

## PART B. Statistical Methods

### 1. Respondent Universe

The *Cargo Theft Incident Report* (OMB No. 1110-0048) includes respondents from United States (U.S.) law enforcement agencies (LEAs) who voluntarily report crimes to the FBI's Uniform Crime reporting (UCR) Program. Approximately 18,400 LEAs participate in the FBI UCR Program. LEAs consist of local, county, state, tribal, and federal agencies that correlate to all population group sizes and have many diverse attributes. These agencies include a mix of population density and degrees of urbanization; various compositions of population particularly youth concentration; population mobility with respect to residents' mobility, commuting patterns, and transient factors; different economic conditions including median income, poverty level, and job availability; areas with different modes of transportation and highway systems; different cultural factors and educational, recreational, and religious characteristics; family conditions with respect to divorce and family cohesiveness; climate; effective strength of law enforcement; policies of other components of the criminal justice system; citizens' attitudes toward crime; and crime reporting practices of the citizenry.

Response rates have gradually increased over the last three years. The table below provides an overview of the number of respondent/non-respondent LEAs/states.

	<b>Number of LEAs Participating</b>	<b>Number of Non-Participating Agencies</b>	<b>Number of States/BIA* / U.S. Territories Participating</b>	<b>Participation Percentage</b>	<b>Percent Increase</b>
<b>2013</b>	3,022	15,391	11	16%	
<b>2014</b>	5,340	13,158	22	29%	13%
<b>2015</b>	8,226	10,213	32	44%	15%

\*Bureau of Indian Affairs

This increase in participation is a positive response to collecting these data, but several factors still affect collection:

- States do not have the resources required to make the necessary technical changes or to align their local and state statutes with federal requirements.
- States do not have the necessary resources to conduct data quality checks on reported incidents associated with cargo theft, which could result in inaccurate data.
- States do not have adequate resources to train participants on how to recognize and properly record cargo theft incidents
- States do not perceive cargo theft as a priority or a significant problem within their state.

### 2. Collection of Information Procedures

Ideally, all data are collected/received from state UCR Program participants on a monthly basis. The FBI's UCR Program has established various time frames and deadlines for acquiring the monthly data. Monthly reports/submissions should be received at the FBI by the seventh day after the close of each month. Annual deadlines are also designated in order to collect/assess receipt of monthly submissions. There are times when special circumstances may cause an agency to request an extension. The FBI's UCR Program has the authority to grant these extensions. Although monthly reports are preferred by agencies, upon approval, the state UCR Programs can submit data at intervals, e.g., monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, and annually; that minimizes the burden to the agency.

LEAs submit cargo theft data to the FBI UCR Program through two reporting mechanisms: the Summary Reporting System (SRS) or the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). The SRS is referred to as the "traditional" FBI UCR Program; it began in 1930, and has had few modifications through the years. Participating agencies submit their data via electronic files or by using the Microsoft Excel Workbook Tool which contains an electronic version of the *Cargo Theft Incident Report*. The NIBRS is used by participating LEAs to report offenses and relevant details by incident, using up to 59 data elements to collect details about offenses, offenders, victims, property, and arrestees reported to police. Developed in the late 1980's, the NIBRS was designed as an automated system to modernize UCR, and includes automated checks to ensure data quality.

As the UCR Cargo Theft Data Collection is intended to collect all reported cargo thefts from LEAs in the United States, sampling methodologies are not used. Estimation procedures will not be applied due to cargo theft being a relatively new collection. Although the response rates have increased over the last couple of years, the rates are still low and may not be a true representation of the offense. The LEAs that do not submit cargo theft data are not estimated to compensate for the missing jurisdiction due to the already low occurrence of cargo theft incidents as reported by the 44 percent of participating agencies.

At the end of each reporting year, the FBI UCR Program requests for state program and direct contributor personnel to verify all cargo theft incident data submitted to the program. Currently, a number of state programs do not verify the data which ultimately results in a loss of potentially valid data. The New UCR System's automation capabilities will improve the current business processes in effect today.

### 3. Response Rates/Non-Response

The UCR Cargo Theft data collection is relatively new with only 3 years of data published, but the number of LEAs providing cargo theft incidents has increased each year. As more agencies participate, future versions of the cargo theft publication will depict a more complete account of the occurrences of cargo thefts in the United States.

The UCR Program plans to monitor the increase/decrease of participation in the data collection for a complete five year cycle in an effort to develop a trend of the data. Once the five year cycle

is finished, and the trend is established, if necessary, the Program will move forward with options for a possible change in the way this data is collected through the Advisory Process of the Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division. If after the cycle the trend is determined to meet acceptable data standards, the current collection processes will remain in place.

Response rates are maximized through liaison with state UCR Programs. Communications encouraging data submissions occur frequently because of the relationship between FBI UCR staff and LEAs. FBI UCR staff have a strong understanding of contextual challenges agencies face in reporting valid and reliable data and regularly work to overcome nonresponse issues when such challenges occur. The mission of the cargo theft collection in UCR is to acquire cargo theft data, establish guidelines for the collection of such data, and publish cargo theft data. Although the FBI makes every effort through its editing procedures, training practices, and correspondence to ensure the validity of the data it receives, the accuracy of the statistics depends primarily on the adherence of each contributor to the established standards of reporting. The FBI is working to help LEAs participate in the cargo theft data collection with the FBI CJIS Division's creation of the New UCR system. The goal of the New UCR System is to improve the accuracy and timeliness of the crime data collection and delivery process, while increasing the value to users of UCR products by making the data available through the Crime Data Explorer (CDE) mechanism. The CDE is a web-based access system that will modernize the delivery of UCR crime data and information to internal and external users. The CDE will allow the FBI to more systematically apply methods that have a positive effect on response rates, which will make data available for research and review by the public sector.

The UCR Program is in the process of transitioning local, state, and tribal LEAs from the SRS to NIBRS. Under this plan, the FBI UCR training staff only provides on-site training for LEAs that submit NIBRS data. However, the trainers are available by telephone or e-mail to provide LEAs with answers about classification, scoring, and other UCR-related questions for both SRS and NIBRS. The FBI's UCR Program proactively incorporated cargo theft training into the standard instructional curriculum in 2010. Due to budgetary restraints, the CJIS Audit Unit's UCR Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Team has also been restructured. The QAR Team will only be made available upon a formal request from a State UCR Program. These requests will be reviewed and prioritized based on the availability of the CJIS Audit Unit's resources. Once approved, the QAR will be tailored to meet the specific needs articulated by the State Program Manager.

The *USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005* mandated the FBI's UCR Program to collect cargo theft data, but was not a mandate for the state UCR participating LEAs. When the FBI is tasked to develop new unfunded information collections, the costs associated with the implementation of the changes are the responsibility of law enforcement. Historically, this resource issue has hampered the FBI's ability to collect new initiative data from its contributors. To deal with non-responsive agencies the FBI UCR Program provides training, liaison, and reference material to LEAs in order to submit data.

It is very important for the data to be accurate and reliable. LEAs use UCR data to track crime, task force placement, staffing levels, and officer placement. The UCR data is also used for administration, operational, and management within LEAs. Agencies will justify task forces, staffing levels, and officer counts compared to other LEAs in order to get more staffing levels or equipment. The agencies use other agencies' crime statistics and staffing levels to justify their own crime statistics and staffing levels in order to obtain funding. Cargo theft data is used by law enforcement to identify areas of vulnerability in the transportation of cargo goods, to identify patterns of cargo theft, and forecast high risk areas for cargo transporters. The data is also used to study the impact cargo theft has on commerce and the economy.

#### 4. Collection Development

During implementation of the cargo theft information collection, extensive research regarding the offense of cargo theft was conducted. Members of the CJIS Division's Law Enforcement Support Section, FBI UCR Program; CJIS Division's Information Technology Management Section; and the Criminal Investigative Division (CID), Americas Criminal Enterprise Section, Major Theft Unit (MTU) discussed the steps necessary to begin the collection of cargo theft information within the scope of the FBI's UCR Program as mandated. The MTU took the lead to develop cargo theft into an information collection. The MTU coordinated with federal, state, and local law enforcement officials and industry experts for input and feedback. Agencies involved were the Los Angeles Police Department, Burglary Auto Theft Division; International Cargo Security Council; National Retail Federation; Miami-Dade Police Department; FBI Division, Cargo Theft Task Force; Miami Division, Cargo Theft Task Force; American Trucking Association; Memphis Division, Cargo Theft Task Force; Assistant United States Attorney, Miami, Florida; and the United States Department of Justice.

The primary emphasis in developing an approach for collecting national cargo theft statistics was to meet the requirements of the Patriot Act, and to avoid placing major new reporting burdens on LEAs contributing data to the FBI UCR Program. To accomplish this goal, a data collection was developed based on the programs' existing reporting systems, the NIBRS and the SRS. Furthermore, the method by which cargo theft is collected by the FBI UCR Program was fully vetted and approved by the FBI's CJIS Advisory Policy Board (APB) process. The APB is chartered under the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 and is responsible for reviewing appropriate policy, technical, and operational issues related to CJIS Division programs and for providing appropriate guidance and recommendations to the Director of the FBI. The Advisory Process is conducted twice each calendar year equating the two "rounds." Each round is comprised of Working Group meetings, Subcommittee meetings, and the Board.

The Working Groups review topic papers on operational, policy, and technical issues related to CJIS Division programs and policies and make recommendations to the APB or one of its Subcommittees. All fifty states, as well as U.S. territories, federal agencies, tribal representatives, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police are organized into five Working Groups. Working Group meetings take place once each round and are conducted as closed meetings.

The UCR Subcommittee is comprised of APB members and other UCR subject-matter specialists. The UCR Subcommittee was established to thoroughly review controversial recommendations for the consideration of the entire APB. The Chair of the APB, in consultation with the Designated Federal Officer (DFO), may invite any governmental or quasi-governmental entity who is involved in CJIS activities to attend any meeting of the CJIS Subcommittees for the purpose of consultation or providing information. Subcommittee meetings take place at least once each round.

The APB meets at the end of each round or twice during each calendar year. A notice of these meetings is published in the *Federal Register*, and the meetings are conducted in open session unless determined otherwise by the DFO. The APB is composed of 34 executive representatives from criminal justice agencies and national security agencies throughout the U.S. The FBI established the CJIS Advisory Process to obtain the user community's advice and guidance on the development and operation of all CJIS Programs. The philosophy underlying the advisory process is one of shared management; that is, the FBI along with local, state, tribal, and federal data providers and system users share responsibility for the operation and management of all systems administered by the FBI for the benefit of the criminal justice community. It ensures law enforcement has the opportunity to discuss and vote on any policy or procedural changes to CJIS systems affecting law enforcement's ability to share information to the nation.

At the 2009 ASUCRP conference, sessions were conducted to field test the *Cargo Theft Incident Report* and the Cargo Theft Instructions. State UCR Program Managers were given cargo theft test scenarios and were tasked with reading the instructions and filling out the Cargo Theft Incident Report. From this, the FBI's UCR Program staff reviewed all the comments, suggestions, and ideas and reviewed the cargo theft form to incorporate the suggested changes. During implementation, the FBI received feedback to include on the form offense and location codes, which would assist contributors when reporting cargo theft and also reduce data processing errors. In addition, grammatical errors were identified and verbiage on the original form was not consistent with other FBI UCR information collections. Instructions were rewritten to be more easily understood. The Cargo Theft Data Collection has been refined by the FBI's UCR staff along with law enforcement involvement, and other entities associated with cargo theft to cause the least impact burden on the LEAs.

5. Contact Information

SA Christopher Nicholas  
LESS Chief  
[christopher.nicholas@ic.fbi.gov](mailto:christopher.nicholas@ic.fbi.gov)  
304-625-3690

Samuel Berhanu  
CSMU Chief  
[samuel.berhanu@ic.fbi.gov](mailto:samuel.berhanu@ic.fbi.gov)  
304-625-3692

Sammy Demarco  
Supervisory Management Analyst and Program Analyst  
[sammy.demarco@ic.fbi.gov](mailto:sammy.demarco@ic.fbi.gov)  
304-625-3551

Lora Klingensmith  
Management Analyst and Program Analyst  
[lora.klingensmith@ic.fbi.gov](mailto:lora.klingensmith@ic.fbi.gov)  
304-625-4073

Kristi L. Donahue  
Management Analyst and Program Analyst  
[kristi.donahue@ic.fbi.gov](mailto:kristi.donahue@ic.fbi.gov)  
304-625-2972