



NaVCIS Freight Crime “Jump-Up” Thefts 2018-2023





National Freight Crime Analysis

“Jump-Up” Thefts: 2018-2023

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1.1 What is NaVCIS Freight?

- 1.1.1 NaVCIS Freight works in partnership with the UK haulage industry, which is victim to millions of pounds worth of stolen goods each year. The role of the freight team is to target crime that affects the road haulage and freight transport sector in the UK – namely cargo theft.

1.2 Sponsors



NaVCIS FREIGHT MEMBERS

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1.3 Purpose of Report

- 1.3.1 This report offers an analysis of the nature and scale of reported “Jump-Up” thefts from vehicles delivering Tobacco to their retail outlets in the UK Apr 18 – December 2023. Data captured 11th December 2023.
- 1.3.2 Freight Crime is also referred to as Cargo Crime. For the purpose of this report the term Freight Crime will be used throughout.

1.4 Aims

- 1.4.1 To produce a report highlighting the problem of Jump-Up thefts targeting Tobacco deliveries in the UK.
- 1.4.2 To increase the focus of attention on the problem for both Police and Industry.
- 1.4.3 Make recommendations as to the best practice in an attempt to combat the problem.
- 1.4.4 Encourage businesses that do not currently engage with NaVCIS Freight to get involved / work in partnership to combat the problem.



1.5 Data Sources

- 1.4.1 NaVCIS Freight is the only police unit in the UK to attempt to collate and maintain a recording system to capture freight crime offences. This is done on a national scale. To achieve this, NaVCIS request freight and cargo crime notifications from a number of sources, namely UK police forces, hauliers, cargo insurers and cargo surveyors, along with industry trade organisations such as, the Road Haulage Association, and the British International Freight Association.
- 1.4.2 Freight crime does not have a unique Home Office Crime Recording code. Police forces invariably record freight crime as a general theft offence, or theft from motor vehicle. It is important to note that there are inherent difficulties when attempting to harvest *specific* freight crime data.
- 1.4.3 Every effort is made by NaVCIS to accurately summarise, and report on, the impact of freight crime in the UK, however the data collated by NaVCIS is by no means the 'complete picture' and should not be considered as such.

1.6 Contact Information

- 1.6.1 If you have any questions about the content of this report or about the work carried out by NaVCIS Freight, please email: freight@navcis.police.uk

2. Key Findings

- 2.1 Since the demise of Palmer & Huntley (P&H) in 2017, who were the largest distributors of Tobacco in the UK, and the distribution being devolved to individual retailers, Jump-Up thefts have increased exponentially.
- 2.2 The best practice of security measures that P&H distribution vehicles had was either not passed onto or taken up by individual retailers, who used their existing fleets of distribution vehicles. This has enabled criminals to exploit the weaknesses that these vehicles possess to steal over £2.5 million pounds worth, predominantly of Tobacco in 2023 alone. This is cost price – retail price plus lost duty on Tobacco could raise this to well over £12 million for 2023.
- 2.2 Jump-Up thefts reached an all-time high of 549 offences during 2021, as the UK was recovering from covid-19. In 2022 and 2023 the number of these offences has significantly decreased. This could be due to a number of factors including Retailers / Carriers making improvements to Loading Procedures, target hardening and investing in upgrading locking systems on trailer doors, heightened awareness of these offences, under reporting, less offences taking place or criminals moving onto more lucrative offences.
- 2.3 Due to the distances travelled between the offence taking place and the driver becoming aware of his missing stock, policing of these offences is difficult. In 2023 there was 325 arrests for Freight Crime offences however only 13 were for Jump-Up offences.



3. Recommendations

- 3.1 In order to minimise the risk of becoming a victim of “Jump-Up” offences, NaVCIS subject matter experts recommend the consideration of:
- a. implementing the Best Practice approach as detailed in paragraph 12.1 below.
 - b. the use of a hard sided vehicle when transporting Tobacco products.
 - c. the use of opaque totes to make it harder and take longer for offenders to locate where the Tobacco products are within the trailer.
 - d. using Bulk Head to secure Tobacco products.
 - e. the use of Bulldog locks / Slam Locks / Lock shields.
 - f. the use of extra Alarms / CCCTV inside the trailer.
 - g. the use of internal cages.
 - h. liaising with Industry Security companies to see what advancements they have made i.e. computerised locks that let Head Office know when the shutters are opened and closed.
 - i. varying the day of the week and the route used to deliver Tobacco products to your retail outlets (if possible).
 - j. outward facing CCTV to cover the street and exit of the distribution centre to establish if a previously parked vehicle follows your vehicle when it leaves the distribution centre. If possible capture the registration, make, model and number of occupants and pass those details onto Police, NaVCIS and Insurers.

4. Jump-Up Thefts

- 4.1 Definition: Jump-Up thefts are carried out by Organised Crime Group (OCGs), where they follow national supermarket HGVs leaving distribution centres and delivering to their retail outlets. These are known as “final mile deliveries” in the supply chain. When the HGV is either held up in traffic, stationary at traffic signals, or when the driver arrives at the store and enters to inform management that they have arrived; offenders will quickly gain entry through trailer doors, either forcing / drilling locks, cutting seals or using generic trailer keys to enter and steal Tobacco and Cigarettes products. These offences are generally non-confrontational and violence is very rarely used. However if challenged by drivers or retail staff, offenders are known to make threats of violence on occasion.¹

¹ NaVCIS Freight Problem Profile dated Dec 2022



5 The Catalyst for the rise in Jump-Up thefts

- 5.1 As is common in freight crime, the OCGs responsible understand supply chains, they have a working knowledge of the industry and are quick to identify and exploit any vulnerabilities. The catalyst for the rise in this modus operandi (MO) can be tracked back to a significant change in the landscape of tobacco distribution in the UK. The region's largest wholesale distributor (Palmer & Harvey), who was responsible for the vast majority of tobacco store deliveries, fell into receivership in 2017. Consequently, the distribution of tobacco dispersed, with a number of individual retailers taking responsibility for their own deliveries via their existing logistic network.²
- 5.2 The demise of the wholesaler was covered extensively in the mainstream media and unsurprisingly it did not take long for the OCGs to act upon the "lucrative opportunity" this afforded. The previous carrier, accustomed to the challenges associated with tobacco deliveries having accrued many years of experience, had operated a high security fleet in conjunction with robust procedures to mitigate risk exposure. With distribution suddenly undertaken by numerous different carriers, often utilising vehicles with inadequate security equipment and prominent branding, retailers quickly found themselves attracting unwanted attention, with incidents of theft spiralling at an alarming rate.³

6 Data Analysis

- 6.1 Jump-Up offences began being reported to NaVCIS during April 2018, predominantly in the Metropolitan Force area (30 offences) with an additional 30 offences spread between 13 other Forces. By 2019 (Covid year) this phenomena had risen to 366 offences as NaVCIS started liaising with Retailers / Carriers in relation to the trend of "Jump-Up thefts, with the Metropolitan Force area again taking the lions share (155 offences), West Midlands (32), Hampshire (25), Hertfordshire (22) Thames Valley and Greater Manchester each having 18 offences. There were also 26 other Force areas that had offences ranging from 1 to 9.
- 6.2 It was interesting that during Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdowns in 2019-2020, Jump-Up offences continued at an almost constant level 366 and 375 offences respectively; compared to most crime types reducing drastically.
- 6.3 In 2021, as the UK was slowly coming out of Covid restrictions, Jump-Up thefts reached an all-time high of 549 offences. The Metropolitan Force area continued to be the hardest hit, with 244 offences, Greater Manchester (49), 4 other Force areas in the 20s, 27 other Force areas with the number of

² Maple Fleet Services Security Leaflet: "Access Denied" – Combatting the worrying rise in Jump-Up Thefts with access control 2023

³ Maple Fleet Services Security Leaflet: "Access Denied" – Combatting the worrying rise in Jump-Up Thefts with access control 2023



offences ranging from 1 to 19. Showing that this type of offence was still being reported and was not a localised problem but a National one.

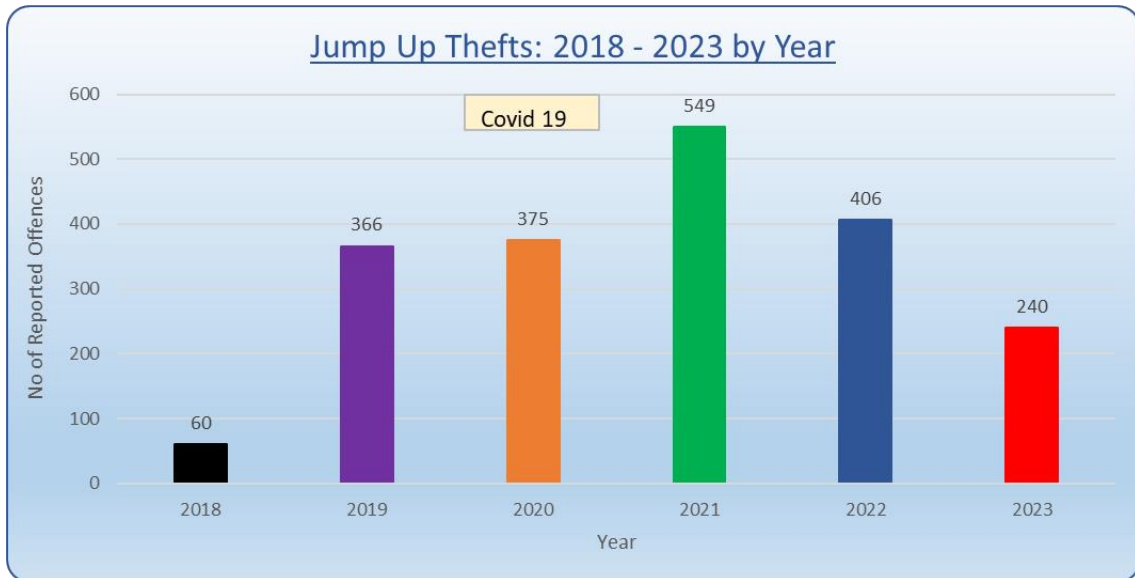


Figure 1: Chart showing the number of Jump-Up offences 2018 to thus far in 2023

6.4 In 2023, the estimated loss value of Freight (primarily Tobacco) from Jump-Up offences was in excess of £2.5 million. That figure represents cost value whereas retail value plus estimated loss of duty may give a figure closer to £12+ million.

7 Methods Used

7.1 As already discussed, these offences are normally committed by OCGs with an established MO:

- a. Wait outside the distribution centre’s exit to establish the direction of travel of the target vehicle.
- b. Either radio ahead to other member of the team or to follow the vehicle themselves.
- c. When the vehicle is in slow moving traffic / stopped at traffic light / arrived at its destination and/or the driver has gone inside to notify management of their arrival, the offender(s) attack the lock on the rear shutter doors of the trailer, enter the trailer and steal Tobacco.
- d. Sometime OCGs use one vehicle in front of the Target Delivery vehicle in order to slow it down while the second vehicle is behind. An offender gets out of the rear vehicle, enters the trailer and passes the Tobacco goods out to other offenders in the rear vehicle. The vehicles do not necessarily



have to be static for this to happen but can be moving slowly through traffic; requiring the offenders to ‘jump up’.

- e. The “Insider Threat”: Persons working in the Distribution Centres Supply Chain having access to and/or knowing the timings and routes of deliveries / anticipated times of deliveries to retail outlets who provide information around location / loading position on the trailer of the whereabouts of the Tobacco and passing this information onto the OCG.
- f. Jump-Up Offenders will follow the delivery lorry to the place of delivery, once the lorry arrives at store and the driver goes in store to inform the manager / staff that they have arrived and are delivering. The offenders will approach the stationary lorry and gain entry by drilling / forcing locks and remove and steal Tobacco products.

8 Locations

- 8.1 Due to the nature of these offences, it is difficult to pin point where the offences have occurred, i.e.
 - a. The driver is not always aware of when and where the actual crime took place, all that they know is it was somewhere along their delivery route.
 - b. Pattern setting – Due to economic reasons, time constraints, consumer consumption, route constraints etc. Retailers often set delivery patterns i.e. leave the distribution centre at the same time each day, use the same route at the same time of day and on the same day of the week. This makes it easy for offenders to predict where the vehicle will be along any given route at any time of day.
 - c. Locations – The sheer volume of traffic in city centres / towns leads to slow moving / stop/start traffic / congestion of traffic and numerous traffic lights, hence City Centres / Towns are the ideal location for these offences to be committed.

9. Geographic spread of Offences

- 9.1 What is interesting to note though is that these offences started in the Metropolitan Police area and the major cities: Leeds, Manchester, Sheffield, Birmingham and quickly spread out from there to encompass the urban areas of Thames Valley, Hertfordshire, Greater Manchester, West Midlands, Essex, Lancashire, Merseyside, Hampshire, Bedfordshire, Sussex, Surrey, Cheshire and West Yorkshire. 26 other Force areas also experienced Jump-Up thefts but to a much lesser extent, including Police Northern Ireland, demonstrating that MOs are likely shared or copied between criminal groups.



Fig 2: Map of Jump Up Offences 2018



Fig 3: Map of Jump Up Offences 2023

10. Arrests

- 10.1 Identifying and arresting offenders involved in Jump-Up thefts is difficult due to these offences being committed somewhere along the distribution route and not always being discovered until sometime later when the driver arrives at his destination. Furthermore, as the offences are normally committed in busy, slow moving traffic, the offenders and their vehicles easily blend in and unless other members of the public report the offence and give details of the vehicle(s) and offenders involved, by the time the driver has arrived at his destination, the offenders are long gone.
- 10.2 However, during 2023, a number of Forces have had several operations to target this type of offence. Thus far, from the 325 arrests for Freight Crime in 2023, only 13 have been offenders involved in Jump-Up offences.

11. Industry Reporting

- 11.1 Improved reporting of Jump Up offences to the Police will help drive action and aid internal industry security opportunities. It has been established in the Methods used (paragraph 7) that offenders follow the delivery vehicles after they have departed the depot and that somewhere along the route the delivery vehicle is attacked. Providing details of the route taken will greatly assist in the analysis of these offences and any bottlenecks along the route can be identified for extra security measures to be taken by both Industry and Law Enforcement.



12. Best Practice

- 12.1 Moving Cargo also known Romanian Roll over thefts is where several vehicles are used to box the delivery vehicle in (normally on the motorway), thus slowing it down. The offenders then climbs onto the bonnet of the moving vehicle, cuts the rear lock of the delivery vehicle and climbs inside. They then pass the stolen goods out to other offenders in their vehicle.
- 12.2 Similar Methods Used to Jump Ups however Moving Cargo is at speed, on motorways and targets all types of goods as opposed to just Tobacco.
- 12.3 During 2020/21 there was a series of “Moving Cargo” Thefts of High Value Electronic Goods. A large reduction in this type of offence occurred when a carrier started to implement Full Height Steel Cages as the last two pallets were loaded onto the Trailer, within hard sided trailers to prevent offenders accessing the cargo area. This type of approach could also be considered when transporting High Value Tobacco loads.



Figure 2: Pictures of Full Height Steel Cages



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