

## CASESTUDY

## Cargo Theft Recovery

## FreightWatch leads authorities to stolen pharmaceutical shipments



## Incidents

During a two-week span, an organized criminal ring is suspected of stealing pharmaceutical shipments in two incidents in Georgia. The high-value shipments were owned by the same pharmaceutical company and were stolen after they left a distribution center in southern Florida and crossed into Georgia, nearly 500 miles from origin.

In each incident, the drivers left their trailers unattended briefly and thieves drove off with the entire loads. Because of two nearly identical incidents, authorities suspect that organized criminals were targeting the distribution center and conducted active surveillance to target the pharmaceutical shipments.

Organized criminals in southern Florida and elsewhere are known to follow a targeted load longer than normal, as the first 200 miles from origin present the greatest incidence of thefts during a shipment, known as the "red zone." A common cargo theft modus operandi (MO) is that cargo thieves wait until a driver steps away from a tractor-trailer to strike.

## Recoveries

Prompt emergency response by FreightWatch International (FWI) to engage local law enforcement and provide shipment and tracking information resulted in complete recovery of the shipments with a combined value of more than \$1.6 million.

FWI's Command and Control Center (C3) initiated the emergency response process for each theft after receiving telephone calls from the client reporting them. The C3 gathered details and escalated the incidents to the FreightWatch Emergency Response Team (ERT). In each case, the ERT engaged local law enforcement and located the missing shipments using real-time location data from the FWI covert tracking technology embedded in each shipment to lead law enforcement to the stolen shipments.

## After Event Actions

After the thefts, the pharmaceutical company engaged FWI's cargo theft experts to review operations at the distribution center in Florida and consult on risk mitigation protocols to prevent possible collusion. Because authorities suspected the facility was under surveillance, manufacturers should be wary of employee involvement. FWI was also retained to provide additional monitoring services for pharmaceutical company's Florida operations as well as operations in Canada.

## Trends

According to the FWI Intelligence Center, pharmaceutical thefts in 2013 increased 97 percent and 64 percent, compared to 2012 and 2011, respectively. Given the increased risk, transporting pharmaceuticals or any high-value shipment, should not be undertaken without established security protocols including emergency response services. The FWI Intelligence Center has determined that more than 74 percent of all U.S. cargo thefts in 2013 were conducted by thieves targeting loaded trailers and containers left stationary and unattended.

## FWI

FreightWatch International has secured high-value shipments since 1998 by providing cargo security technology and services to the pharmaceutical and life sciences industries. FWI covert tracking technology and emergency response coordination can significantly mitigate the risk of shipment theft. FreightWatch has a proven track record engaging and assisting law enforcement with the recovery of stolen shipments in thefts that involved sophisticated criminal rings.