

POLICE CIRCULAR ORDER No. 70

The following instructions are issued for the guidance of Police Officers in the investigation of copper-wire thefts :—

1. Telegraphs or telephone wires are prepared by a special process and can be distinguished from ordinary wire. In order to establish the identity of stolen copper-wire it is essential that 6" of the remaining wire at either end should be cut and preserved for comparison by the Metallurgical expert. The Investigating Officer should be careful to mark the running end, i.e., the end at which the culprit applied the instrument so that the end cut by the culprit and the end seized by the Police are not confused.

Preventive measures against the theft of copper-wires.

2. The linemen and head coolies employed for repair work are generally suspected to be at the bottom of many of these thefts. They have the requisite knowledge and their presence near the telegraph pole cannot be questioned. The movements of these persons should be watched and spare stock with them should be verified as soon as a case is reported. Whenever possible, a police officer may be deputed with the repairing party to the spot to ascertain whether a *bona fide* repair was necessary and actually effected.

3. Instances have come to notice in which such thefts are committed near water sources and the wires are coiled into small bundles and kept concealed in the water. After some time they are removed in a bullock cart provided with screen with a view to make it appear that some purdanashin ladies occupy it. If a theft of copper wire is reported near a water source it should be thoroughly searched.

4. Sometimes the culprits choose the earlier part of the night, i.e., between 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. before the police party starts for patrol. It is necessary to detail evening patrols occasionally. The time and the venue of the patrol should be changed from time to time so that there may be an element of surprise.

5. The inconvenience caused to the public by disruption of communication must be brought home to the people, living near about the telegraph lines and their full co-operation obtained. Instances of good work done by them should be recognised by awarding rewards promptly.

6. The scrap-metal dealers and braziers generally purchase the stolen copper-wires. A list of braziers residing near about the affected areas should be prepared and watch kept on them. Attempt should also be made to bring one or two of the braziers into confidence so that person intending to dispose of stolen wires may be spotted out.

7. The culprits when arrested with stolen copper-wire should be interrogated to ascertain the names of receivers and their accomplices. They may also be interviewed in jail for the above purpose.

8. People loitering suspiciously near telegraph posts be challenged and proceedings under section 109, Cr. P. C. instituted whenever circumstances justify it.

9. All officers should carefully read the new law, viz., Act LXXX of 1950 which penalises the very possession of telegraph wires under certain circumstances and take action thereunder whenever possible.

10. A list of copper-wire thieves is published in the C. I. G. which should be maintained as permanent record at each police-station and on the occurrence of copper-wire thefts their movements should be watched and necessary enquiries made about their complicity therein.

11. There have been instances in which outsiders temporarily appointed by the Posts and Telegraph Department to assist in effecting repairs to the lines have been found committing thefts after their discharge. This should be borne in mind and enquiries should be made relating to such personnel.

12. Plain clothes constables should be deputed occasionally to watch unobtrusively the movements of known copper-wire thieves, utensil makers and receivers of stolen copper-wires. In appropriate cases the suspects may be placed under active surveillance.

13. Attention of all officers is drawn to the following resolutions adopted in a recent co-operation meeting between D. I.-G., S. R. and certain officers of the Posts and Telegraph Department :—

- (a) Proper verification of character and antecedents of the linemen
- (b) Closer co-operation between Police and Officers of the Posts and Telegraph Department.
- (c) A list of outsiders temporarily appointed for repair work of telegraph like should be furnished by the Posts and Telegraph Department to Superintendent of Police for verification of their character and antecedents.
- (d) The Postal Department have agreed to pay a reward of Rs. 100 in each case resulting in detection and conviction of copper-wire thefts. Superintendents of Police should circulate this to their subordinates.
- (e) The Postal and Telegraph Department have agreed to issue instructions to the linemen to promptly report the occurrence to the nearest police-station and to give all possible assistance in the police investigation. Superintendents of Police should see that the cases are promptly investigated and instances of delay in reporting the case brought to the notice of the authorities.

(Previous police circular order No. 4 of 1953)