OVERHAUL

United States Q1-2026 Cargo Theft Report

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Executive Summary

Overhaul's US Q1-2026 Cargo Theft Report is meant to highlight the ways in which cargo theft events in the United States 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 theft data collected in Q1-2026 and analyzes trends derived from database content, law enforcement information and industry personnel. 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 related to **Memphis.**

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 (36%) and Texas (17%), which ranked 1st and 2nd in terms of cargo theft risk. **Electronics** (17%) were especially at risk, followed by **Food & Drinks** (15%), **Miscellaneous** (13%), **Auto & Parts** (11%), and **Clothing & Shoes** (11%).

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 during Q1-2026 and better plan your shipping routes and outfit your carriers with the electronic security and real-time monitoring solutions to best protect your cargo.

United States: Q1-2026 Cargo Theft Trends

In Q1-2026, Overhaul recorded a total of 574 cargo theft incidents in the United States. This number is still high, representing an average of 191 incidents per month and about 6.4 per day, but it is a decrease of 6% compared to Q1-2025. This drop may be at least partially explained by the large number of successful arrests and enforcement by Law Enforcement Agencies across the country.

Since 2021, cargo theft had increased every year, with each first quarter higher than the same period the year before. The results in Q1-2026 break this pattern, showing a change after several years of steady growth.

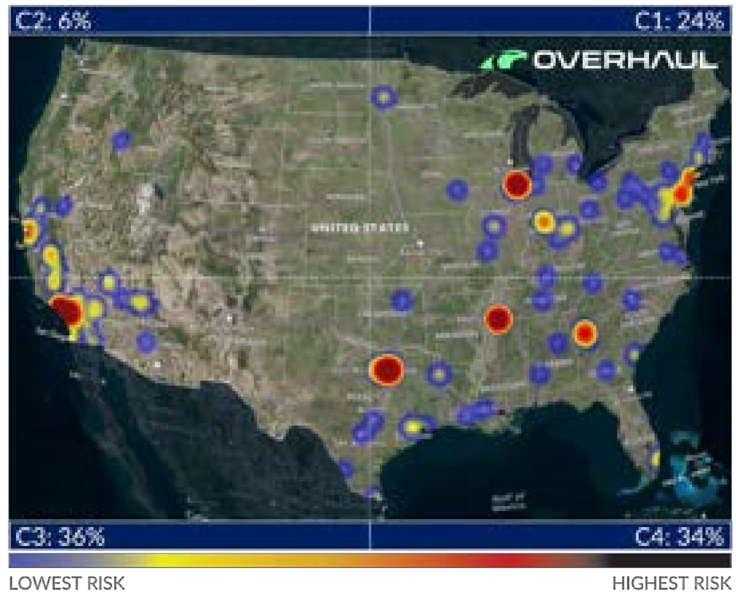
When compared to Q4-2025, theft incidents in Q1-2026 decreased by 25%, which is 9 percentage points less than the drop seen in Q1-2025 versus Q4-2024. This means that although cargo theft usually goes down at the start of the year, the drop in 2026 was smaller than expected, and risk levels did not go down as much as in previous years.

Historically, the first quarter of each year shows a decrease in cargo theft compared to the last quarter of the previous year. This is usually due to lower economic and logistics activity after the holiday season. However, the smaller decrease in early 2026 suggests that risk is still higher than usual.

The distribution of theft incidents in the first quarter of 2026 was 37% in January, 31% in February, and 32% in March.

Spatial and Temporal Analysis of Cargo Theft in the United States

By dividing the country into quadrants as seen in the map below, Quadrant 3 (C3) recorded the highest share of cargo theft incidents at 36%, driven largely by sustained activity in Southern California, which remains the most established cargo theft hotspot in the United States.



Quadrant 4 (C4) followed closely with 34% of total incidents, with key metro areas such as Dallas and Memphis continuing to show elevated levels of activity. The remaining incidents were distributed across 24% in Quadrant 1 (C1) and 6% in Quadrant 2 (C2).

Although Southern California continues to anchor cargo theft activity, the near parity between C3 and C4 highlights a more balanced distribution of risk across regions. This reinforces the shift observed over the past year, where cargo theft is no longer concentrated in a single geographic cluster but is instead becoming more dispersed across major logistics corridors.

This pattern suggests that organized theft groups are expanding operations beyond traditional hotspots, targeting high-volume freight hubs in multiple regions. As a result, risk exposure is becoming more widespread, requiring broader geographic coverage in both monitoring and prevention strategies.

Spatial and Temporal Analysis of Cargo Theft in the US

Thefts Per Day & Hour

In Q1-2026, cargo theft activity showed a more balanced distribution throughout the week, although certain days continue to present higher risk. Thursday (18%) and Monday (17%) recorded the highest concentration of incidents, followed by Friday (16%). Meanwhile, Tuesday (14%), Saturday (13%), Sunday (11%), and Wednesday (11%) showed moderate to lower levels of activity.

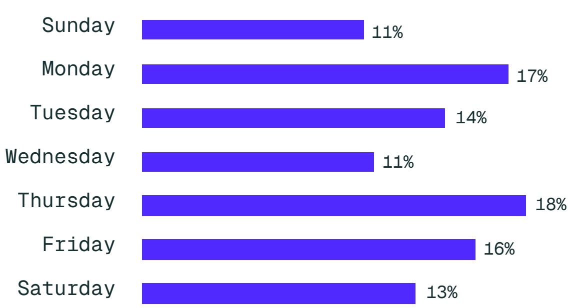
In terms of timing, cargo theft activity also showed a redistribution. The 00:00 to 06:00 hrs window remained the highest-risk period at 29%, consistent with historical patterns of targeting shipments during low visibility hours. However, 06:00 to 12:00 hrs followed closely at 27%, indicating sustained activity extending into early operational hours.

Notably, the 12:00 to 18:00 hrs period dropped to 18%, a significant decrease compared to previous quarters when this window had emerged as the primary peak. Meanwhile, 18:00 to 24:00 hrs accounted for 26% of incidents, reflecting a rebound in evening activity.

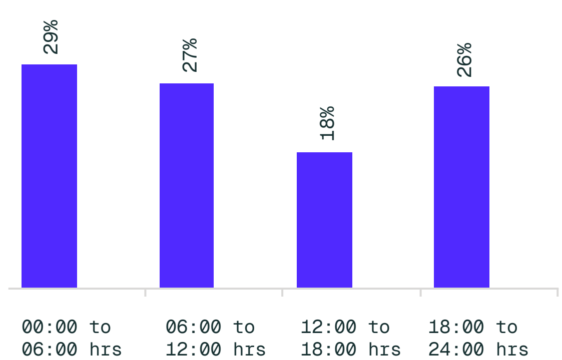
29% of cases occuring between 00:00 and 06:00 hrs remain the highest-risk period

Overall, these patterns suggest that while theft during low-supervision hours remains a key tactic, criminal activity is becoming more evenly distributed across both daytime and nighttime periods.

Graph 1. Cargo Theft per Day of Week Q1-2026



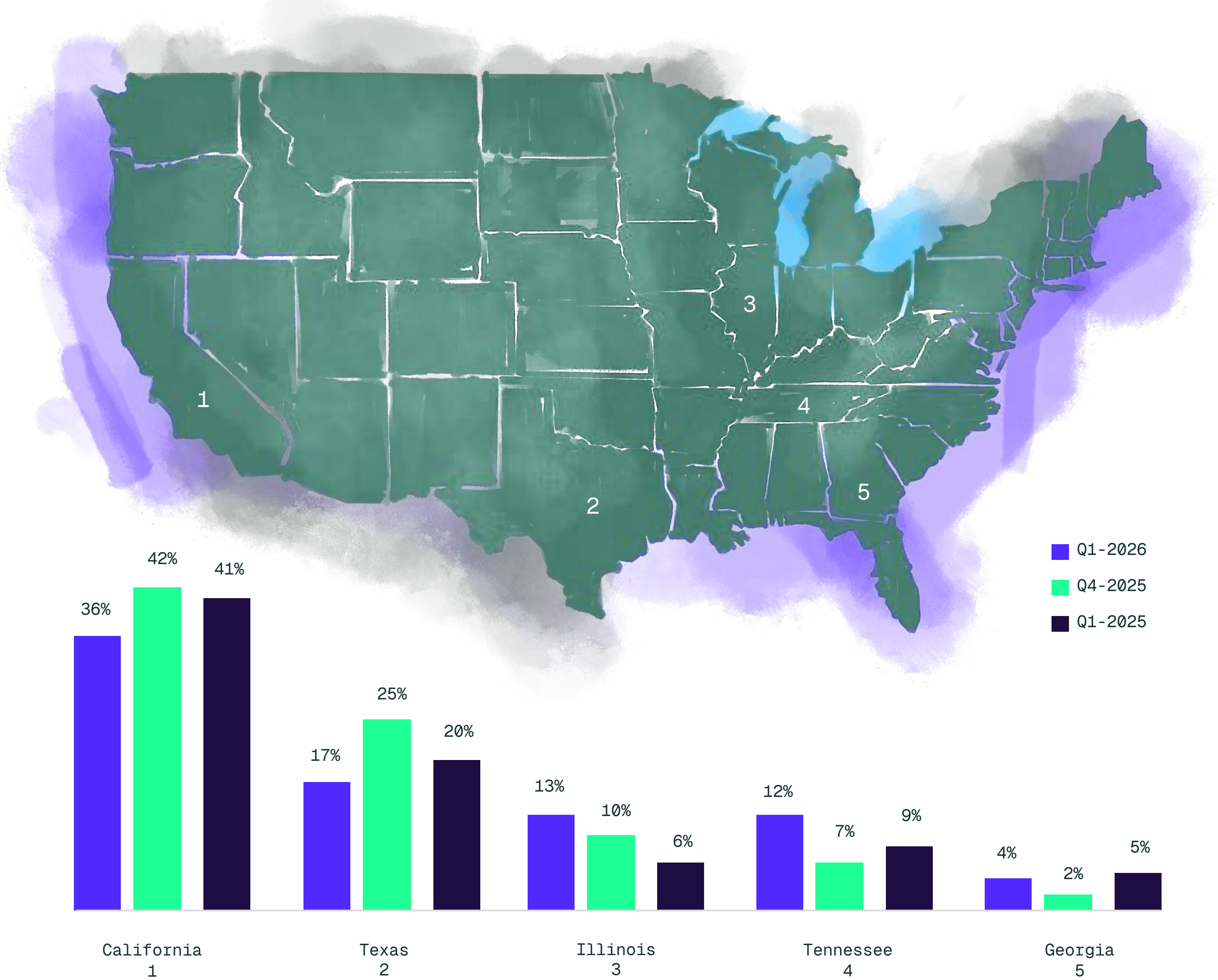
Graph 2. Cargo Theft by Time of Day Q1-2026



Analysis of the 5 States with the Highest Volume of Cargo Thefts

In Q1-2026, California remained at the top of the list of cargo theft by state, accounting for 36% of the total. This represents a decrease from 42% in Q4-2025 and also slightly down from 41% in Q1-2025. Thefts in California were primarily comprised of **Food & Drinks** (20%), followed by **Electronics** (19%), **Clothing & Shoes** (14%), **Home & Garden** (13%), and **Personal Care** (7%). These top five product categories represented the majority of thefts in the state.

Graph 3. Cargo Theft by State Q1-2026 vs Q1-2025 vs Q4-2025



Analysis of the 5 States with the Highest Volume of Cargo Thefts

Texas accounted for 17% of total thefts in Q1-2026, ranking second in the U.S. This marks a decrease from 25% in Q4-2025 and from 20% in Q1-2025. The most frequently targeted categories in Texas were **Electronics** (23%) and **Miscellaneous** (23%), followed by **Food & Drinks** (15%), **Auto & Parts** (15%), and **Metals** (8%).

Illinois rose significantly in ranking, accounting for 13% of total cargo thefts, up from 10% in Q4-2025 and 6% in Q1-2025. The most targeted product types in the state were **Electronics** (45%), **Clothing & Shoes** (25%), and **Home & Garden** (15%), showing a strong concentration in high-value consumer goods.

Tennessee recorded 12% of total cargo thefts, increasing from 7% in Q4-2025 and 9% in Q1-2025. The most frequently stolen categories were **Pharmaceuticals** (20%), **Electronics** (20%), and **Food & Drinks** (20%), indicating a balanced distribution across high-value and consumable goods.

Georgia accounted for 4% of total thefts in Q1-2026, up from 2% in Q4-2025 but slightly down from 5% in Q1-2025, continuing to represent a smaller but persistent share of cargo theft activity.

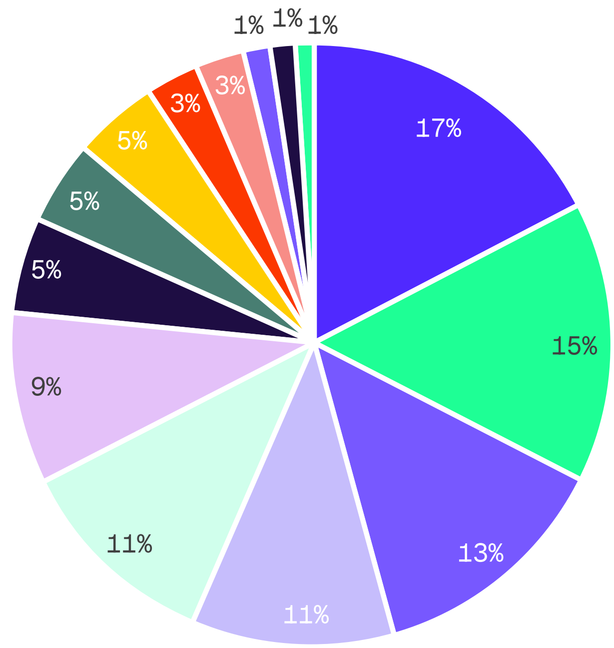
Cargo Theft by Product Type & Value

In Q1-2026, **Electronics** were targeted most frequently, representing 17% of total thefts, followed by **Food & Drinks** (15%), **Miscellaneous** (13%), and both **Auto & Parts** (11%) and **Clothing & Shoes** (11%). Together, these top categories continue to concentrate a significant share of cargo theft activity, reflecting sustained focus on high-demand and easily resellable goods.

In Q1-2026, only one product type experienced an increase in theft rate compared to both Q4-2025 and Q1-2025 (highlighted in red). **Auto & Parts** recorded the most consistent growth, increasing 142% compared to Q4-2025 and 51% compared to Q1-2025, indicating a clear upward trend in targeting this category across both comparison periods.

At the same time, several product types recorded mixed trends, increasing in one period while decreasing in the other. For example, **Food & Drinks** (+66% vs Q4-2025, -10% vs Q1-2025) and **Electronics** (-33% vs Q4-2025, +12% vs Q1-2025) reflect shifting targeting patterns depending on the comparison baseline. Other categories such as **Metals, Tobacco,** and **Personal Care** also showed growth compared to Q4-2025 but remained flat or declined year over year.

Additionally, three product types recorded lower theft rates compared to both Q4-2025 and Q1-2025 (highlighted in yellow). These include **Clothing & Shoes** (-6%, -20%), **Home & Garden** (-9%, -28%), and **Pharmaceuticals** (-15%, -25%).



Graph 4. Cargo Theft by Product Type Q1-2026

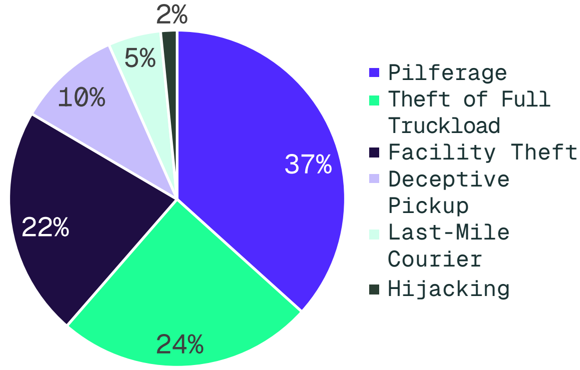
Product Type	Q1-2026	% Change Q4-2025	% Change Q1-2025
Alcohol	1%	-47%	201%
Auto & Parts	11%	142%	51%
Building & Industrial	5%	28%	0%
Cash	3%	-35%	0%
Clothing & Shoes	11%	-6%	-20%
Electronics	17%	-33%	12%
Food & Drinks	15%	66%	-10%
Home & Garden	9%	-9%	-28%
Metals	5%	55%	0%
Miscellaneous	13%	-15%	21%
Personal Care	5%	9%	-9%
Pharmaceuticals	3%	-15%	-25%
Sport Equipment	1%	-15%	51%
Tobacco	1%	41%	0%

Cargo Theft by Event Type & Location

Pilferage remained the most common method of cargo theft in Q1-2026, accounting for 37% of all reported incidents, although showing a decrease compared to previous periods. The highest concentrations of pilferage occurred in Tennessee (37%), Texas (27%), Illinois (17%), and California (12%), indicating continued localized theft activity in key logistics hubs.

Theft of Full Truckload represented 24% of incidents, making it the second most common method. These events were most frequently reported in Texas (32%), followed by California (19%), Georgia (17%), and Illinois (8%).

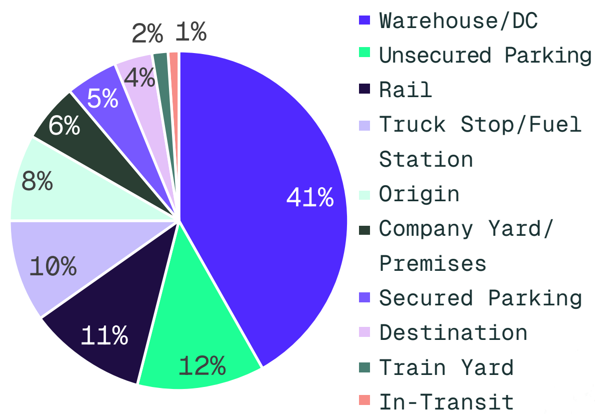
Graph 5. Cargo Theft by Type of Event Q1-2026



Facility Theft accounted for 22% of incidents, maintaining a significant share of total activity. This type of theft was heavily concentrated in California (64%), followed by Illinois (16%), highlighting a strong focus on fixed facilities.

Deceptive Pickup accounted for 10% of incidents in Q1-2026, and when compared to Q1-2025, this represents a 31% increase in events related to this method of operation. This category includes fraud, identity theft, and other forms of deception used to illegally obtain cargo. Unlike the general trend observed in Q1-2026, where cargo theft in general declined, Deceptive Pickup continues to grow and remains a significant and evolving threat to the supply chain. These incidents were primarily concentrated in California (48%), followed by Illinois (16%), Indiana (10%), and New Jersey (7%).

Graph 6. Cargo Theft by Location Q1-2026



Last-Mile Courier thefts accounted for 5% of incidents, while Hijacking remained relatively low at 2%.

When examining theft locations, **Warehouse/DC** remained the most commonly targeted site, involved in 41% of thefts where a location was specified. **Unsecured Parking** accounted for 12%, followed by Rail (11%) and **Truck Stop/Fuel Stations** (10%). Other locations included **Origin** (8%), **Company Yard/Premises** (6%), **Secured Parking** (5%), and **Destination** (4%), showing that cargo theft continues to impact multiple points.

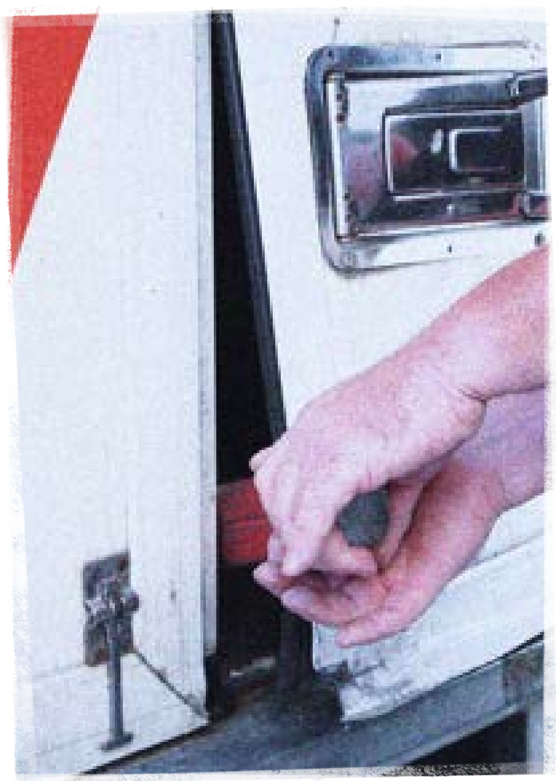
Quarterly Spotlight

To better serve the security-minded logistics community, Overhaul spotlights one product category, theft type, geographical area, or trend in each U.S. business quarter report. This quarter's spotlight focuses on cargo theft activity in Memphis, Tennessee, analyzing trends and patterns observed in Q1-2026 compared to Q1-2025. Unless otherwise specified, all data and analysis in this section are based on theft events recorded in the United States during these two periods.

MEMPHIS

showed a 27% increase in theft incidents compared to Q1-2025

Historically, cargo theft activity tends to decrease at the start of the year. This pattern was observed at the national level in Q1-2026, where overall cargo theft declined compared to previous periods. However, Memphis, Tennessee showed a different trend, reporting a 27% increase in theft incidents compared to Q1-2025. It is also important to note that Q1-2025 had already shown an increase compared to Q1-2024, confirming a consistent upward trend in cargo theft activity in this city.



This makes Memphis a growing risk area within the U.S., requiring closer attention from shippers and carriers.

From a temporal perspective, theft activity in Q1-2026 was concentrated on Thursday (26%) and Monday (22%), followed by Saturday (19%). This represents a shift from Q1-2025, where activity was more distributed across the week, with higher levels on Monday (23%), Tuesday (21%), and Sunday (16%).

In terms of timing, incidents in Q1-2026 were heavily concentrated during 00:00 to 06:00 hrs (42%) and 06:00 to 12:00 hrs (34%), showing a strong preference for low-visibility and early operational hours.

Quarterly Spotlight: Memphis, TN.

Compared to Q1-2025, this reflects a more pronounced concentration in early morning hours, as activity during 12:00 to 18:00 hrs dropped significantly to 6%.

Looking at theft methods, **Pilferage** dominated activity in Q1-2026, accounting for 80% of incidents, increasing from 75% in Q1-2025. **Theft of Full Truckload** represented 13%, while **Facility Theft** accounted for 3%, both relatively stable compared to the previous year. This confirms that Memphis is heavily impacted by theft from unattended shipments, particularly through pilferage, although full truckload thefts continue to represent a relevant risk.

From a location standpoint, **Warehouse/DC** remained the primary target (43%), although down from 55% in Q1-2025, indicating some diversification in targeting. **Company Yard/Premises** increased to 17% (from 9%), while **Unsecured Parking** decreased to 10% (from 23%), suggesting a shift in where unattended cargo is being exploited.

In terms of product types, theft activity in Q1-2026 was more evenly distributed, with **Miscellaneous** (20%), **Electronics** (20%), and **Food & Drinks** (20%) sharing the top positions. This contrasts with Q1-2025, where **Electronics** dominated with 33%, indicating a move toward more opportunistic targeting across different types of cargo.

In addition to these patterns, Memphis continues to be affected by organized groups targeting rail cargo, including thefts occurring on **Rail** lines and in **Train Yards.**

Overall, Memphis represents a complex and high-risk environment, where theft is driven largely by unattended shipments, both through pilferage and full truckload events, as well as rail-related activity. This combination of factors highlights the need for strong logistics planning and layered security strategies to effectively manage risk in the region.

Recommendations

Overhaul considers the threat of cargo theft in the United States to be HIGH and on the rise due 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** and the continued targeting of high-value shipments as evidenced by increased average loss values.

Steps should be taken to verify the authenticity of all shipment related activity, particularly any entity which has been engaged to either move or store a shipment. Driver and business verification, prior to releasing any shipment, is paramount. Overhaul recommends that shippers be extremely diligent in vetting all carriers and drivers, particularly those operating out of the Southern California and/or those handling highly targeted products such as **Electronics.** Thorough documentation should be kept that include photos from origin of the driver, his CDL, the back of the trailer with seal affixed (seal number visible), tractor and trailer identifying markings and license plates, and BOL. In addition, origin personnel should be on the lookout for red flags such as temporary placards or logos, as well as recently painted-over

logos, paper/missing license plates, and drivers not matching their CDL photo. Red flags should disqualify any offending driver from departing with a load. An immediate escalation with a path to effective law enforcement engagement is critical to recovering stolen cargo.

Additionally, tracking technology should be used to its fullest extent on the conveyance power unit, cargo area when separate, and the cargo itself, maintaining visibility of the shipment to identify suspicious route deviations, unauthorized stops, and separation of the cargo from the conveyance.

Disclaimer

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 practice to use updated theft numbers for past timeframes when comparing them to current totals.

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