

Shedding Light on What's to Come In 2025

Global, North American & European Cargo Theft
Tactics & Trend Report



Global cargo theft trends at-a-glance

In 2024, several critical trends emerged that underscored the evolving landscape of global cargo theft. Food and beverage products dominated the list of targeted commodities, accounting for 22% of all incidents, followed by agricultural goods at 10%, electronics at 9%, and fuel at 7%.

These patterns reflect both the rising demand for essential goods and also the impact of broader socioeconomic factors, such as severe weather disruptions to agricultural production and the heightened cost of living. These conditions have fueled theft, adulteration, and related risks, making certain commodities particularly attractive to criminal networks.

Commodity critical trends

22% food & beverage

10% agricultural goods

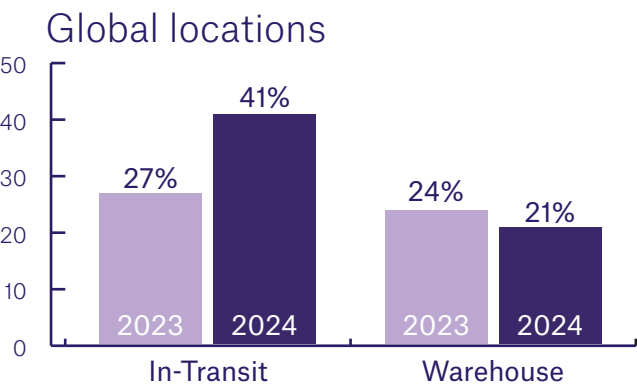
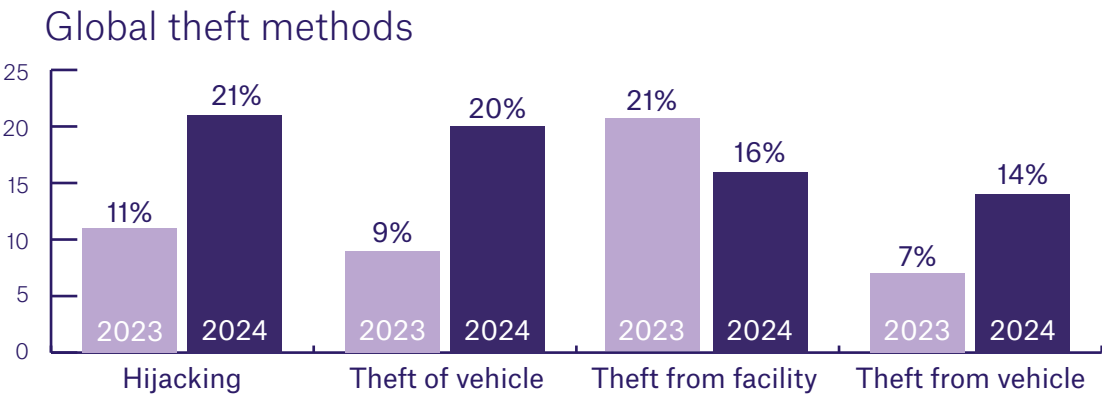
09% electronics

07% fuel



Methods & locations of cargo

The methods and locations of cargo thefts also revealed significant trends. Hijackings led as the top theft type at 21%, followed by theft of entire vehicles at 20%, theft from facility at 16%, and theft from vehicle at 14%.



Notably, 41% of thefts occurred in transit, while 21% were linked to warehouses, with smaller percentages attributed to production facilities, delivery sites, and parking lots.

Brazil, Mexico, India, the United States, Germany, Chile, and South Africa were hotspots for incidents, with Q1 and Q4 recording the highest activity levels. Additionally, criminals increasingly leveraged fraud and technology to execute sophisticated heists, emphasizing the urgent need for enhanced security protocols and comprehensive risk management strategies across the supply chain.



Strategic thefts & cybercrime are still wreaking havoc



A key theme throughout 2024 was the rise in strategic thefts. These thefts are characterized by the use of deception, fraud, and sophisticated planning to steal cargo. Some key tactics include deceptive tactics like impersonation, advanced technologies like AI to alter bills of lading, and remote operations.

With an exponential increase occurring in the United States in particular, BSI Consulting also tracked instances of this method occurring in several countries in Europe, including the United Kingdom, Germany, and France, suggesting this as a risk for companies operating in the region in 2025.

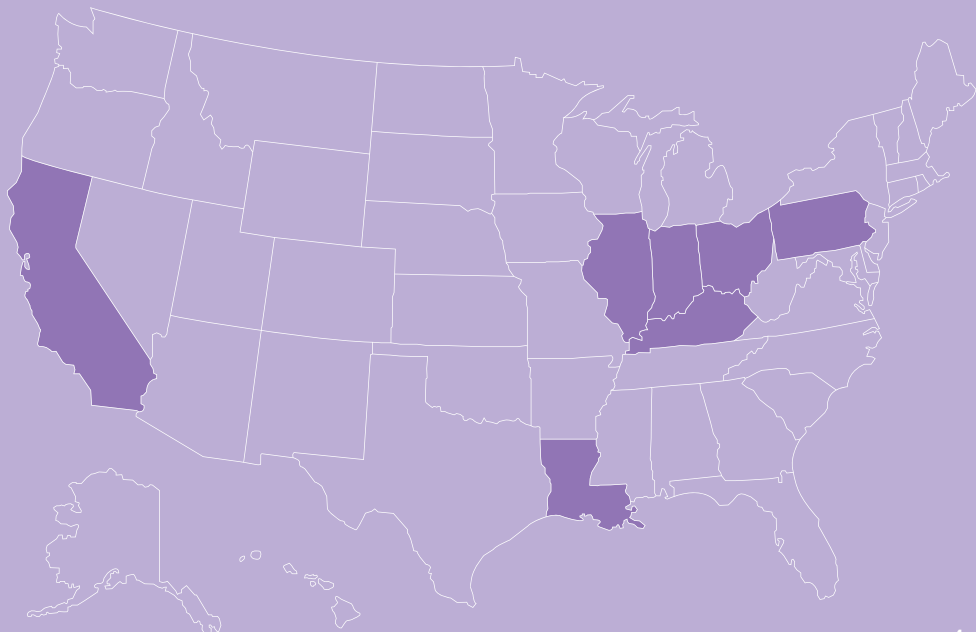


Sophisticated cargo theft driving organized crime

Strategic cargo theft and organized crime are escalating concerns, now accounting for around **18% of all thefts in the United States**, as criminals adopt increasingly sophisticated tactics to target supply chains. These methods often involve deception and technological expertise, such as using fraudulent documentation to pick up cargo, hacking into Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) accounts to arrange fictitious pickups, and employing disguises to facilitate thefts. High-value goods such as electronics, apparel, and pharmaceuticals are particularly at risk, with incidents of stolen hydrocodone and promethazine highlighting the vulnerability of the pharmaceutical industry.



Within the United States, while California remains a hotspot for strategic cargo theft, incidents are increasingly being reported in the Midwest, including states like Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, as well as Kentucky, Louisiana, and Pennsylvania. This geographic expansion signals the growing reach of organized criminal groups and the emergence of new actors employing fraudulent techniques.



Global cargo theft by product type



22%
Food & Beverage



10%
Agriculture



9%
Electronics



7%
Fuel



5%
Automotive

Targeted commodities



Industries such as food and beverage, alcohol, metals, consumer goods, and apparel have all felt the impact of these thefts. Insider information is frequently leveraged to target higher-value shipments, amplifying the risks for businesses handling premium products.

In one notable incident, thieves presented false documentation posing as a French wholesale distributor to steal 22 tons of cheese valued at over 360,000 USD from a dairy in London, England. As organized crime syndicates evolve their strategies, supply chain stakeholders across the country face mounting challenges in safeguarding their operations against these ever-changing threats.

Criminals are exploiting AI

Cybercrime has also emerged as a key enabler, with criminals exploiting artificial intelligence (AI) to craft phishing emails, deep fakes, and malware designed to access sensitive freight data. By mid-2024, freight companies reported a surge in cyberattacks leveraging cloud-based storage services, underscoring the dynamic and adaptive nature of these threats.



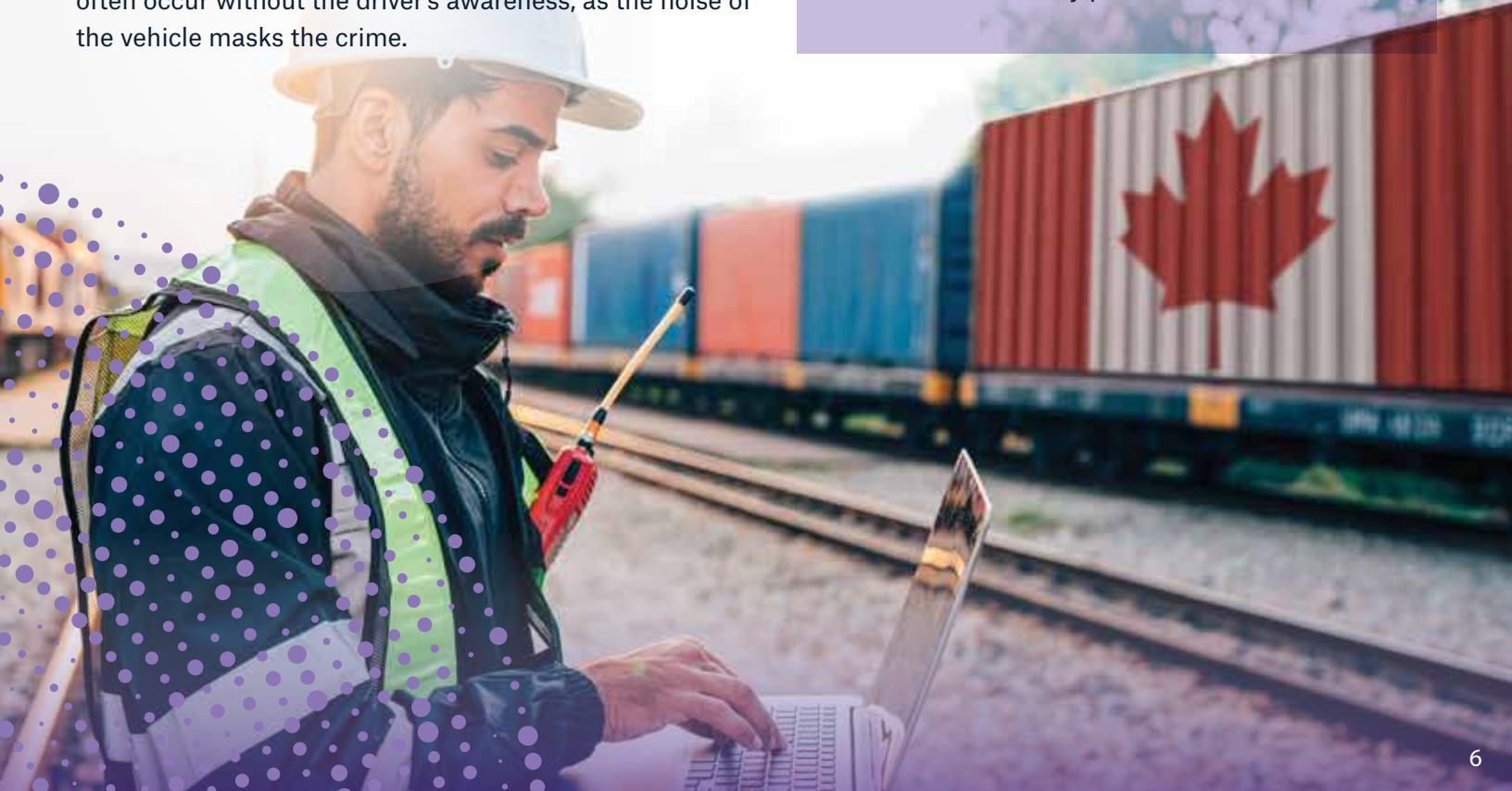
North American theft trends

Keeping an eye on rail in the U.S. & Canada

While 2024 was characterized by the rise in strategic theft discussed above, cargo theft from trains remains a significant concern, accounting for around 6 % of all thefts in the United States and Canada, with criminals employing increasingly strategic methods to target freight.

While the U.S. grapples with a significant rise in strategic cargo thefts, Canada is experiencing an increase in pilferage-type incidents. Cargo theft in Canada, particularly in the Peel Region of the Greater Toronto Area, has seen a rise in pilferage incidents as organized criminal groups adopt increasingly strategic methods. Leveraging information obtained by observing shipments leaving distribution centers, these groups plan and execute thefts on in-transit shipments, often targeting high-value goods like electronics. Tactics include using staged distractions, such as blocking roads with seemingly broken-down vehicles, to create opportunities for theft. These incidents often occur without the driver's awareness, as the noise of the vehicle masks the crime.

In Bakersfield, California, groups of thieves reportedly gather along railroad tracks near Highway 58 multiple times a week, breaking locks on containers to steal goods when trains stop. Leveraging knowledge of train schedules and exploiting shift changes, these criminals demonstrate a calculated approach to theft. The high volume of cargo handled by Southern California's ports, coupled with slow-moving trains through Los Angeles, creates frequent opportunities for theft, further exacerbated by outdated locks and insufficient security personnel on railcars.

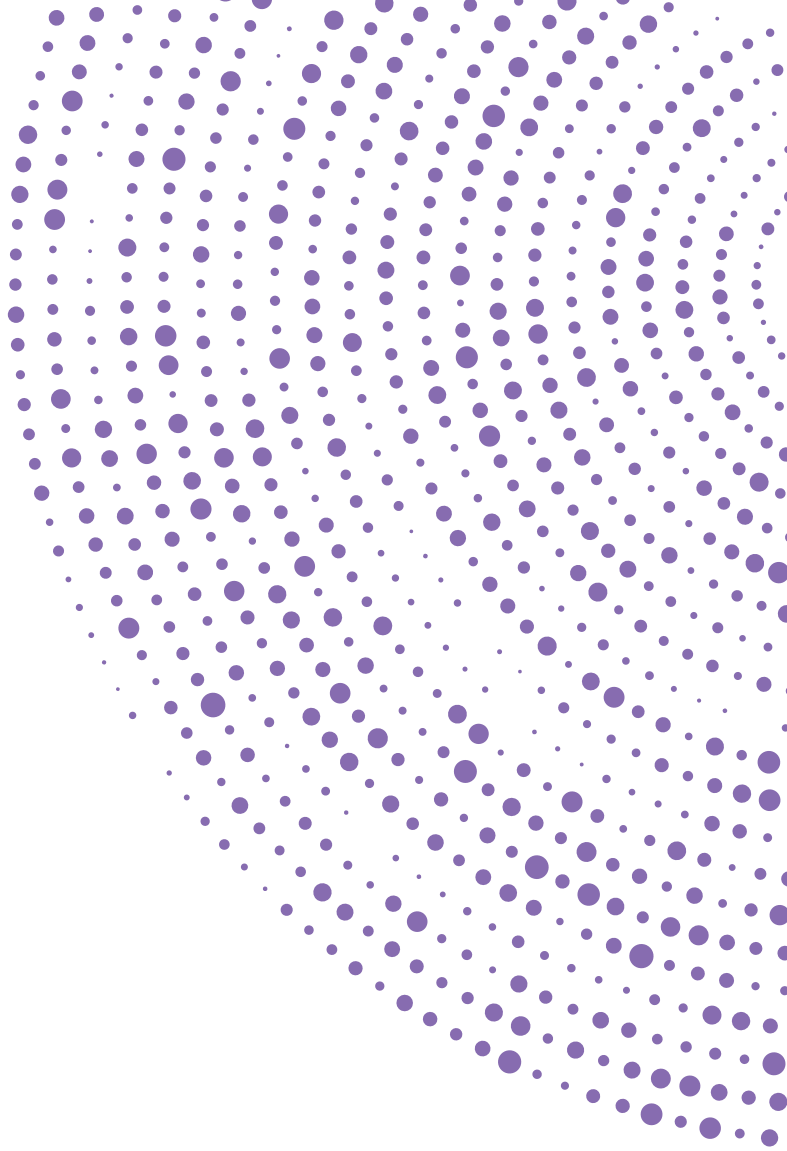


The growing threat of cargo theft

The strategic theft concerns, already occurring in the United States, are emerging threats for the Peel region and Greater Toronto area, albeit with a delay of several months. This risk suggests businesses operating in this vital region must remain vigilant, recognizing the evolving tactics of organized crime and implementing proactive measures to safeguard their supply chains.

Recognizing the growing threat of cargo theft, a member of the United States House of Representatives introduced the **Safeguarding Our Supply Chains Act** in June 2024. This legislation aims to address cargo theft and supply chain fraud by establishing a Supply Chain Crime Coordination Center within the Department of Homeland Security and forming a dedicated task force led by Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and the FBI. In Canada, the launch of the National Supply Chain Office (NSCO) in December 2023 represents government efforts to enhance efficiency, resilience, and reliability of the country's supply chains.

Despite these measures, supply chains are expected to remain a target as criminal groups continue to exploit vulnerabilities and access sensitive logistical information to facilitate their theft operations.



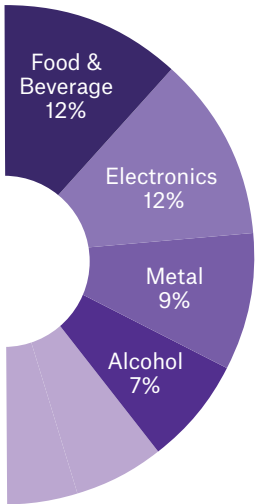
Europe and the United Kingdom

In 2024, cargo theft trends across Europe was consistent with prior years despite an overall increase, though some shifts emerged. Food and beverage products topped the list of stolen commodities, making up 12% of incidents, followed by electronics at 12%, metals at 9%, and alcohol at 7%. High-demand goods underscored the persistent vulnerabilities within supply chains, and the ongoing appeal of readily sellable items for organized criminal groups.

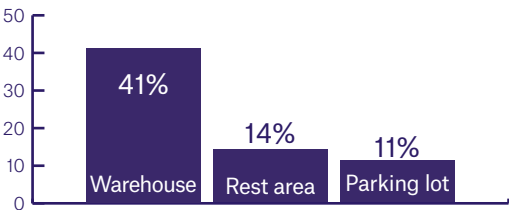
Locations and methods of theft showed the region's ongoing challenges in securing cargo. Warehouses were the most targeted, at 41% of recorded incidents. Thefts at rest areas, parking lots, and unsecured roadside locations represented a significant number of incidents as well.

Common methods included theft from facilities, containers, and trailers, vehicle hijackings and "slash-and-grab" tactics. Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, and France had the highest rates of theft, with parked vehicles in unsecured rest areas and warehouses as primary targets. Additionally, Europe has seen a rise in technologically sophisticated thefts, mirroring strategic trends observed in the U. S., as criminals are exploiting technological vulnerabilities to bypass traditional security measures.

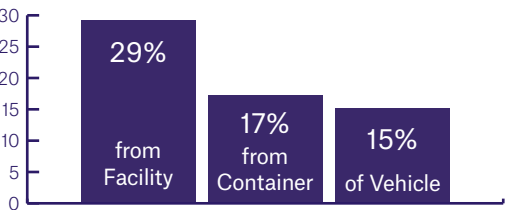
Europe & UK
Theft by product



Theft locations



Theft methods



Looking at theft risks and trends in the United Kingdom, the lack of secure parking across Europe continues to contribute to the proportion of cargo crime affecting trucks. Common theft methods in the country include theft from container/trailer, theft from vehicle, and theft from facility.

Simultaneously, top locations include unsecured roadside parking and rest areas, both accounting for about 20% of thefts each. At truck stops and motorway service stations thieves slash tarpaulins or break into trailers to steal valuable goods – with the top products stolen in the U. K. this year Food & Beverage 20%, Alcohol 14%, Electronics 11%, and Pharmaceuticals 9%. The U. K.'s Department for Transport has taken steps to raise truck parking standards and increase safe parking capacity. They've created a task force with the Road Haulage Association (RHA) to examine these issues in May and invested £16.5 million in improving parking spaces, facilities, and rest areas.

Hear from our experts...

Comments from Tony Pelli

Practice Director, BSI Consulting

2024 and the start of 2025 have underlined the importance of flexibility and resilience in supply chains. From tariff threats to cargo theft, BSI Consulting is seeing risk at all levels of the supply chain, and we expect to continue through the rest of the year and beyond. It is essential that companies understand how they are managing risk in the supply chain across their procurement, supply chain, logistics, and compliance teams (among others), have a detailed map of their supply chains to understand the impact that emerging risks may have on their business, and build relationships with suppliers to co-manage risks. Building supply chain resilience will give companies a competitive edge, protect their bottom line, and allow them to deliver to their customers without disruption.



Tony Pelli

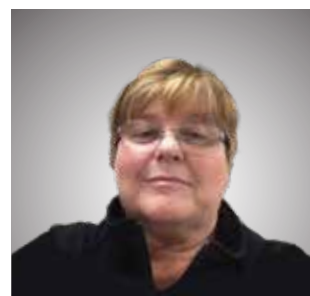
*Practice Director,
BSI Consulting*

Comments from Dr. Cyndee Garbrecht

SVP, Claims, Munich Re Specialty Group, N.A.

Cargo claims trends in 2024 included increased theft, evolving tactics, and new targets for criminals. These trends are expected to continue into 2025, but the biggest issue not only for us but the entire insurance industry is Fictitious Pickups. Fictitious pickups increased by 1,445.83% from Q1 of 2022 to Q1 of 2024. From January 1, 2024, to June 30, 2024 thefts increased by 34.55%, involving 1,778 reported losses totaling \$112M. We have seen about 70 claims in the past 6 months. These thefts aren't the simple bandit types targeting warehouses, parking lots, and truck stops. These are sophisticated criminal organizations with established black-market connections.

The latest theft modality employed is cloning carrier trucks. Here is how it works: Equipment that arrives at loading docks is thoroughly cloned, including the correct colors, logos, unit number structure, etc. Drivers who arrive also have information about scheduled trailer pickups, mixing traditional fictitious pickup strategies into the advanced cloning of carrier trucks. The effort and expense required to clone trucks shows how much effort thieves are willing to put into fraudulently obtaining freight, essentially stealing cargo by appointment. This method is relatively new, so we do not have any data yet.



Dr. Cyndee Garbrecht

SVP, Claims, MRSGNA



Connect Screen

A platform you can trust to enhance decision-making
& build supply chain resiliency

BSI Connect Screen is an integrated platform that employs a risk-based approach to supply chain risk management programs. It targets the biggest global supply chain threats to help organizations inspire trust and build resilience through data-driven insight. Our platform contains the largest proprietary global supply chain risk intelligence database that looks at more than 20 risk ratings in over 200 countries. BSI Connect Screen provides services and solutions to accelerate your understanding of supply chain risk and gain insight to empower decision making to build a more resilient supply chain.

These services include:

- Custom intelligence services
- Powerful, interactive risk mapping
- Daily updates and notifications
- Custom report builder
- Supply chain incident database
- Connect Screen auditing system
- Advisory services
- Training services

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Our specialized ocean marine cargo solution is focused on protecting our clients' assets while in transit, delayed in transit, and in storage. We offer a range of comprehensive coverage options with financial backing, tailored underwriting, and risk mitigation services. Munich Re Specialty leverages the strength of Lloyd's capacity, providing our partners with flexible solutions for complex, out-of-the-box risk scenarios associated with global supply chain disruptions and risks alike.

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