

Claims Bulletin



Special Bulletin

LGIT MEMBERS REPORT COPPER THEFTS

Reports of the theft of copper are on the rise across the country. This week, a LGIT member municipality reported a property loss of over 30 feet of copper tubing taken from the heat pump unit of a town building and previously a member reported theft of copper guttering.

Copper is now valued at over \$3.50 per pound; in most areas, the cost of copper pipe tubing has risen nearly 71 percent since April of 2005. Because of the substantial increase in the value of copper, there has been an increase in metal related thefts from any equipment that contains copper wiring, cabling or tubing, including but not limited to, street lights, phone cables and equipment and HVAC equipment. HVAC equipment is especially vulnerable since most of the time the copper (or aluminum) heat exchanger is outside of the building and not well secured. Loss of heat and cooling can leave your building vulnerable to water damages from frozen pipes and computer damage caused by overheated data centers.

Copper thefts are a crime of opportunity. Access is usually easy and in most cases a vehicle can be driven to the site of the theft. The target is not well protected by alarms, cameras, or barriers and lighting is poor or nonexistent.

PREVENTING COPPER THEFT - Consider the following recommendations to protect your property from copper theft.

- Facility managers should develop a plan to identify vulnerabilities
- Install or add security lighting around facilities and HVAC equipment
- Ensure that power shut offs are not in close proximity to HVAC units
- Eliminate access to roof-mounted HVAC units by removing ladders and steps
- Consider installation of wrought iron cages or fencing to enclose HVAC units
- Consider installation of security cameras and/or alarms mounted to the HVAC unit
- Increase law enforcement patrols around the perimeter of buildings at night

It is time to take some precautions to avoid this risk exposure.

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