

RHA

Driving Down Freight Crime

RHA's Call to Police and Crime Commissioners



April 2024



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The road transport industry is critical to the UK supply chain and economic growth. It faces significant pressures, from unsustainable cost increases across wages, fuel, and energy, to shortages of drivers, technicians, vehicles, and parts.

Police and Crime Commissioners are the people's voice in policing. They ensure their local forces are focused on the needs of their area, and work in partnership with stakeholders at the local and national level to ensure a unified approach to preventing and reducing crime.

Road haulage and coach businesses are struggling up against rising levels of freight crime and inconsistency in roads policing, particularly for the movement of large freight movements (also known as abnormal loads). It is in these areas that we call on Police and Crime Commissioners to take action.

Freight Crime: The extent of the problem

Freight crime refers to any crime targeted at road vehicles designed to carry goods, ranging from threats and attacks on drivers to the theft of valuable loads.

Freight crime costs the UK economy around £250 million annually. The National Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service (NaVCIS) reports that in 2023, there were 5,373 reports of HGV and cargo crime in the UK, resulting in an estimated cost of the loss in value from thefts alone of £68 million. The retail value will of course be much higher, not to mention the cost of damage to vehicles and higher insurance premiums.

The value of goods stolen alone cannot calculate the true cost of freight crime; it affects companies' viability, staff retention, and levels of investment into the UK. There is a particularly severe impact on small to medium sized enterprises that make up the majority of the logistics industry and already struggling with cost-of-living and business pressures.

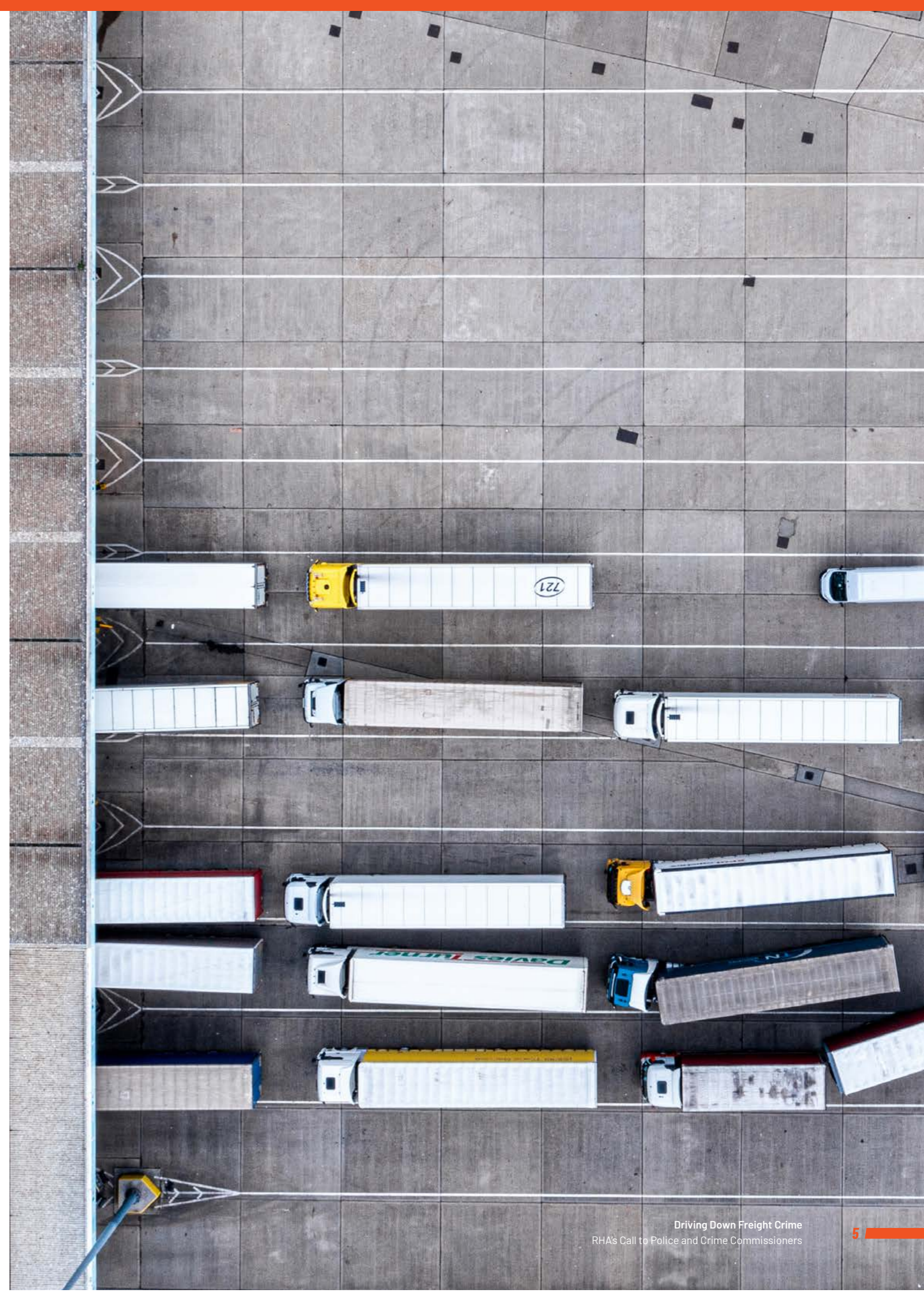
Organised Crime Groups are the primary perpetrators of freight crime. They know what is moving and when, where trucks are most likely to be at rest and vulnerable and how to avoid detection. This industry knowledge and operational intelligence makes freight crime a low-risk, high-reward enterprise.

RHA's asks of Police and Crime Commissioners

The National Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service (NaVCIS), a national police unit hosted by Hampshire Constabulary, is the lead organisation targeting cargo and trailer thefts. It operates independently, under the direction of the National Police Chief Councils' vehicle crime lead ACC Jenny Sims. It receives no financial support from Government, and relies entirely on their sponsors for funding, of which RHA is one.

NaVCIS compiles statistics on freight crime and provides direct support to local forces when problems with freight crime are identified. This is made harder by the fact that freight crime is not recorded separately from other vehicle thefts, making it more difficult to truly ascertain the extent of the problem. NaVCIS have attempted to resolve this by requesting forces record freight crimes with #FREIGHT.

Government and industry are also working to drive down freight crime by addressing the lack of secure parking spaces that makes HGVs more of a target for criminals. A National Survey of Lorry Parking has been completed identifying areas in need of more truckstops. An industry task and finish group, led by the RHA, has been brought together to address both low standards and low capacity across the industry. £52.5m has been allocated through various match funding grant schemes to help truck stops invest in improvements, including security measures.





Abnormal Loads

When oversized vehicles need to move on the UK's roads, usually transporting a large piece of machinery such as wind turbine parts, their movements need to be reported to police, who can impose certain restrictions. These restrictions are currently inconsistently applied across the country, and there are limited police guidelines in place as to how any restrictions should be applied.

Large disparities between how police forces choose to regulate abnormal loads and overly stringent limitations on travel times and routes causes significant delays to journeys. The cost of these inefficiencies is borne by businesses and the end consumer and increases both carbon emissions and the risk of freight crime. Independent economic research carried out by CEBR has shown that the estimated financial cost of increased requirements for hauliers moving abnormal loads is £16.8m per annum. Reduced activity and wasted time by hauliers due to increased bureaucracy has been estimated to cost up to £171m per annum.

The road haulage industry needs consistency of application and approach in this area, and we call on the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners to prepare guidance on the oversized vehicle movement regulations and the engagement that should take place in determining local needs as well as push for a consistent approach as is possible within the UK.

RHA's asks of Police and Crime Commissioners

We ask that all Police and Crime Commissioners make driving down freight crime a priority by:

- Ensuring your force recognises the true impact of freight crime on victims, particularly businesses and drivers by referencing it directly in your Police and Crime Plan.
- Encouraging full engagement with NaVCIS in acting to drive down freight crime, including reporting instances of freight crime directly to the unit, inclusion of the #FREIGHT tag in reports and requesting assistance where significant numbers of freight crime instances are reported.
- Inclusion of freight crime in policies relating to organised crime and liaise with other forces to address issues, including through the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners.
- Recognising the role of safe and secure truckstop parking in driving down freight crime and convening stakeholders from industry and local authorities to help applications for new safe and secure truck parking, particularly in areas of highest need, to be approved.
- Making use of commissioning powers to invest in driving down freight crime, by:
 - Sponsoring NaVCIS operations
 - Assisting truckstops with investment in security measures.
 - Creating a local awareness campaign.
- Lobbying alongside other PCCs for national action to drive down freight crime, including:
 - A NPCC Freight Crime Strategy and a National Awareness Campaign
 - Government funding towards NaVCIS operations
 - Engagement with Opal team on serious organised acquisitive crime.
 - Consistent restrictions on the movement of abnormal loads thus reducing journey times.

▮ The RHA is a major trade association representing 8,500 road haulage, coach, and van operators across the UK, 85% of whom are SMEs. Our members operate around 250,000 HGVs (half of the UK fleet) out of 10,000 operating centres and range from a single-truck company to those with thousands of vehicles.

To find out more, please click here: <https://www.rha.uk.net/>

▮ For more information, please connect with us:



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