

Tool Theft Crisis? These are the riskiest regions for your tools... and the staggering costs to tradespeople

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New research has revealed the location of tool theft hotspots across the nation, with London and West Yorkshire having the highest numbers of reported cases in proportion to the local population. That's according to FOI data collated and analysed by [Monster Mesh](#), construction and branding specialists.

A similar study found that the construction industry suffers a loss of more than £400 million a year due to vandalism and theft⁽²⁾ and this latest report reflects these figures, with over £94 million worth of tools being reported stolen across London Boroughs alone⁽¹⁾.

Tool or van theft can be hugely detrimental for tradespeople, not only impacting victims financially but, affecting their stress levels, productivity and reputation too. That's why Monster Mesh conducted this study to find out the scale of the problem and warn tradespeople about the issue.

The construction and event branding specialists submitted FOI requests to 45 police forces to find out which regions were most impacted by tool theft and received responses from 31 constabularies across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The responses were collated and analysed to find out,

- How many cases of tool theft took place - number of reported incidents
- The number of cases in proportion to the local population size
- The estimated cost of tool theft reported to each constabulary

The report findings revealed:

The City of London Police reported the most cases of tool theft per 100,000 people. However, the City of

London covers the central district of London which is more of a business hub, rather than a residential area. This meant that though the number of incidents reported in total wasn't the highest, the population in this area is low, meaning that there is comparatively a high number of theft incidents. Given the numerous high-value construction sites in the area, tradespeople visiting should be vigilant over their tools and equipment.

The most affected location outside of London was West Yorkshire, which reported 3,048 incidents last year. That's on average, 130 instances of tool theft per 100,000 people. In locations along major motorways like the M62, thieves may find it easier to escape with stolen goods. Parts of West Yorkshire also experience higher rates of deprivation, potentially increasing theft rates as an economic coping mechanism.

Safest regions for tool theft

North Wales ranks as the safest region for tradespeople's tools. Just 18 incidents in total were reported to Police last year, which equates to just 3 cases of tool theft for every 100,000 people. With as few as 45 people per square kilometre, opportunities for theft are limited due to the low-density population.

Leicestershire came in as the fourth safest, despite being a more highly populated region. Leicestershire Police have increased patrols in construction hotspots to deter theft and have used targeted outreach to tradespeople which emphasises secure storage methods and comprehensive insurance coverage⁽³⁾.

Regions with the highest total value of tool theft

When it comes to the total value of tool theft, unsurprisingly London is number one, with over £94 million being reported to the Metropolitan Police Service. This is a staggering figure and the figure could be even higher given any unreported tool theft instances.

Mark McLennan, Founder at [Monster-Mesh](#) said: "With four Police constabularies reporting over £1m of tools per year, it's safe to say tool theft is one of the biggest and most costly problems facing construction firms and tradespeople.

Tool theft costs them far too much time, money and stress, especially given the ongoing cost of living crisis. Many just don't have the resources to spare, which is why we wanted to warn the industry and share a range of low cost tips to help tradespeople prevent tool theft by putting their best foot forward."

For guidance on how to reduce the risk of tool theft for tradespeople and businesses, read Monster Mesh's [7 low cost tips to prevent tool theft](#).