21-14 - Handling Cargo Theft Cases

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

NEWSLETTER

Field Operations Support Services

HANDLING CARGO THEFT CASES

PURPOSE

The purpose of this newsletter is to inform Department personnel of the proper procedures for handling a Cargo Theft case.

BACKGROUND

Cargo thefts average more than $100,000.00 per occurrence and should be treated as a major crime. Contrary to common belief, these thefts are **not** insurance fraud. The suspects who commit these crimes are frequently armed and highly organized. The Major Crimes Bureau, Cargo Criminal Apprehension Team (Cargo CATs) mission involves a close working relationship with representatives from the private sector as well as other law enforcement agencies. The crimes investigated by Cargo CAT detectives are crimes involving robbery, hi-jacking, or commercial vehicle thefts where a commercial shipping container or trailer laden with freight is involved.

> **NOTE:** Bob-tail trucks, tractors, trailers, and shipping containers without freight are not assigned to Cargo CATs.

The mission of Cargo CATs is as follows:

- Reduce cargo theft crimes by apprehending and prosecuting both cargo thieves and their receivers; and
- Return stolen property to their rightful owners.

An Incident Report (SH-R-49) is required on all cargo theft cases. The property stolen from the container should be listed separately from the vehicles and containers.

A Separate CHP-180 should be used for each vehicle involved (tractor, trailer, chassis-carrier with an ocean/shipping container). When a cargo theft involves an ocean/shipping container, the cargo container is listed as an attached stolen vehicle part/component on the CHP-180 utilized for the chassis-carrier. The term “CARGO INVOLVED” should be entered in the miscellaneous field of the CHP-180. The same report number may be used for all reports.

The container's shipping number is entered into the Stolen Vehicle System (SVS) as a stolen vehicle part/component. Containers are no longer entered in the Automated Property System (APS). If a container number is entered correctly into SVS by station secretaries, deputies, and dispatch, personnel will be able to utilize the vehicle (VEH) screen in the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) or on a Mobile Data Computer (MDC) to check a container number to determine if it is stolen.

When the victim does not have all of the information needed for a report, any one of the following steps may be taken:

- Vehicle information (example: VIN, license plate, container number) - Complete as much of the CHP-180 as possible. The words "NOT FOR SVS" should be written across the top of the report. Handling detectives will obtain the missing information and enter it into SVS.

- Unknown property loss – The bill of lading containing a list of the property that was inside the container may be absent or stolen with the vehicle. The term "Unknown cargo" may be used. To ensure proper notification to Cargo CATs by the victim, instruct the victim to go to https://lasd.org/cargotheft/ and complete a Cargo CATs Loss Report Form. This form can then be either e-mailed to cargocats2@lasd.org or faxed to Cargo CATs office at (562) 944-5982.

Notifications

Cargo CATs shall be notified of all crimes involving cargo containers and trailers laden with freight. Notifications fall into two categories:

- Immediate Notification – Cargo CATs shall be notified as soon as possible regarding cases where a suspect is in custody, a cargo crime occurs, and the vehicle is equipped with a GPS tracker, or several stolen trailers or cargo containers laden with freight are stolen or located and recovered. During regular business hours, contact Cargo CATS at [REDACTED TEXT]. If after business hours, contact Sheriff's Information Bureau (SIB), who will, in turn contact the on-call Cargo CATs detective.

- Routine Notification – Reports with no workable information can be faxed to Cargo CATs at (562) 944-5982 or scanned and emailed to cargocats2@lasd.org.

Please call Cargo CATs at [REDACTED TEXT] if there are any questions or concerns regarding a cargo case, or contact Field Operations Support Services at [REDACTED TEXT]

ATTACHMENTS

Cargo CATs Loss Report Form

Cargo CATs Equipment Recognition and Identification Card

REFERENCES

LASD Cargo CATs Internet Site