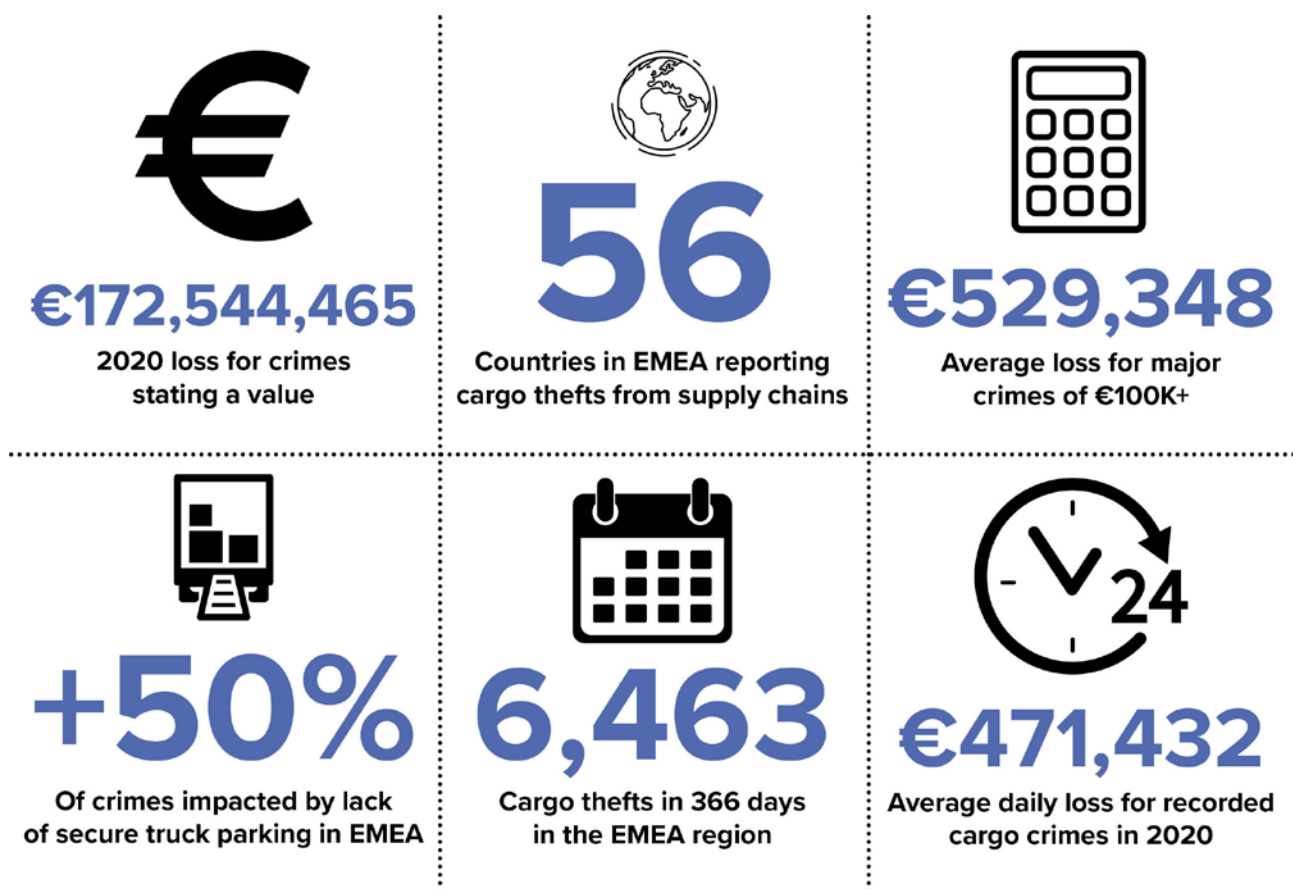


Cargo theft remains high in 2020 despite lockdowns

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By Damian Brett



TAPA EMEA - 2020 cargo theft data

The Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) region saw cargo crime continue at a high rate last year despite Covid lockdowns limiting the movement of people.

Figures from the Transported Asset Protection Association's (TAPA) *Cargo Theft Annual Report* shows that 6,463 cargo thefts were reported across 56 countries last year.

The organisation said that the number of actual incidents is likely to be much higher as the number reported on its database was likely restricted by Covid.

Thorsten Neumann, president and chief executive of TAPA EMEA, said: “2020 will go down in history as a year like no other. At a time when most businesses were focused almost entirely on a fight for survival, and law enforcement agencies faced the added pressure of policing new government lockdowns, traditional channels of cargo crime data were, as expected, also severely impacted.

“Consequently, it is difficult to give a meaningful comparison with previous years. However, while some criminal operations would have been disrupted by lockdown measures, 2020 still saw the second-highest rate of incidents in TAPA’s 24-year history. And, had we been able to maintain the same level of data sharing from LEAs across the region as we achieved in 2019, I am certain 2020 would have set a new record for cargo crimes in the EMEA region.

“For organised crime groups (OCGs) and other, smaller groups of offenders targeting supply chains, cargo crime is its own ‘industry’ offering very rich rewards. Although, TAPA EMEA members are among those companies best protected from these threats, the risks remain 24/7/365, even during a pandemic.”

TAPA said that plenty of factors will have fuelled criminal activities in 2020, including media reports of product shortages, job losses or the fear of unemployment opening up new ‘markets’ to buyers seeking bargains and scarce supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) from governments, medical professionals and consumers.

The top three product types suffering losses in 2020 were: food and drink (536 cargo thefts), tobacco (403 incidents) and theft of truck and/or trailer (282 incidents).

Other products suffering high loss rates from supply chains in the last calendar year included furniture/household appliances (240 loss incidents), clothing and footwear (213), cosmetics and hygiene (150), tools/building materials (97), metal (87), computers/laptops (68), and pharmaceuticals (67).

Trucks, trailers and last mile delivery vans were by far the most popular target for cargo thieves, as in previous years, representing 56.3% of all crimes recorded. This compared to 212 crimes recorded as theft from facility in 2020.