

Counter theft of lead roofing

void becoming a victim of metal theft in your parish

This resource is based on information from Alex Glanville, Head of Property Services for the Church in Wales and Ecclesiastical Insurance.

Alex Glanville says that parishes need to :

- Use SMARTWATER. This is an invisible solution which marks metal with a traceable 'DNA'. SMARTWATER only works if it is also registered with the company. EIG issued kits in 2007 but we hear of parishes who have applied it without registering it – this is as good as useless as without registration, stolen metal cannot be traced to the church it came from.

Using Smartwater is considered a deterrent to thieves and will increase the level of cover for insurance that Parishes have with EIG. From next year, to get any cover for metal theft it will be necessary to apply Smartwater. To purchase kits call 0845 458 4584 or see:

http://www.cpsonline.co.uk/acatalog/Smart_Water.html

- Be extra vigilant. Ask neighbours etc to keep a special look out and make regular visits to churches and halls.
- Make sure you are not making it easy for thieves by leaving things around to aid climbing such as bins or ladders. Take a good look around your buildings to think how thieves might access. Trim vegetation to make your building visible.
- Make sure any security measures you have are working such as security lights and alarms.
- Consider measures to secure your external metals such as roof alarms, guards, fencing etc – this will need discussion through the faculty process but start looking at it now.

Ecclesiastical Insurance Group - EIG - has provided the following information

Theft of metal

Churches continue to be a target for metal theft

Since the start of 2007 we've received more than 8,000 claims for metal theft, at an estimated total cost of more than £23 million. Lead, copper and stainless steel roof coverings, roof flashings, copper lightning conductors and lead rainwater pipes have all been targeted. Whilst world demand for metal remains strong their scrap value will continue to be high, making them an attractive target for thieves, and churches will continue to face this problem for the foreseeable future.

We're here to help

Ecclesiastical has been actively tackling this problem for several years by:

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- launching a nationwide awareness campaign
- sending a free SmartWater forensic security marking kit to every church we insure in late 2007, and now offering it at a discounted rate through the [Churches Purchasing Scheme](#) (CPS)
- lobbying the police, Parliament and scrap metal dealers
- providing [theft of metal prevention guidance notes](#) and offering tailored advice for individual churches through our [Insurance Consultants and Surveyors](#) .

You may not be aware that Ecclesiastical has also recently pioneered the trial of a new electronic church roof security system that is now available through CPS (more on this below).

What's happening now?

Metal prices (such as for lead and copper) are increasing again on the world market and experience has shown that as metal prices rise, thefts increase. With escalating losses, metal theft is one of the most serious problems that the churches we insure currently face.

Nearly every day we receive claims for theft of external metals from churches. It's not just the cost of replacing the materials that is the problem, it's the resultant damage - thieves have also torn holes in roofs causing them to leak and ripped stonework away from pinnacles and towers.

Damage caused by thieves can cost anything from a few hundred pounds to tens of thousands to repair. The thieves get a fraction of the cost for scrap and they're causing irreparable damage to some of the nation's most beautiful and sacred buildings.

Reduce the risk of your church being targeted

The level of risk churches face is different in each case. To find out how at risk you are from metal theft, we've produced a useful [self assessment tool](#).

Top tips for protecting your church.

1. SmartWater – help us to help you

SmartWater usage is a policy condition and we want you to be protected so that you receive the benefit of external metal insurance cover. Please urgently check your church's status. For more information about SmartWater, the policy condition, success stories and much more, please [visit our SmartWater page](#)

2. Engage with your local community

Joining the local Neighbourhood Watch scheme and urging the church's neighbours to keep a watchful eye out for anything suspicious around the church can be a big help that costs nothing. Such activity, if identified, should be dealt with by calling the police straightaway and you should inform other churches in your area to put them on their guard. If you're part of a National Churchwatch scheme, you can use this to pass on information

3. Install an electronic roof security system

Following successful trials on churches at a number of metal theft hot spots, CPS is pleased to offer a new electronic roof security system.

Key benefits:

- Effective at deterring metal theft as demonstrated in recent trials.
- The system is specifically designed to detect and deter intruders before any damage is caused.
- The technology used is virtually invisible and reversible.
- Large roof areas can be protected cost effectively.
- If the remote signalling security system is activated the alarm receiving centre carry out a planned response based on your previous instructions - perfect for buildings in remote or rural locations.

If you install an Ecclesiastical approved roof security system and have also complied with the SmartWater policy condition, we may be able to increase your metal theft cover depending on individual circumstances.

For more information (including about permissions) or to arrange a free*, no-obligation site survey please contact CPS on 0845 458 4584. You can also download a [factsheet](#).

*UK mainland only - travel expenses may be applicable offshore

<http://www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmatters/index.aspx>