OVERHAUL

United States & Canada: Annual Cargo Theft Report 2023

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Overhaul's 2023 Annual Report is meant to highlight the ways in which cargo theft events in the United States and Canada are evolving. This understanding is critical in order to help shippers and drivers prepare for and avoid risks.

To that end, Overhaul actively compiles data regarding cargo theft activity, categorizing stolen loads by product type, and tracking by date, location, Modus Operandi (M.O.), value and specific product. This report summarizes the United States and Canada theft data collected in 2023 and analyzes trends derived from database content, law enforcement information, and industry associates. It also draws on observations by personnel in the field to provide an overview of national cargo theft activity as well as a deep dive into specific focus areas based on our findings. Specifically, we homed in on cargo theft activity in California, Texas, and Tennessee, as well as thefts involving shipments of Electronics.
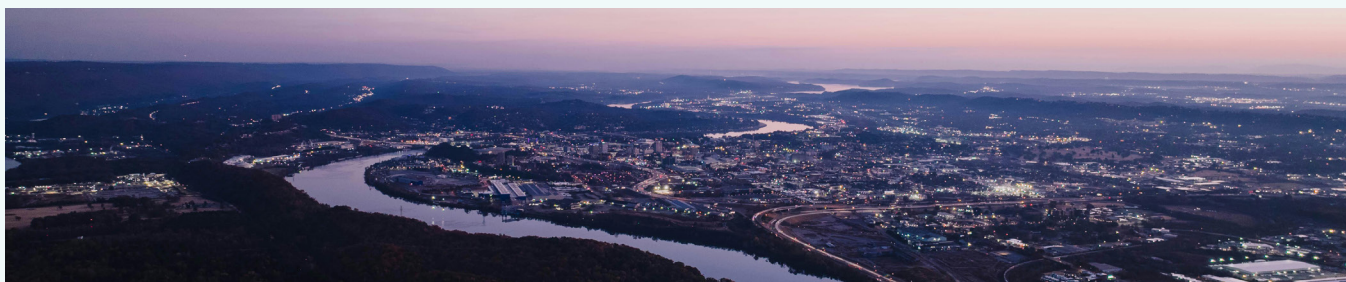
Cargo theft in the United States continues to show higher incidence near freight hubs and large cities, leading to hot spots in states such as California (54%) and Texas (16%), which ranked 1st and 2nd in terms of cargo theft risk. Electronics (20%) were especially at risk, followed by Food & Drinks (15%), Home & Garden (14%), and Miscellaneous (12%).

In 2024, cargo theft events in the United States are expected to show a major increase from 1,183 to 1,598. These numbers show definitively that cargo theft is an ongoing risk that must be taken seriously, and the range of affected industries and times in which an attack may occur highlight how important it is to have the right tools and technology to keep your shipments safe.

We hope this report helps you better understand the cargo theft patterns observed in the United States and Canada during 2023 and how this data has informed Overhaul's predictions for 2024. In turn, these predictions can help you better plan your shipping routes and outfit your carriers with the electronic security and real-time monitoring solutions to best protect your cargo.

It is inherent that the reader understands that any cargo theft report is an indirect representation of the overall cargo theft footprint; it is not a direct reflection. Overhaul records only those cargo thefts reported by reliable sources, such as transportation security councils, insurance companies, and law enforcement organizations. While this does not result in the 100% capture of incidents, it provides a sufficient cross section of cargo thefts and allows Overhaul to identify trends and deliver in-depth, accurate analysis of the scope of cargo theft in the United States and Canada. Additionally, Overhaul only records incidents involving the theft of cargo, not standalone conveyances such as trailers, containers, or bobtail tractors.

It should be noted that delays in incident reporting typically cause measurable increases in theft volumes in the weeks following publication of Overhaul reports. As such, the most recent totals for the year are expected to rise above those recorded thus far. It is Overhaul's practice to use updated theft numbers for past timeframes when comparing them to current totals.
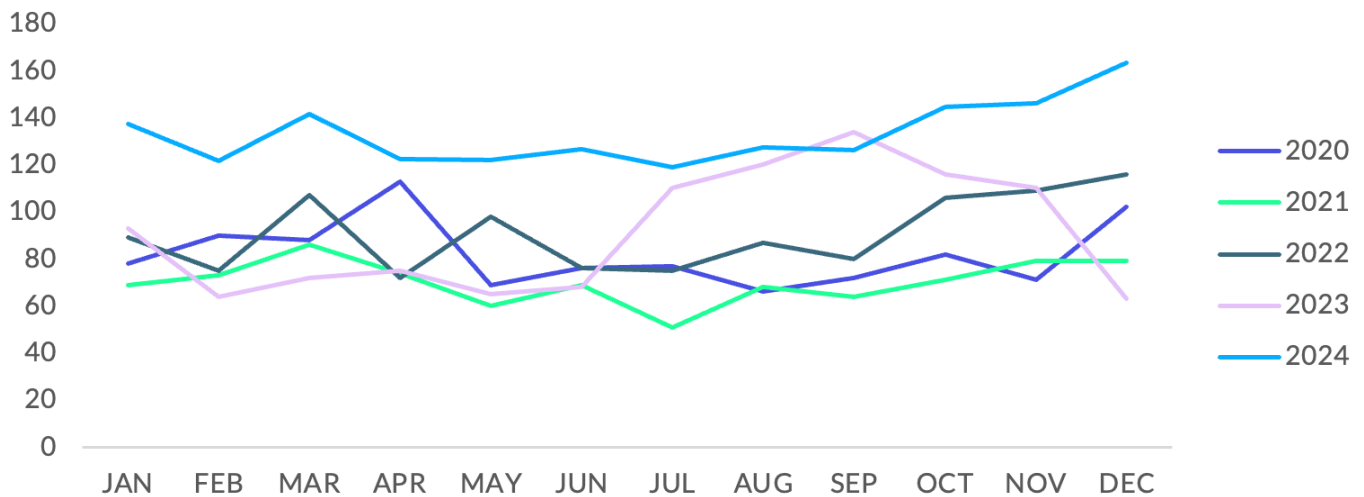
United States: 2023 Cargo Theft Report

Overhaul recorded a total of 1,183 cargo thefts throughout the United States in 2023, including 229 in Q1, 208 in Q2, 457 in Q3 and 289 in Q4. The average value of these thefts was $586,917. These numbers represent a 9% increase in volume and a 67% increase in average value when compared to 2022. With an average of 98.5 reported cargo thefts per month, the United States sustained cargo thefts at a rate of 3.24 per day in 2023, up from 2.99 in 2022.

As seen in **Graph 1,** U.S. cargo theft volumes in 2021 saw a return to pre-pandemic trends in cargo theft volumes, decreasing by 14% versus 2020. 2022 was a year of unique supply chain disruptions and economic challenges, likely influencing the 29% increase in cargo theft volumes in the U.S. versus 2021. 2023 followed 2022 trends and exceeded cargo theft expectations, especially in the second half of the year where the recorded theft events grew significantly.

Overhaul's time series analysis suggests that national cargo theft volumes will experience an increase of 35% in 2024, following 2022 and 2023 trends.

Graph 1: Cargo Theft Monthly Trends 2020 - 2023/Predictive Analysis 2024
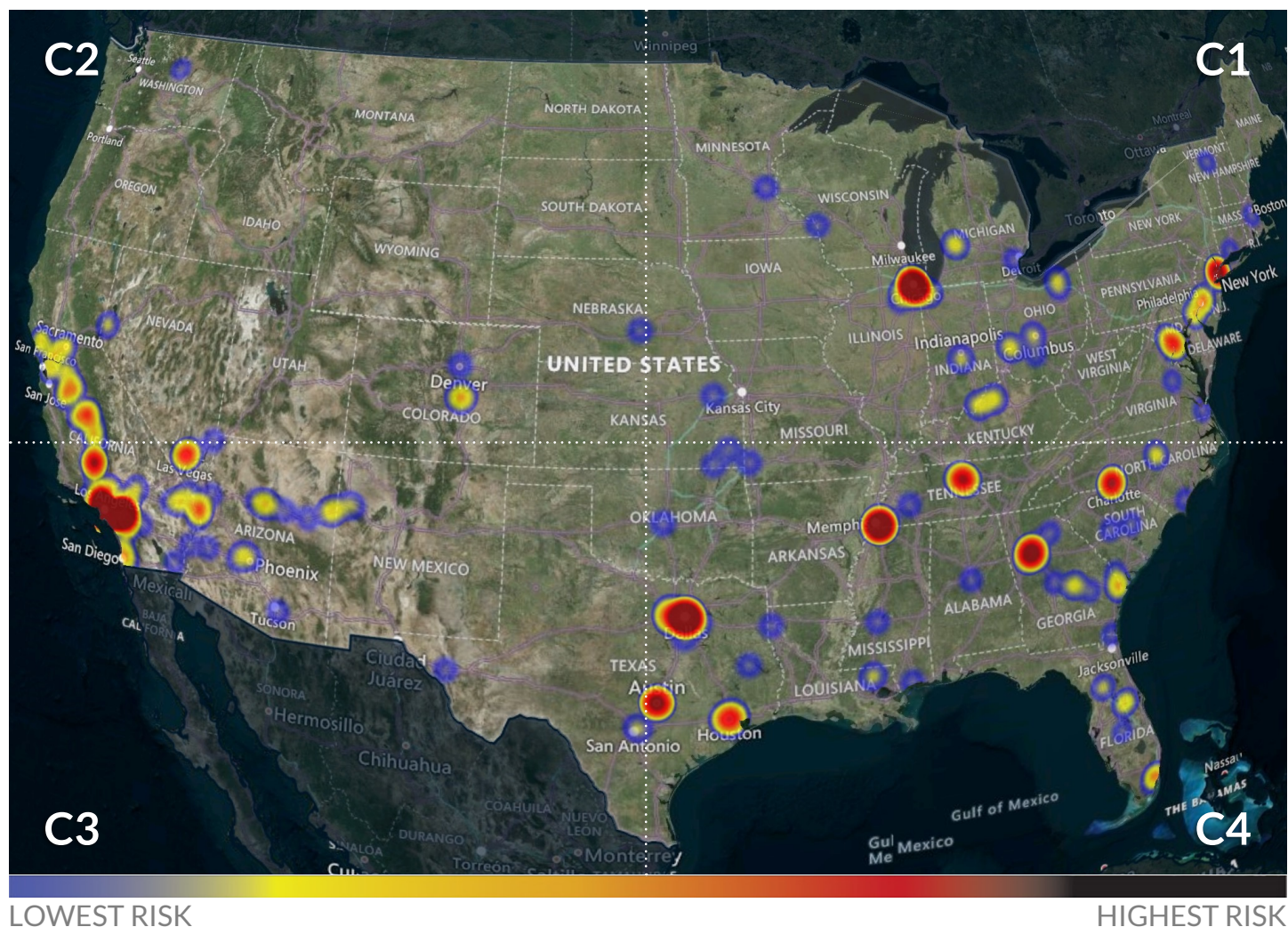
Legend: 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

Spatial and Temporal Analysis of Cargo Theft in the United States

By dividing the country into quadrants as seen in the map below, it was identified that 50% of recorded cargo thefts occurred in Quadrant 3 (C3), which includes known cargo theft hot spots such as Los Angeles, Bakersfield, and San Bernardino. C3 theft volumes increased 20 percentage points in 2023, whereas Quadrant 1 (C1) recorded a 15% increase versus 2022. This is explained by the increased theft volume in Chicago and New York City.

Quadrant 4 (C4) recorded a 32% concentration of thefts in the country, and Quadrant 2 (C2) only recorded 3% of all cargo theft events in 2023.

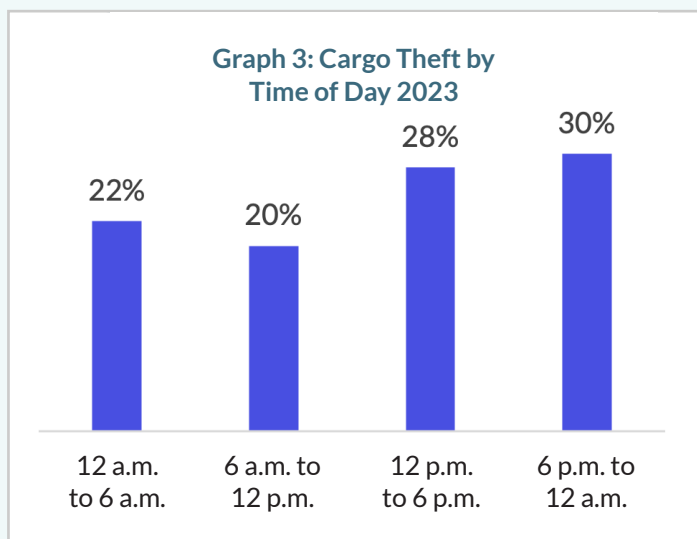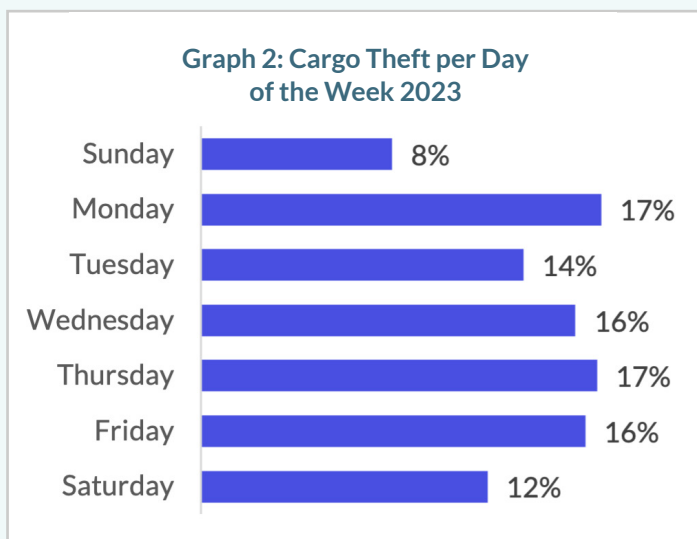LOWEST RISK   HIGHEST RISK

In terms of temporal patterns, cargo theft by month was more volatile in 2023 than 2022, with a range of 8.4% between the highest and lowest months (July and February respectively) as compared to a range of 2.7% in 2022. In 2023, the third quarter concentrated the highest levels of cargo theft with 39%, followed by Q4 with 32%.
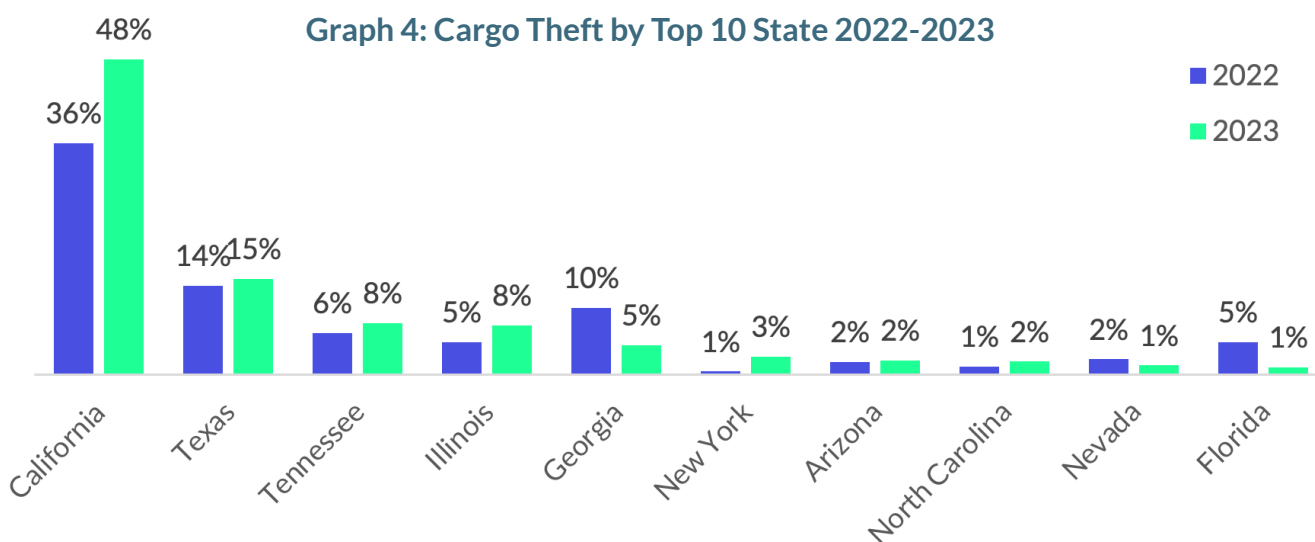
Thefts per Day & Hour

Just like the previous year, weekends weren't the most popular days of the week among thieves. In 2023, Mondays and Thursdays showed the highest concentration of cargo crime with a combined 34% of incidents.

As for timetables, the pattern changed from what was shown in 2022, with 30% of all cargo theft events taking place between 6 p.m. and 12 a.m. The concentration of thefts during these hours increased 9 percentage points versus 2022, while thefts occurring overnight between 12 a.m. and 6 a.m. decreased 18 percentage points, representing a total of 22% in 2023.

Graph 2: Cargo Theft per Day of the Week 2023

Day	Percentage
Sunday	8%
Monday	17%
Tuesday	14%
Wednesday	16%
Thursday	17%
Friday	16%
Saturday	12%

Graph 3: Cargo Theft by Time of Day 2023

Time	Percentage
12 a.m. to 6 a.m.	22%
6 a.m. to 12 p.m.	20%
12 p.m. to 6 p.m.	28%
6 p.m. to 12 a.m.	30%

Analysis of the 10 States with the Highest Volume of Cargo Thefts

During 2023, 63% of all thefts were recorded in the top two states, up from 49% in 2022. This is largely due to the increase in thefts in the Southern region of the country. California once again claimed the top spot for cargo theft, concentrating 48% of total thefts in 2023. Texas' cargo theft volumes didn't show a significant increase versus 2022, landing at 15% in 2023.

Graph 4: Cargo Theft by Top 10 State 2022-2023

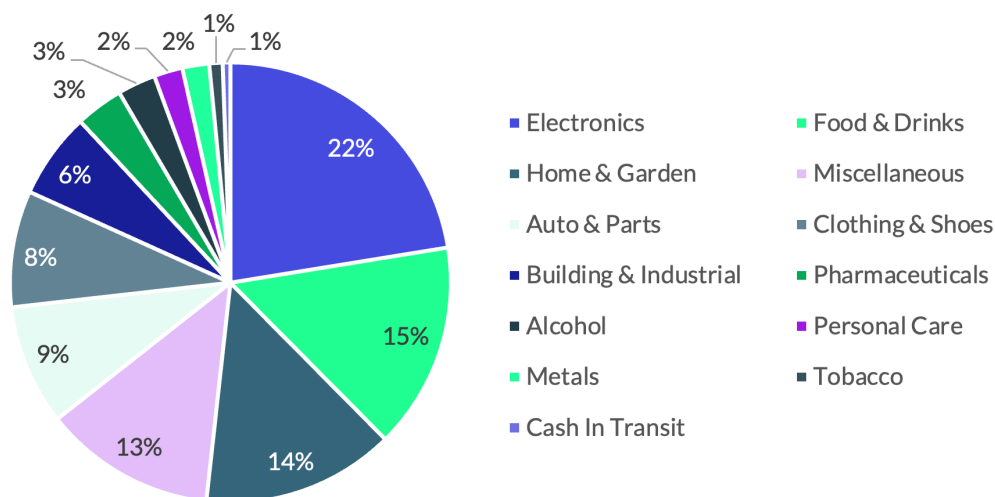| State	2022	2023
California	36%	48%
Texas	14%	15%
Tennessee	6%	8%
Illinois	5%	8%
Georgia	10%	5%
New York	1%	3%
Arizona	2%	2%
North Carolina	1%	2%
Nevada	2%	1%
Florida	5%	1%

Cargo Theft by Product Type & Value

For the third consecutive year, *Electronics* was the most stolen product type among recorded cargo theft incidents. It registered 22% of total thefts, a slight 2% decrease from 24% in 2022. *Food & Drinks* (15%) was the second most stolen product type, recording a 66% increase from 2022. *Home & Garden* (14%) followed closely behind, maintaining third place in 2023.
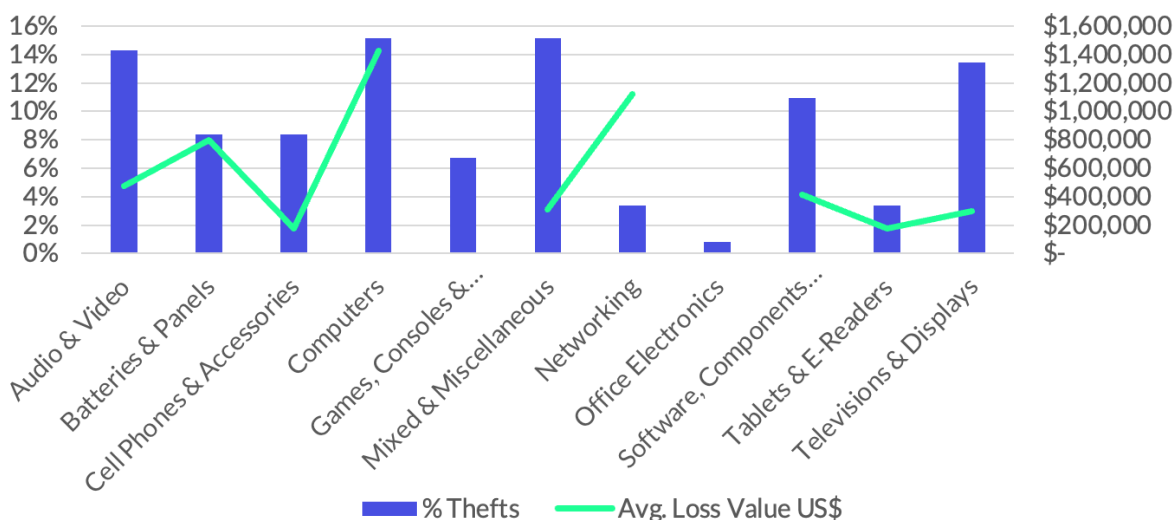
Graph 5: Cargo Theft by Product Type 2023

Legend:
- Electronics
- Home & Garden
- Auto & Parts
- Building & Industrial
- Alcohol
- Metals
- Cash In Transit
- Food & Drinks
- Miscellaneous
- Clothing & Shoes
- Pharmaceuticals
- Personal Care
- Tobacco

Product Type Drilldown: Electronics

Electronics recorded 22% of total thefts in 2023 and an average loss value of $546,045. California (74%) remained the top state for *Electronics* thefts, followed by Arizona (9%) and Tennessee (3%) to represent a combined 86% of total *Electronics* thefts.

Graph 6: Electronics Theft by Subtype & Value 2023

Categories: Audio & Video, Batteries & Panels, Cell Phones & Accessories, Computers, Games, Consoles &..., Mixed & Miscellaneous, Networking, Office Electronics, Software, Components..., Tablets & E-Readers, Televisions & Displays

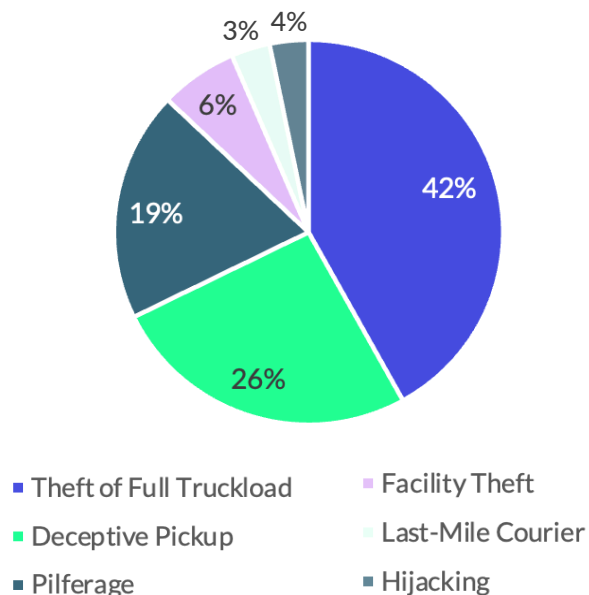Legend: % Thefts — Avg. Loss Value US$

Product Type Drilldown: Food & Drinks

Food & Drinks ranked second in 2023, representing 15% of recorded cargo theft events. 29% of theft events within this category were **Theft of Full Truckload**. Coffee and Energy & Sports Drinks accounted for 21% of thefts.

California concentrated the highest volume of **Food & Drinks** thefts at 71%. Florida ranked second at 8%, followed by Georgia with 6%. In terms of the type of thefts recorded within the category, after **Theft of Full Truckload** (42%), **Deceptive Pickup[1]** accounted for 26% of incidents, followed by **Pilferage** with 19%.

[1] The categories of Deceptive Pickups and Fictitious Pickups have been consolidated into a single category of Deceptive Pickup. This change has been made to streamline our reporting and analysis processes. Going forward, all theft events involving a fraudulent pickup will be classified as Deceptive Pickup.

Graph 7: Food & Drinks by Type of Event 2023

Pie chart values: 42%, 26%, 19%, 6%, 3%, 4%

Legend:
- Theft of Full Truckload
- Deceptive Pickup
- Pilferage
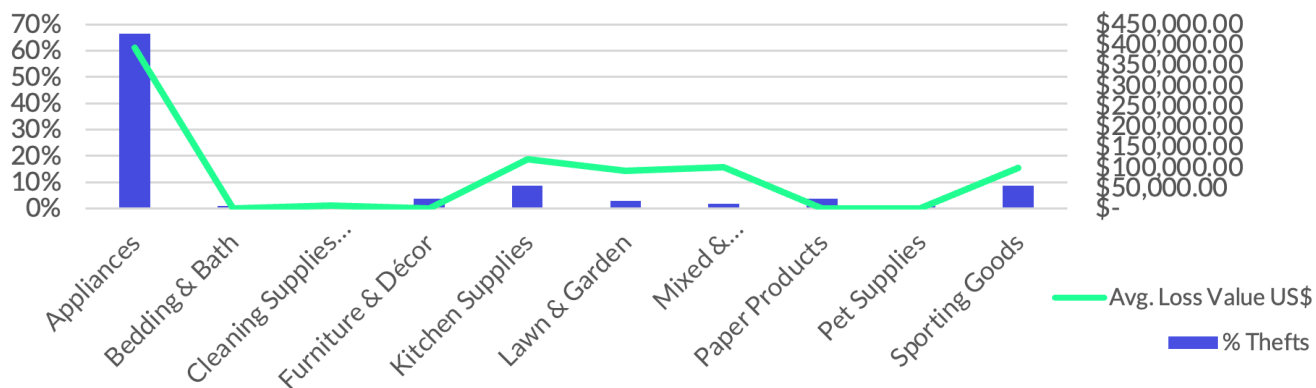- Facility Theft
- Last-Mile Courier
- Hijacking

Product Type Drilldown: Home & Garden

In 2023, **Home & Garden** was the third most stolen product type behind **Electronics** and **Miscellaneous,** accounting for 14% of the total. This marked an increase of two percentage points in comparison to 2022.

Within the **Home & Garden** category, Appliances continued to be the most stolen subtype, accounting for 66% of all thefts, followed by **Kitchen Supplies** at 9%. **Toys & Games** saw a significant increase from 3% in 2022 to 8% in 2023, replacing **Sporting Goods** as the third most stolen subtype. Along with the increased volume of thefts, **Appliances** also experienced a significant increase in average loss value, reaching $392,579 in 2023 and becoming the product subtype with the highest average loss value within the broader **Home & Garden** category.

Graph 8: Home & Garden Theft by Subtype & Value 2023

X-axis categories: Appliances, Bedding & Bath, Cleaning Supplies..., Furniture & Décor, Kitchen Supplies, Lawn & Garden, Mixed &..., Paper Products, Pet Supplies, Sporting Goods

Legend:
- Avg. Loss Value US$
- % Thefts

Average Loss Value

The average loss value per theft incident in 2023 was $586,917, a 67% increase compared to 2022. This increase in cargo theft volume indicates that cargo theft risk is on the rise, with criminals specifically targeting high-value loads.

Some product types recorded significantly higher average values in 2023 when compared to 2022, such as **Miscellaneous, Metals, Clothing & Shoes, and Home & Garden.**
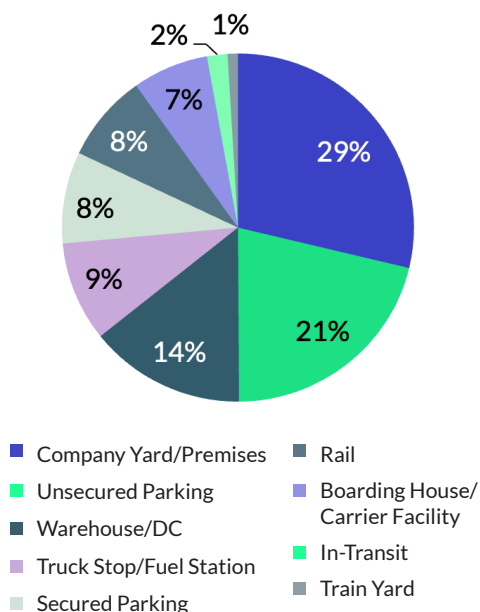
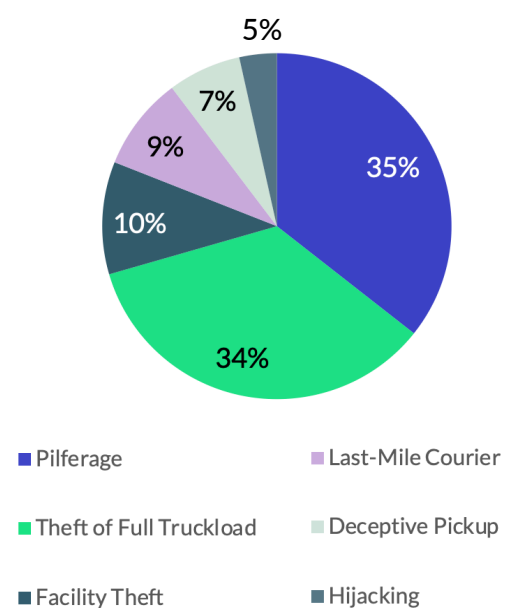| Product Type	2023	2022
Alcohol	$ 16,219	$ 31,184
Auto & Parts	$ 148,111	$ 143,204
Building & Industrial	$ 113,971	$ 120,025
Cash In Transit	$ 500,000	$ 646,000
Clothing & Shoes	$ 1,638,850	$ 350,706
Electronics	$ 546,045	$ 651,549
Food & Drinks	$ 192,041	$ 140,253
Home & Garden	$ 295,929	$ 103,200
Metals	$ 772,912	$ 134,857
Miscellaneous	$ 2,550,277	$ 129,472
Personal Care	$ 580,824	$ 304,111
Pharmaceuticals	$ 129,893	
Tobacco		$ 142,258
All Product Types	**$ 586,917**	**$ 351,556**

Cargo Theft by Event Type & Location

In the United States, cargo thieves tend to target trailers and containers that are stationary and unattended due to the risk of capture. From 2022 to 2023, the rate of **Theft of Full Truckload** increased by 19%, while the rate of **Pilferage** increased by 5%. Despite the increase in **Pilferage** and **Theft of Full Truckload,** the types of events with the highest increase in 2023 were **Facility Theft** (+52%), **Last-Mile Courier** (51%), **Hijacking** (+42%), and **Deceptive Pickup** (+36%).

In 2022, 8% of all thefts with a known location occurred within **Company Yard/Premises;** this rate increased to 29% in 2023. **Unsecured Parking** recorded the second highest theft rate at 21%. **Warehouse/ DCs** (+28%), **Rail** (+353%), and **Secured Parking** (+68%) all recorded increases, representing a combined 31% of all recorded events in 2023.

Graph 9: Cargo Theft by Location 2023

Legend:
- Company Yard/Premises
- Unsecured Parking
- Warehouse/DC
- Truck Stop/Fuel Station
- Secured Parking
- Rail
- Boarding House/Carrier Facility
- In-Transit
- Train Yard

Graph 10: Cargo Theft by Type of Event 2023

Legend:
- Pilferage
- Theft of Full Truckload
- Facility Theft
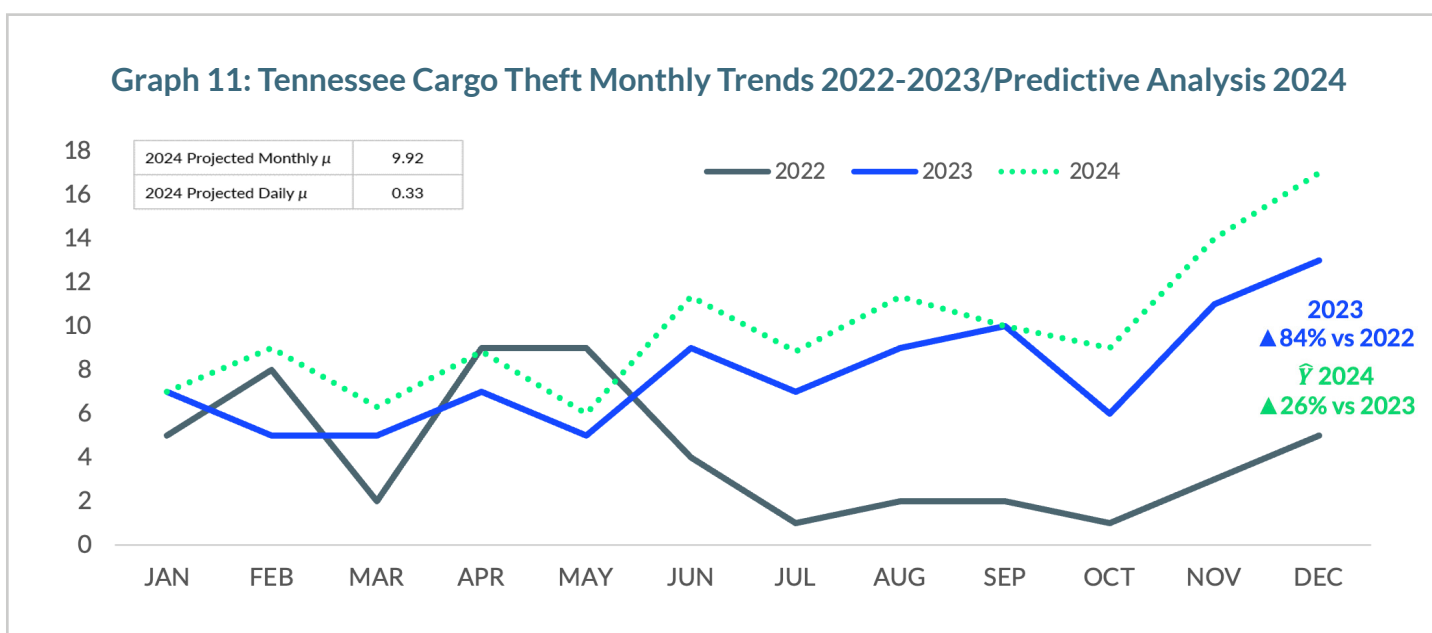- Last-Mile Courier
- Deceptive Pickup
- Hijacking

Special Report 2023

The Overhaul Intelligence Center decided to do a special report on load theft in the state of Tennessee, which recorded one of the largest increases in cargo theft at a national level and was ranked the third highest for cargo theft risks in 2023.
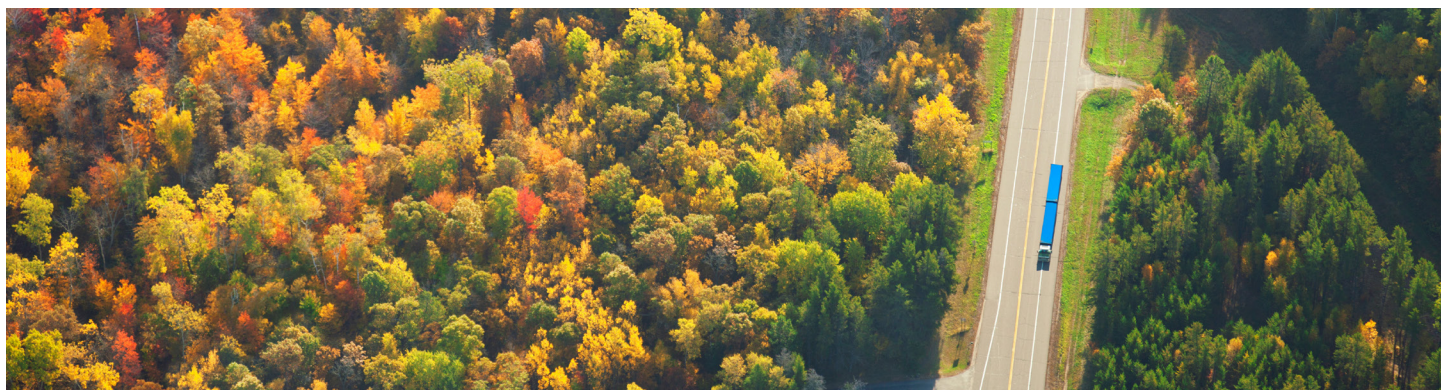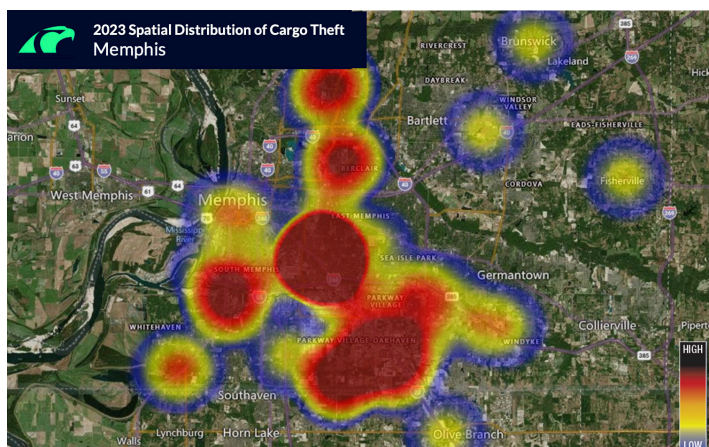
Cargo Theft in Tennessee

In 2023, Tennessee accounted for 9% of all recorded cargo theft events in the United States, representing an 84% increase in volume compared to 2022. This trend is expected to continue in 2024, with Overhaul predicting a 26% increase in theft rates within the state compared to 2023, resulting in an average of 9.92 thefts per month.

Graph 11: Tennessee Cargo Theft Monthly Trends 2022-2023/Predictive Analysis 2024

2024 Projected Monthly μ	9.92
2024 Projected Daily μ	0.33

Legend: 2022, 2023, 2024 (dotted)

2023
▲84% vs 2022

$\hat{Y}$ 2024
▲26% vs 2023

Months: JAN, FEB, MAR, APR, MAY, JUN, JUL, AUG, SEP, OCT, NOV, DEC

In terms of spatial distribution, the primary hot spots in the state have consistently been in Memphis (75%) and Nashville (23%).

The most stolen product type in the state was *Miscellaneous* at 22% with an average loss value of $30,000, which is 13% higher than that recorded across all product types. *Clothing & Shoes* (19%), *Electronics* (19%), *Food & Drinks* (15%), and *Pharmaceuticals* (7%) completed the top 5 most stolen product types in Tennessee, which represented a combined 81% of total thefts.

2023 Spatial Distribution of Cargo Theft
Tennessee

2023 Spatial Distribution of Cargo Theft
Memphis

The displacement of criminal activity in Tennessee shows that cargo crimes shifted from *Pilferage* (-34%) to *Theft of Full Truckload* (+35%) and *Facility Theft* (+63%).

In 2023, most thefts occurred after dark (46%), but there was a notable increase in the rate of thefts recorded between 12 p.m. and 6 p.m. (+23 percentage points). Thefts between 6 a.m. and 12 p.m. recorded a decrease of 26% versus 2022.
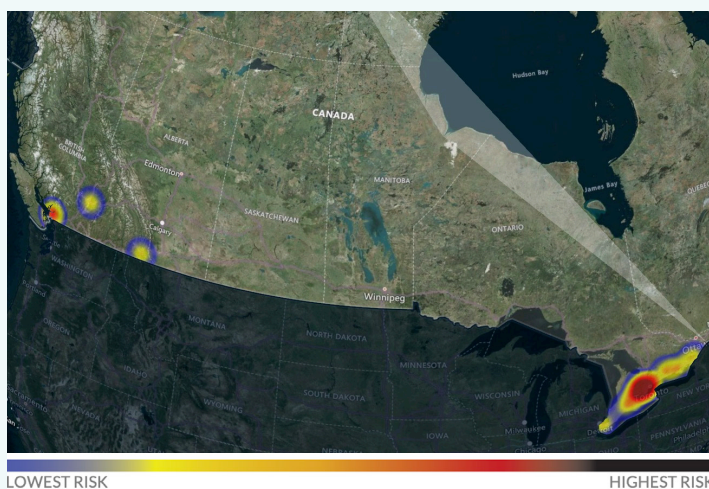
Memphis is the main hotspot within Tennessee. In this city, 70% of all events were *Theft of Full Truckload*. In 2023, 46% of all thefts with a known location occurred at *Unsecured Parking, Warehouse/DC* and *Truck Stop/Fuel Station,* each of which represented 21% of all events within the state.

Canada

Historically an area of low reporting, the cargo theft issue in Canada is nonetheless well known. Industry-wide reporting still trails behind that of the United States. However, organized cargo thieves in Canada are just as sophisticated as they are in the United States, often utilizing the same methods and criminal networks not only to target products, but also to liquidate them.
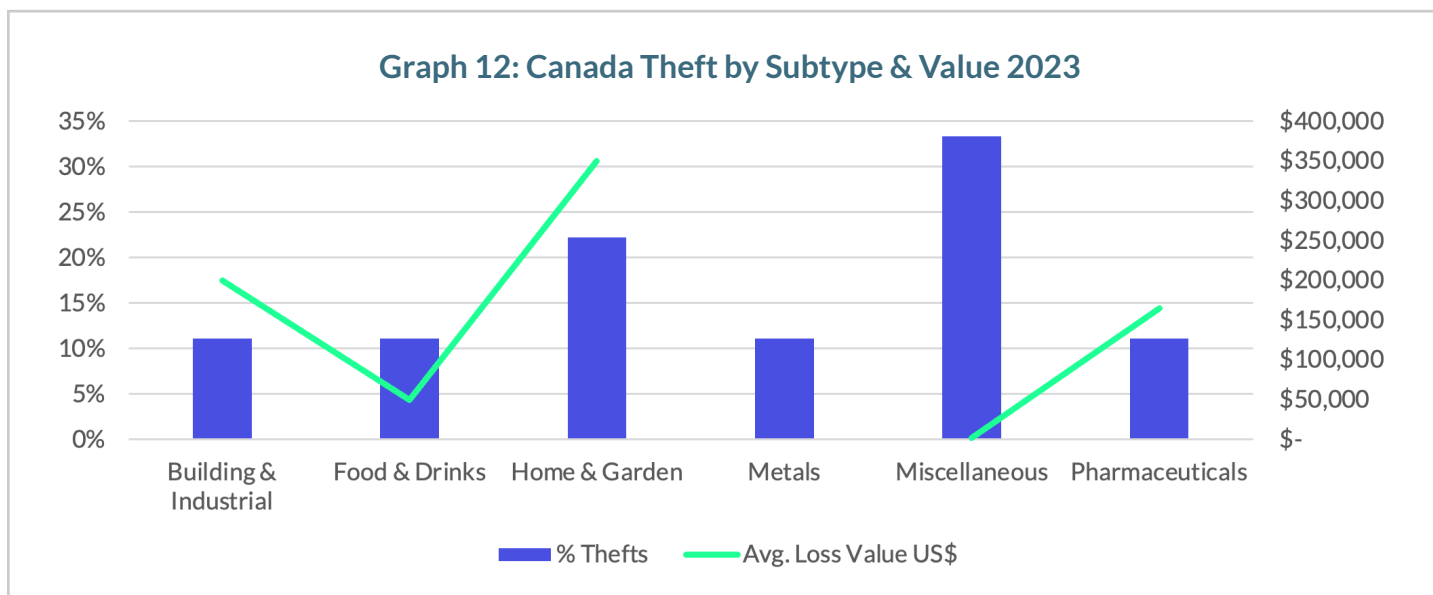
The majority of cargo theft incidents in Canada occurred in Ontario, accounting for 75% of all thefts. These events were concentrated around the Greater Toronto Area, which is considered the most severe hotspot for cargo theft in the country. The remaining 25% of thefts occurred in British Columbia.

When examining product types, *Miscellaneous* was the most stolen product type in 2023 (33%), followed by *Home & Garden* (22%) and both *Food & Drinks* and *Pharmaceuticals* at 11% each. These four product categories accounted for 78% of total thefts in the country. At $350,000, *Home & Garden* claimed the highest average loss value in the country.

LOWEST RISK   HIGHEST RISK

Graph 12: Canada Theft by Subtype & Value 2023

Legend: ■ % Thefts — Avg. Loss Value US$

For the second consecutive year, **Theft of Full Truckload** remains the most popular method with 63% of total thefts. **Facility Theft** increased from 14% in 2022 to 19% in 2023, making it the second most common theft type together with **Last-Mile Courier,** which recorded the same theft rate in 2023. It is important to mention that most of the **Last-Mile Courier** events were recorded in the last quarter of the year, especially in the holiday season.

While industry incident reporting lags behind, cargo crime in Canada is likely to rise until cargo theft specific legislation is passed and better data is available to understand the problem.

Recommendations

Overhaul considers the threat of cargo theft in the United States and Canada to be HIGH and on the rise, despite the expected decrease in theft volume in 2023. This is due, in part, to the continued increase in the level of organization and sophistication of criminal groups focusing on high-value cargo, as evidenced by the ongoing upward trend observed in atypical theft types such as Deceptive Pickup and Facility Theft.

Steps should be taken to verify the authenticity of all shipment related activities, particularly those involving entities who have been engaged to either move or store a shipment. Driver and business verification, prior to releasing any shipment, is paramount.

Given that a significant proportion of thefts continue to occur while cargo units are stopped, Overhaul recommends that any location where cargo would either intentionally (or unintentionally) come to rest—even for brief periods of time—should be as secure as possible. Things to consider when selecting a secure area/lot include controlled access, adequate lighting, congestion, any type of either personal or video surveillance, the estimated duration of the stop, and past intelligence of localized cargo theft activity.

In all cases, tracking technology should be used to its fullest extent on the conveyance power unit, cargo area when separate, and the cargo itself. This will enable shippers to maintain visibility of their shipment and identify suspicious route deviations, unauthorized stops, and separation of the cargo from the conveyance.