Electrical Safety Authority

London Hydro

Copper Theft Toolkit:

Understanding Safety Risks and Community Impacts



A Communications Toolkit for local distribution companies, municipalities, provincial partners, police services, and telecommunications companies to help raise awareness of the safety risks and community impacts of copper theft.

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About This Toolkit

Copper theft is more than a property crime. It can create electrical hazards that cause serious injury or death, threaten critical infrastructure and disrupt essential services that communities rely on every day.

Recent changes to the Criminal Code, including the federal government's Bill C-14, mean that those who target or damage essential infrastructure face significantly harsher penalties and stricter sentencing. However, preventing injuries and protecting communities also requires continued awareness, vigilance and collaboration among local partners.

Developed by the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) and London Hydro, this toolkit provides municipalities, provincial ministries, police services, telecommunications providers and local distribution companies (LDCs) with ready-to-use communications materials to:

- Raise awareness of the electrical safety risks associated with copper theft.
- Increase understanding of its impact on communities and critical infrastructure.
- Encourage the safe reporting of suspicious activity.

The toolkit is organized around three core communications pillars of messaging that can be adapted for websites, social media, newsletters and community outreach initiatives:

1. **Know the Risks:** Copper theft can create electrical hazards that can seriously injure or kill people.
2. **Understand the Impact:** Damage can affect critical infrastructure, service reliability and entire communities.
3. **See Something, Say Something:** Report suspicious activity to the appropriate authorities.

Toolkit Assets

The following resources have been developed to support municipalities, provincial ministries, police services, telecommunications companies and local distribution companies (LDCs) in raising awareness of the electrical safety risks and community impacts associated with copper theft.

You are encouraged to localize the following resources and materials with applicable reporting information and relevant community resources to support your public education efforts and to encourage the public to stay safe and report suspicious activity.

Asset	Purpose
Key Messages	Public, customer and community discussions
Website Content	Content to support public awareness on owned channel
E-Newsletter Content	Resident and community awareness and outreach
Social Media Assets	Digital communications to support public awareness on owned channels
Frequently Asked Questions	Public, customer and community discussions

Key Messages

Know the Risks

1. Copper theft is a serious electrical and public safety issue.

Tampering with electrical infrastructure can expose live electrical equipment and compromise important safety systems, creating shock and fire hazards that can seriously injure or kill people.

Since 2015, 46 electrical safety incidents involving copper theft have been reported to the ESA.

These risks can extend beyond the person committing the theft to members of the public, utility workers and first responders.

Copper theft should be treated as a public safety issue, not simply a property crime.

2. Danger may remain after the theft.

Damaged electrical infrastructure can remain hazardous long after an incident occurs, and electrical hazards are not always visible.

Members of the public, utility workers and first responders may encounter risks after a copper theft has taken place. If a downed powerline is present, stay back at least 10 metres.

Understand the Impact

3. Copper theft impacts entire communities.

Damage to electrical infrastructure can disrupt electricity and services communities depend on every day.

Outages and repairs may impact the public, businesses and public services.

4. Protecting infrastructure helps protect public safety.

Reliable electrical infrastructure supports homes, businesses, emergency response and community services.

See something, Say something.

5. Everyone has a role to play.

If you see something, say something. If you notice suspicious activity around electrical infrastructure: Stay back. Do not intervene. Report suspicious activity to local authorities.

Website Content

[Insert date and location + **supplied website banner**]:

Electrical infrastructure powers the homes, businesses and public services our communities rely on every day. When copper is stolen from electrical systems, the consequences can extend far beyond damaged property.

Copper theft can expose live electrical equipment and compromise important safety systems. This can create shock and fire hazards that can cause serious injury or death.

In some situations, damaged electrical infrastructure may remain hazardous long after the theft has occurred. Because electrical hazards are not always visible, members of the public, utility workers and first responders may be exposed to danger without realizing it.

Copper theft also affects the communities we live in. Damage to electrical infrastructure can disrupt electricity, telecommunications and other essential services that the public, businesses and public facilities rely on every day.

Recent changes to the Criminal Code, including the federal government's Bill C-14, have strengthened penalties for those who target or damage essential infrastructure.

However, preventing injuries and protecting communities also requires continued awareness, vigilance and collaboration among local partners.

When it comes to copper theft, members of the community should:

1. Know the Risks

Damaged electrical equipment should always be treated as potentially hazardous.

Never approach cut wires, damaged utility equipment or restricted electrical infrastructure. If you encounter a downed powerline, stay back at least 10 metres.

2. Understand the Impact

Copper theft can result in service interruptions, community disruption and costly repairs.

Protecting infrastructure helps keep communities safe, reliable and connected.

3. See something, Say something

If you see suspicious activity around any electrical infrastructure:

- Stay at least 10 metres away from a downed powerline.
- Report suspicious activity to [insert local police service info]. If there is an emergency or an immediate threat to safety, call 9-1-1.
- Report damaged infrastructure to [insert local utility info].

By understanding the risks and reporting concerns safely, everyone can help protect their community.

How and Where to Report Suspicious Activity and Suspected Copper Theft**

[Insert Local Police Organization Name]

- [Insert local police station phone number] and/or 911
- [Insert local online reporting link]

[Insert Local Utility Name]

- [Insert reporting phone number]
- [Insert applicable website link to get more info/report]

**Please update the information above to reflect your respective organization and community.

E-Newsletter Content

Copper Theft: Understanding the Safety Risks and Community Impacts



Copper theft is more than a property crime. It creates serious electrical safety hazards, threatens critical infrastructure and can disrupt essential services that communities rely on every day.

When copper is stolen from electrical systems, live electrical equipment can become exposed and critical safety systems compromised, creating shock and fire hazards that can cause serious injury or death. In some cases, electrical hazards may remain long after the theft has occurred and are not always visible to the public, utility workers or first responders.

Copper theft can also disrupt electricity, telecommunications and other essential services that homes, businesses and public facilities depend on every day.

Recent changes to the Criminal Code, including the federal government's Bill C-14, have strengthened penalties for those who target or damage essential infrastructure. However, preventing injuries and protecting communities also requires continued awareness, vigilance and reporting of suspicious activity.

What You Can Do

1. **Know the Risks:** Never approach cut wires, damaged utility equipment or restricted electrical infrastructure. Stay at least 10 metres away from a downed powerline.
2. **Understand the Impact:** Copper theft can lead to service interruptions, community disruption and costly repairs.
3. **See Something, Say Something:** If you see suspicious activity around electrical infrastructure:
    - Stay back and do not approach the area.
    - Report suspicious activity to [insert local police service info]. If there is an emergency or an immediate threat to safety, call 9-1-1.
    - Report damaged infrastructure to [insert local utility info].

Social Media Assets

1. Know the Risks

Post 1

Copper theft is not just a property crime.

Tampering with electrical infrastructure can expose live equipment and create hazards that can seriously injure or kill someone.

Know the risks: [insert link to Copper Theft article on website]

#ElectricalSafety #CopperTheft #PublicSafety

Post 2

The danger from copper theft can remain after the theft occurs.

Damaged infrastructure may create hazards that are not always visible.

Stay back. If you encounter a downed powerline, keep at least 10 metres away and report it.

Know the risks: [insert link to Copper Theft article on website]

#ElectricalSafety #CopperTheft #PublicSafety

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Social Media Assets (continued)

2. Understand the Impact

Post 1

Copper theft can damage electrical infrastructure and disrupt critical services communities rely on every day.

Understand the impact: [insert link to Copper Theft article on website]

#ElectricalSafety #CopperTheft #PublicSafety

Post 2

Copper theft can create safety hazards, service interruptions and costly repairs.

Damage not only impacts the immediate site but can impact access to community services.

Understand the impact: [insert link to Copper Theft article on website]

#ElectricalSafety #CopperTheft #PublicSafety

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Social Media Assets (continued)

3. See Something, Say Something

Post 1

See suspicious activity around electrical infrastructure?

Stay back. Do not intervene. Report to your local authorities.

Report suspicious activity: [insert link to Copper Theft article on website]

#ElectricalSafety #CopperTheft #PublicSafety

Post 2

See It. Stay Back. Report It.

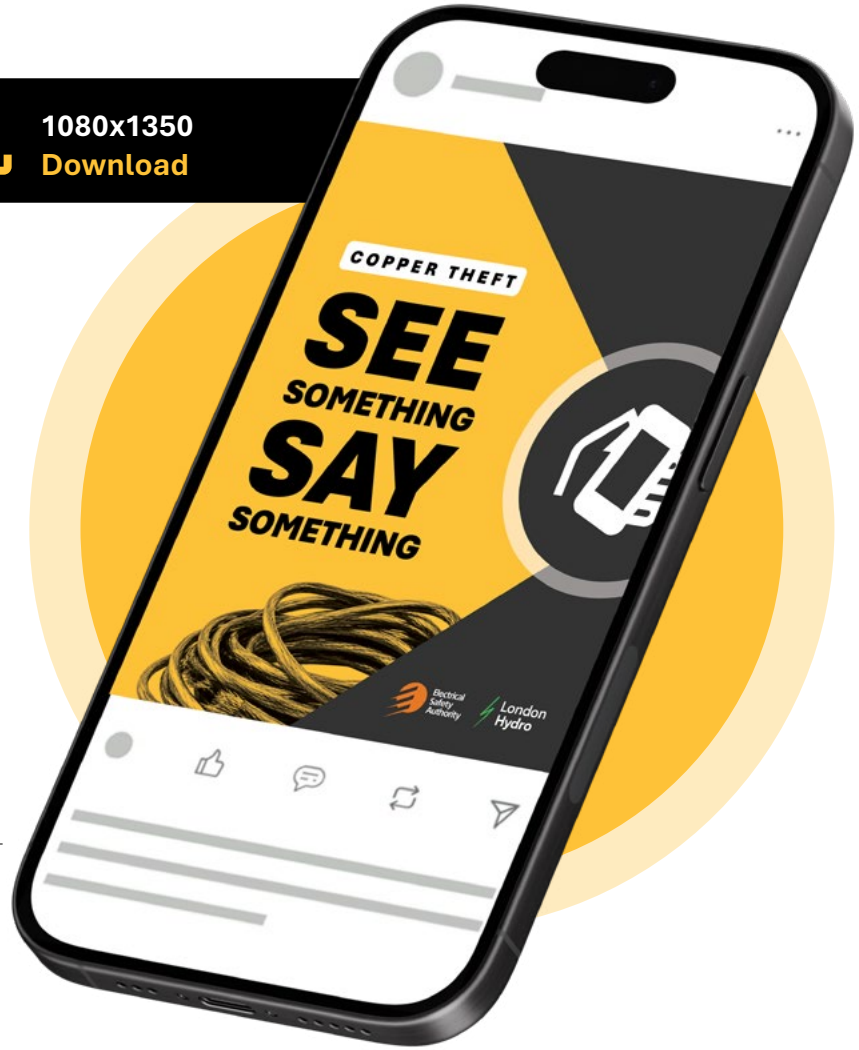
If you see suspicious activity around electrical infrastructure, don't intervene. Keep your distance and contact local authorities.

If a downed powerline is present, stay at least 10 metres away

Who to contact: [insert link to Copper Theft article on website]

#ElectricalSafety #CopperTheft #PublicSafety

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Frequently Asked Questions



Why is copper theft a public safety issue?

Copper theft can expose live electrical equipment and create serious electrical hazards.

Who can be affected?

Members of the public, utility workers and first responders may all be affected due to shock and fire hazards that can cause serious injury or death.

Are electrical hazards always visible?

No. Damaged equipment may remain hazardous even if no visible signs are present.

What should I do if I see suspicious activity?

Stay back and report it through appropriate local channels.

Should I confront someone?

No. Do not approach or confront suspected individuals.

What should I do if equipment appears damaged?

Stay away and notify the local utility.

How far should I stay away from a downed powerline?

Stay at least 10 metres away and do not approach or touch the line or anything in contact with it. Report the hazard through the appropriate local utility or emergency channel.

When should I call 9-1-1?

Call 9-1-1 if there is an immediate threat to life or safety.