

## **DAC Guidance Notes: Metal Theft**

These guidelines cover general information regarding how to approach protecting valuable metal on your church and how to deal with any thefts that occur.

### **Metal theft and deterrents**

The theft of lead and copper from church roofs is a serious problem and is becoming increasingly common.

The Ecclesiastical Insurance Group (EIG), as the main insurer of Anglican churches, report that in the past 8 years they have seen claims following metal theft rise from 6 to 1763 per year. This has cost churches nearly £23m over the past 5 years.

The Church Buildings Council (CBC) has put forward two main deterrents that can be implemented to discourage metal thieves:

1. Forensic marking products put a unique mark on metal. Invisible in natural light, the mark can only be seen in the ultraviolet. SmartWater is the main product advocated by EIG. This will produce a deterrent effect against some thieves if churches display signs to show that SmartWater is in use. It should also be noted that EIG will no longer renew insurance policies covering valuable church metal if SmartWater has not been applied. EIG will supply marking kits on request.
2. Alarms systems for roofs were trialled by EIG in 2010. This has met with some success. By the end of 2010, 24 churches in the UK had new roof alarms and none of these have subsequently suffered further loss. If metal is stolen from a church with a roof alarm, EIG will provide up to £10,000 in cover, as opposed to the £5,000 limit if there is no alarm.


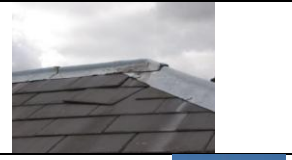



Extensive further information can be found here:

[Churchcare: Theft of Metal](#)

### **Alternative materials**

Where churches are the victims of repeat crime, and all reasonable security measures have been taken, they can consider using alternative materials to lead and copper. Lead has always been used on buildings because it is easy to shape and has a long life. Traditional pitched roofs on historic churches are the most difficult to replace with alternative materials because they lack the flexibility of lead. Where roofs are both hidden by a parapet and at low level, other coverings are more easily applicable.

If a church is victim to repeated metal theft, the parish should immediately consult with their church architect to produce a scheme for replacement with an alternative material. To help in selecting appropriate materials, a guidance 'flow diagram' has been produced by a Birmingham DAC architect and can be viewed below:

LOCATION OF STOLEN LEAD		LISTED BUILDING OR CONSERVATION AREA? <sup>(1)</sup>	VISIBLE FROM THE GROUND?	MATERIALS			
				LEAD, ZINC OR COPPER <sup>(7)</sup>	TERNE COATED STAINLESS STEEL <sup>(4)</sup>	CAST IRON	MODERN MATERIALS <sup>(3)</sup>
PARAPET/VALLEY GUTTERS		Y	Y	✓	✓ <sup>(2)</sup>	N/A	X
			N	✓	✓ <sup>(2)</sup>	N/A	✓ <sup>(6)</sup>
		N	Y	✓	✓ <sup>(2)</sup>	N/A	✓
			N	✓	✓ <sup>(2)</sup>	N/A	✓
FLASHINGS/SOAKERS/HIPS/RIDGES(5)		Y	Y	✓	N/A	N/A	x
			N	✓	N/A	N/A	✓ <sup>(6)</sup>
		N	Y	✓	N/A	N/A	✓
			N	✓	N/A	N/A	✓
CUPOLAS/DOMES		Y	Y	✓	✓	N/A	X
			N	✓	✓	N/A	✓ <sup>(6)</sup>
		N	Y	✓	✓	N/A	✓
			N	✓	✓	N/A	✓
RAINWATER PIPES/HOPPERS/CHUTES OR OTHER DECORATIVE ELEMENTS		Y	Y	✓	N/A	X	X
			N	✓	N/A	✓	X
		N	Y	✓	N/A	✓	✓
			N	✓	N/A	✓	✓
SLOPING SHEETED ROOFS		Y	Y	✓	✓	N/A	X
			N	✓	✓	N/A	✓ <sup>(6)</sup>
		N	Y	✓	✓	N/A	✓
			N	✓	✓	N/A	✓

Footnotes: (1) Grade I or II\* refer to English Heritage for roof coverings. (2) It may be necessary to reorganise boarding below when replacing lead with stainless steel. (3) Type depends on location, e.g. felt or plastic for roofs, PVC or cast aluminium for rainwater goods. (4) Consider joint type, e.g. 'Belgian' roll to match wood core rolls. (5) Ridges might be replaced in blue clay, depending on situation. (6) Grade I or II\* modern materials not permitted. (7) Changes from one metal to another are not necessarily permitted.

Stephen Oliver, Rodney Melville & Partners

*NB: this guidance is not necessarily prescriptive. The individual circumstances of each particular case will be borne in mind when assessing proposals for metal alternatives.*

Further detailed information can be found here: [English Heritage: Theft of Metal from Church Buildings](#)

## **Process following metal theft**

Following any theft, the police should be informed immediately. The church architect should be contacted to make temporary repairs as rainfall on a compromised roof could result in significant damage to the church fabric and interior. The Archdeacon and DAC Secretary would also be informed.

The Ven. Hugh McCurdy (Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech, Diocese of Ely) has drafted, in consultation with a former Crown Prosecution Service employee, a suggested Victim Personal Statement to help Churches in the event that offenders are apprehended and subsequently prosecuted, which can be viewed here:

[Diocese of Ely: Victim Personal Statement](#)

If lead or copper is stolen from a church it can be replaced like-for-like without Faculty as a 'De Minimis' repair, provided that the cost falls below the threshold value. The Archdeacon must be informed when such repairs are carried out and appropriate security measures should be introduced.

Replacement of stolen metal with a different material will require Faculty permission. However, especially in the case of stolen roofing metals, the parish may find that their church is at risk of suffering further and significant damage from wind and weather. In such cases, the parish should contact the Diocesan Registry to request the Chancellor's Emergency Licence to conduct repairs as soon as possible. The Registry Clerk, Mrs Pat Joyce, can be reached at [pat.joyce@sghmartineau.com](mailto:pat.joyce@sghmartineau.com), tel. 0870 763 1483.

When seeking Emergency Licence the parish should explain the situation to the Registry and submit the church architect's specification for the replacement works, along with a quotation. This information should also be sent by email (for speed) to a DAC architect and, in the case of a listed church, to the English Heritage nominee on the DAC. Please be in touch with the DAC Secretary for contact details.

Once any works carried out under an Emergency Licence are completed, the parish must send in a completed petition form to the DAC for a retrospective grant of Faculty.