

Reported fuel thefts increased sharply during August and September 2022, and are significantly higher this year compared to last year. The peak in reported fuel thefts in the summer months correlates with the high fuel prices that we saw during this time. Fuel prices came down slightly in October, and this was reflected in reported fuel thefts (however, there is a delay in the reporting of some data, which will have contributed to this.)

Most recently, Reading appears to have been heavily targeted by fuel thieves, where already in November there have been 2 large scale thefts in the RG postcode (1st and 7th November.) In the earlier incident, it is known that a 7.5tonne lorry was used to syphon the fuel into, showing an element of preplanning by the offenders.

Other hotspots at the moment include South Yorkshire, from Manchester across to Sheffield, Doncaster as well as Lincolnshire. Of note, on 1st November, an individual [was arrested east of Sheffield](#) on suspicion of fuel theft, and had a large amount of empty fuel canisters in the back of his van.

As can be seen on the adjacent map, South Wales continues to be a hotspot for fuel theft, where it is often low level but frequent thefts that are reported; the most common MO here is fuel being syphoned from cars and lorries.

From data reported to Crime Intelligence, the following methods of fuel theft are frequently noted:

Theft of fuel from Plant and Machinery on construction sites

This type of theft has increased dramatically across the country over the course of this year. This is in large part due to the change in legislation which limited the use of red diesel in this sector ([more information here](#)). We tend to see that incidents of machinery having their fuel drained is

accompanied by thefts of tools or cable, which are likely to be opportunistic. It is therefore advised that as a minimum, any valuable items such as these are kept out of sight, and that machinery is stored away from the fence line to make it more difficult for any potential thieves.

Theft of entire fuel bowsers/fuel cubes, or syphoning fuel from these containers

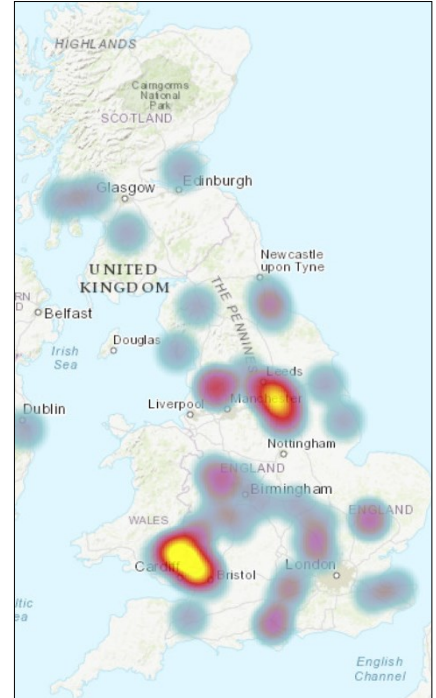
Again, this type of theft has increased significantly this year compared to previous years. This type of theft is often the most costly and damaging for the victims; the main bulk of the cost is not in the fuel lost but can be in the clean up costs, should fuel leak into the surrounding area. It is important to note that the syphoning of fuel thefts from bowsers can happen in one go, or can happen slowly over time, such as the [theft from the royal navy base that occurred last year](#), where £250k worth of fuel was stolen over a number of weeks.

Where the entire fuel bowser or cube has been stolen, it tends to be that access has been gained to the site by either cutting the padlock off the front gate or cutting a hole through the fence line. Where the fuel has been syphoned, it has been known that offenders have been able to park their vehicle ([often a large high sided lorry—see example here](#)) close enough to the fence line to pass the hose through the fence and fill up the containers in their vehicle. Offenders have also been known to wear hi-vis and to have branded vehicles in order to appear legitimate to any passers by.

Theft from vehicles and lorries

This is the predominant type of theft noted in South Wales as mentioned above. It has been known that multiple vehicles can be targeted in a very short amount of time, especially where lorries are parked up in laybys.

If you require any further information on fuel thefts or preventative measures, please do not hesitate to get in touch with crime.intelligence@detertech.com or opal@westmercia.police.uk



Heatmap showing fuel thefts 01/08/22—31/10/22