

Metal Theft in Palm Beach County

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For the past several months, law enforcement has seen a rise in metal thefts all across the county. Because of the serious increase in this particular crime, officials are wanting to crack down on thieves who target homes, restaurants, and even abandoned buildings. Task forces have been created in order to battle the ever popular and lucrative crime of metal theft. There are several different kinds of crimes committed involving metal theft, not only could the thief be [charged with theft](#), but the buyer could be [charged with dealing in stolen property](#).

Targeting Abandoned Buildings

Thieves may think they are stealing property that is no longer wanted but the problem arises when the building owner wants to sell the building, which usually includes what's inside. Thieves will take air conditioning units for the copper, steel appliances, and basically anything metal that the thieves can find.

According to the [Palm Beach Post](#), thieves also used the shield of darkness to steal from the abandoned Olive Garden restaurant near the Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard interchange off I-95. In mid-November, Palm Beach County sheriff's Detective Alfredo Forgione received a tip through Crime Stoppers of Palm Beach County that the building was being burglarized.

On Nov. 30, Leon and Forgione arrested Osvaldo Arencibia, 43. While in custody, Arencibia told Leon he had stolen from the building "20 or 30 times." Arencibia said he went to the Olive Garden "every day for a month," Leon said in the affidavit.

"Thieves target these buildings because no one is watching," Forgione said. "At the end of the day the actual property that's in there still belongs to someone."

Palm Beach County Legal Action

Palm Beach County elected officials are working to pass laws that restrict the activity and requirements for scrap-metal yards. Prosecutors in Palm Beach County have had at least two cases against unlicensed dealers

in the past year. According to the Palm Beach Post, it is a public safety concern when metal is stolen from places like highway lights. If they make buying stolen property riskier for dealers, the reasoning goes, they'll cut off the demand side of the illicit business.

Theft Criminal Defense

If you have been accused of stealing metal and dealing it to scrap-metal yards for a profit, you may be facing serious consequences. Depending on the value of the items stolen, if it is over \$300 you could actually be facing [grand theft charges](#). A criminal defense lawyer can help further explain the details of your situation. Make sure you contact a lawyer immediately after being arrested and accused of theft.

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