



Breaking News on Global Pharmaceutical Technology & Manufacturing

# Experts warn pharma to take precautions against Thanksgiving thefts

By Gareth MacDonald+, 23-Nov-2016

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## **Holiday drug and API thefts are becoming less frequent but pharmaceutical firms still need to take precautions this Thanksgiving say experts.**

The number and value of pharmaceutical cargo thefts in the US has fallen annually since 2011 according to Freightwatch International board member Professor Marvin Shepherd, who told us only 30 to 40 shipments are stolen each year.

Despite this positive trend, drug companies still need to take precautions when normal operations are disrupted Shepard said, explaining that: *"Thanksgiving has the highest number of cargo thefts compared to all holidays."*

*"Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays are when most cargo thefts occur and most thefts occur with parked vehicles."*

This view is shared by criminologist Professor Daniel Ekwall from University of Borås in Sweden who told us *"One reason that pharmaceutical thefts increase during public holidays is because the products will be standing still a little longer period than normal."*

He added that: *"Within criminology, it is fairly common to discuss the issue of seasonality in crimes."*

*"In property crimes is it normal to expect an increase during the fall and winter but also attached to certain events, including holidays where people are not at home or the normal routines are temporally changed."*

## **High value targets**

The drugs criminals target is dictated by their value according to Ekwall, who explained: *"The basic principle for theft is that the higher black market demand or willingness to pay for a certain product, the more likely it is to be target by criminals."*

Ekwall added that criminals tend to target products that are concealable, removable, available, valuable, enjoyable, and disposable – those that are CRAVED.

He added that: *"Not all drugs are craved by thieves. My guess is that drug types like painkillers, strong ones, growth hormones and narcotic based drugs are more theft endangered. But surprises always happen."*

## **Precautions**

FreightWatch recommends logistics and security professionals ensure security protocols are up to date, and in line with industry best practices for in-transit and warehouse operations.

Again, Ekwall agreed. *"Companies protect themselves with security features – namely guards, gates and gadgets - and insurance policies as well as different routines and training."*

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