

Police tackle dangerous and illegally operated business vehicles



Dangerous and illegally operated business vehicles have been taken off the road and prevented from trading in a day of action to tackle metal theft in the East of Scotland.

Officers from Police Scotland joined colleagues from British Transport Police to stop and speak to drivers in Fife, Falkirk and Edinburgh under Operation Scandium. The initiative was set up to ensure that across the UK, scrap metal dealers and those who trade in scrap metal are aware of their responsibilities under the legislation contained within the Air Weapons and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2015 which came into force at the end of 2016.

Police and partners ran check sites today, Monday 20th March, and spoke to 189 motorists, taking action against dangerous and unroadworthy vehicles, drivers flouting the law by driving without MOTs, road tax and insurance, and traders carrying waste and scrap without the appropriate licences.

Chief Inspector Stephen Innes of Police Scotland's Road Policing Unit said: "We have run a number of days of action along with British Transport Police prior to the new law coming in, in order to raise awareness of the changes and ensure traders could make arrangements to comply. It also meant we could stop and speak to drivers about the general safety and roadworthiness of their vehicles as well as allowing partners to carry out specific checks.

"Today we have undertaken enforcement activity at various locations – there is no excuse for not knowing about or

complying with the law that has been in force for a number of months. Metal theft can have a devastating effect on communities and businesses and we also have a commitment to making our roads safer for everyone.

“One trader was dealt with for having no Metal Dealers Licence, and three vehicles were seized for having no insurance. Three vehicles had defects so bad that they were banned from continuing their journeys whilst others needed urgent work to make sure they were fit for the road.

“Further action will be taken in the East of Scotland over the coming weeks to ensure that those ignoring the law and putting people at risk are brought to justice and removed from our roads. I would like to thank all the partners who have joined ourselves and British Transport Police during our operation today.”

Inspector Brian McAleese from British Transport Police, said: “We are pleased we have seen a noticeable decrease in the amount of metal theft incidents on the railway since Operation Scandium launched in July 2015. This is largely due to our proactive work with Police Scotland to tackle this crime head on and the changes to the legislation making it even more difficult for organised gangs to operate.

“The theft of railway cabling is not a victimless crime. Not only are commuters faced with the misery of lengthy delays, but the cost to the railway industry can run into millions. Furthermore, those criminal who cut live cables could be exposed to electric shocks which can easily be lethal.

“We are determined to continue tackling this issue and ensure that individuals who flout the law are brought before the court.”