customer/principal is imposing security requirements, are they realistic and practical to comply with? If not, inform the customer/principal.

## Drivers

It is important that drivers are suitably qualified to move your cargo. They should be made aware of specific requirements for maintaining the security and integrity of stock. Particularly where loads are theft attractive.



Exercise all due care in employing honest, reliable and competent drivers. Ensure drivers are suitably vetted. Where used, approved temping agencies provide suitably qualified and vetted individuals.

Communicate any security requirements specified by a customer to the driver so they are aware of these requirements. Checklists should be used and signed by the transport office and driver.

Drivers should also be suitably trained on load and vehicle theft prevention, to include the points made in this guide. The following site, supported by NaVCIS, may assist:

[Multilingual online training module Driver Safety and Freight Security Course](#)

The following measures will further help drivers to reduce risks:

- Drivers should be made aware of their cargo type, and even observe the loading of their vehicles, particularly where they are not in a secure yard.
- All drivers should have mobile phone communications, with the relevant numbers saved, for use in the event of an incident e.g. the Traffic Office.
- Drivers should check their vehicle daily for any defects. Especially regarding any physical security measures such as locks and alarms.
- Drivers should not pick up any unauthorised third parties such as hitchhikers.
- Routes should be well planned and take into account secure parking/delivery locations.
- It is best to avoid taking the same routes to avoid providing patterns to criminals.
- Avoid discussing routes or parking locations with other drivers or customers. Where unexpected changes are required from the planned routes. Drivers should ensure these are agreed with the transport office.
- It is a good idea to take 'before and after' photographs showing the condition of the trailer, locks etc. before departing on journeys.

## Parking

Parking/rest stop instructions for drivers should include:

- Ensure the cab and trailer are locked and alarmed whenever the driver is not in the vehicle, including when on quick deliveries or breaks.
- Never leave keys in the ignition when the cab is unattended.

- Ensure that while loading/unloading, the cab remains locked and that the trailer and cargo are not left unattended while the trailer doors are open.
- Ensure also that the trailer doors remain locked while driving.
- Secure keys at all times when removed from the vehicle:
  - Never leave vehicle keys unattended.
  - If the keys are left at the operational base, they should be kept in a secured, locked key cabinet in a secure alarmed building.
- Do not leave a vehicle unattended with the keys left hidden for collection by other drivers.
- Do not leave (or visibly display) personal possessions within the cab, and remove key documents from the cab when unattended.
- Drivers' hours should be correctly monitored and adhered to, to help avoid the need to stop/park in areas that may leave the load vulnerable to theft.
- Vehicles/trailers should only be parked at a location with suitable security measures in place for the type of cargo being conveyed.
- To assist with the appropriate selection of parking locations. Consider using a secure truck parking app or use parking locations displaying the Park Mark® label. Or by those certified by Transported Asset Protection Association (TAPA), European Secure Parking Organisation (ESPORG), Government schemes such as Safe & Secure Truck Parking Areas (EU SSTPA) or other secure online parking resources.
- Preference should be for the use of account-based solutions or cashless payment parking areas. This is to avoid drivers needing to carry cash, and also to encourage/enable drivers to park in secure locations.
- Vehicles/trailers should not be left parked/unattended in secluded areas. Particularly at night, even when secured.
- Where practical, park the vehicle where the driver can see it. Always check the vehicle and trailer for signs of tampering when returning to the vehicle.
- Aim to park near to other vehicles. Caution should be exercised however, regarding the "Trojan Horse" type theft. This is where a vehicle parked close alongside is used to transfer goods from the side of one curtain/hard sided trailer to another.
- Where practical, drivers can help protect the load space by parking the rear doors against a wall.
- Avoid identifying parking locations or details of the cargo being transported on social media sites of any kind. This information can be used by thieves to identify potential targets putting the driver, load and equipment / assets at risk.

## Vehicle Security Measures

Vehicles and trailers come with a variety of physical and electronic security measures. These are either as standard or fitted post purchase. Consider the following:

- Any security equipment fitted to vehicles (alarms/immobilisers/ locking devices) should be fitted in accordance with the appropriate sections of BS AU 209. Remember to refer to your insurance advisor to ensure suitable security equipment is fitted.
- Consider the standard security measures fitted to new vehicles before purchasing/leasing them. Ensure the devices / products have also been suitably certified. For example, via the Thatcham Security Certification scheme.
- Ensure retro fit security devices are also similarly certified. And that installation is completed by a Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board (SSAIB) accredited company.
- Anti-theft devices should be checked and serviced regularly (preferably by the installer). This is to ensure correct operation.
- Consider fitting cab tilt locks. This is to prevent tampering with engine electronics and/or vehicle alarms/immobilisers.
- Detached trailers should be immobilised e.g. by king pin or airline lock.
- Consider fitting anti-slash curtains to curtain sided trailers/vehicles. Or where practical, use hard sided trailers as an alternative.
- If conveying high value or theft attractive cargo, additional security measures may be necessary. For example, appropriate vehicle, trailer, and/or cargo tracking devices. Also, covert or overt security escorts or double drivers. Other considerations could include onboard CCTV camera systems, remote locking, or remote immobilisation.

## Round the Corner / Diversion Theft

As well as physically breaking into trailers and removing cargo, thieves have been known to divert and trick drivers to steal stock. This includes staging accidents, impersonating officials/police officers or offering assistance by misleading drivers into thinking that their trailer doors are open.

One tactic is known as a 'round the corner' theft. This is where the thieves will appear to be well informed about your stock and departure/arrival destinations. But will explain that they need to unload the stock away from the intended destination as it is 'too busy' for example.

Criminals have also can impersonate VOSA or Police officers. Hoping that they can pull drivers over in unmarked vehicles and get them to leave the vehicle.

The following measures should help drivers to reduce such risks:

- Always make appropriate checks with the Transport Office if ever approached at or near the point of delivery. If asked to deliver goods to an alternative destination.
- Never be fooled if a call is received enroute asking you to deliver to an alternate location. Again, always make the appropriate checks with the Transport Office.
- Never transfer the load into another vehicle. Instead of taking it to the original destination without first contacting your Transport Office.
- If drivers are stopped by unmarked vehicles, they should park up when safe to do so, remain in their cab, lock the doors and keep the engine running. They should then telephone the Transport office to explain the situation so that they can confirm with a police control room. Note that VOSA/Police officers will never object to waiting for drivers to confirm via a police control room.

## Freight Exchange Sites

Caution should be exercised in the use of such sites. With preference for the use of known and appropriately vetted subcontractors instead.

## Theft From Moving Trucks

Recent years have seen the rise of thieves removing cargo from moving vehicles. Via sophisticated methods and adapted vehicles. Some of these involve perpetrators climbing from the tailing vehicle. To a position where they can unlock/breach the trailer container and will often take great risks, even at speed.

Drivers should consider the following measures:

- Watch for suspicious vehicles or unusual activity.
- Are you being followed? Have you seen the same vehicle before?
- Drivers who suspect anything untoward should make a mental note of any details (location, vehicle make etc.). If CCTV is installed the time should be recorded so footage can be reviewed.

- Cases of theft during transit are difficult to spot as they are conducted in the vehicle's blind spots. Drivers should watch for vehicles that appear to be following their vehicle, especially if these get too close.
- Perpetrators may use grinding equipment to open rear doors, so be wary if sparks are noticed.
- In all cases, call the Police when safe to do so.

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