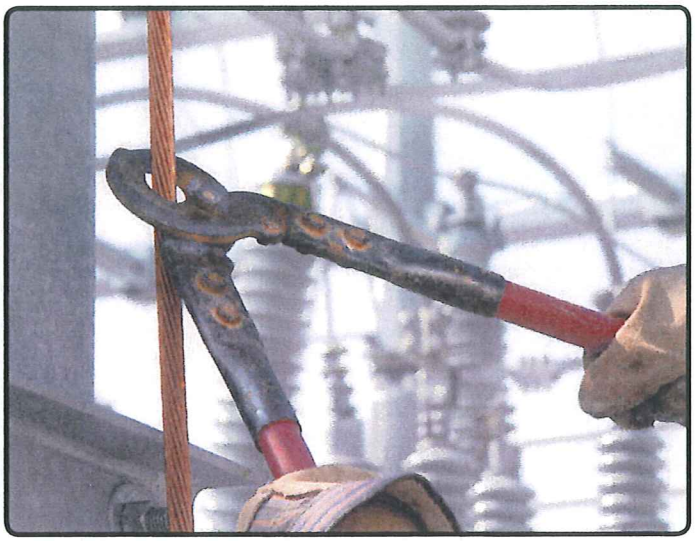
Public Safety

Copper Theft Can Kill

Information to Help Prevent Copper Cable Theft



Copper theft is a deadly problem because it can injure or kill those stealing it and endanger the public. Law enforcement, scrap dealers and local citizens can help to prevent copper theft by increasing their awareness and reporting theft. Would you know how to identify stolen electrical copper cables? The pictures above represent some of the most common copper wires used and stolen in the electric industry. Kentucky Power needs your help in stopping this alarming crime. You can help save a life.

Why is Copper Theft a Problem?

In recent years, the significant rise in the price of copper has resulted in a direct increase in the number of copper thefts from electrical facilities. Not only has theft increased, but the thieves are becoming increasingly bold in their actions and taking greater risks to get the valuable metal.

Copper is used in the electric industry to deliver electricity to your home and business, but also is used as a grounding system to protect the public and utility workers. When copper is stolen, it compromises the electrical system and can cause injuries and death.

Foremost, copper theft is a safety issue, potentially causing harm to the thieves, members of the public and electrical workers. However, copper theft also can cause power outages that can be inconvenient for customers and costly to businesses.

The Cable Theft Process

Copper may be stolen from electric poles, power lines, substations and company storage yards. Cables are cut at short lengths, approximately 2-6 feet, with a saw, bolt cutters or ax.

Before resale, the plastic sheathing and outer skin are usually removed from the cable because raw copper is more valuable.

The Consequences of Copper Theft

Copper theft is illegal in all states, and copper theft from an electrical substation may be a federal offense. Not only is stealing copper illegal, but the purchase of copper is illegal where the purchaser knows or has reason to believe that the copper is stolen. In fact, many states have instituted laws requiring stricter record-keeping and reporting by scrap metal dealers, imposing stiffer penalties for failure to do so.

Kentucky Power will fully support the prosecution of those stealing copper or intentionally buying stolen copper.

Report Copper Theft

Copper theft is a growing crime that comes with deadly consequences, but it can be combatted with your help. If you have any information about copper theft, please call Kentucky Power's security hotline at 1-866-747-5845. One phone call can help save lives.

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