



UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY
Situational Awareness Bulletin

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TYPE of ACTIVITY or THREAT

SAFETY – Theft of copper from Energy Sector substations creating unsafe conditions to first responders and Energy Sector personnel.

RFI: The Michigan Intelligence Operations Center (MIOC) is requesting information on any events involving thefts from electrical substation in your area of responsibility (AO).

SUMMARY

Over the last week, approximately 10 Energy Sector substations in the Marshall and Battle Creek area have been the victims of copper theft. Because the current street value for scrap copper is over \$4.00 per pound, electric substations have become lucrative targets. The targeting of substations for copper has been an issue for over a year. The recent thefts from substations in the greater Flint area caused significant power outages to the area and safety issues for first responders. The suspects are stealing the grounding system conductors and other wires stored at the substation at night. This is accomplished by digging up sections of the grounding system conductors and cutting it off from the power units. The process is time-consuming and requires the suspects to go inside the substation perimeter fence. A few sites have experienced repeated offenses of copper theft.

Energy Sector companies have advised there **SIGNIFICANT** safety risk when responding to a substation that has been the victim of copper theft. If a section of the substation grounding system is severed or removed, the grounding system and equipment connected to the grounding system can still hold dangerous levels of electric charge. This may include the perimeter fencing.

Responders should check the perimeter of the substations for signs of intrusion, including cut fencing or cut gate locks. Officers should look for power equipment sparking or the smell of burnt material before proceeding. **Do not touch the fence or go inside as the area is not safe and a company representative should be on site before entrance is made.** If a suspect is found within the perimeter and/or within the fenced area, responding officers should **make the suspect walk toward the officers, away from the electric equipment and advise the suspect not to touch the perimeter fence.**

ASSESSMENT/ANALYSIS

Since January 1, 2012, approximately 30 substation incidents have been reported statewide.

As of, March 22, 2012, more than 2,100 homes and businesses in the Bellevue area were without electrical service due to these thefts.

OTHER INFORMATION:

The wire being stolen is stranded with two silver strands blended in with the copper-colored strands. One of the silver strands may be stamped for identification. The words are small, however; if stamped it will make the product easy to identify to prove ownership. Not all of the wire is marked and some of it may be painted gray as well.

MIOC MISSION STATEMENT

The Michigan Intelligence Operations Center shall collect, evaluate, collate, and analyze information and intelligence and then, as appropriate, disseminate this information and intelligence to the proper public safety agencies so that any threat of terrorism or criminal activity will be successfully identified and addressed.

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Information may be exempt from public release under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552).

Photo provided by Southern Maryland Information Center



Any agency seeking additional information is asked to contact The MIOC CIP Desk at cip-desk@michigan.gov or 517-335-0262.

HOMELAND SECURITY STANDING INFORMATION NEEDS

This Situational Awareness Bulletin addresses the following Homeland Security Standing Information Needs:

HSEC-6.1.2.9 Energy sector facilities, systems, operations, equipment, supplies, personnel, or events.

All crimes and violence related to these Homeland Security Standing Information Needs – including identifying adversaries, suspicious activities and behaviors, knowledge elicitation, motivations, indicators and plans, methods, capabilities, criminal activities and violence, should be reported to the MIOC at michigan.gov/michtip or mioc@michigan.gov.

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