

How much cases of energy theft are yearly detected?

Yearly about 6000 cases of energy theft are detected. Most of them concern illegal hemp plantations. About a hundred cases were detected because of fire.

Why do energy companies invest in discourage or reduce the amount of energy theft?

The recovery of missed revenues and - even important- prevention of unsafe situations. Messing with electricity connections is dangerous. Theft is often done through highly unsecured connections, which can lead to fire and so to danger to the surrounding area.

Which dangerous situations does energy companies find at illegal hemp plantations?

- danger of electrocution (unprofessional and illegal connections)
- danger of fire (bundling of wires)
- danger of fire (mounting lamps and equipment on wood)
- danger of fire (exceeding the capacity of a small installation)
- CO2 poisoning as CO2 fertilisation brings oxygen level below 19%
- CO poisoning by malfunctioning gas heating (for plants)
- booby traps because of 'securing' the hemp plantation

How much money is related to energy theft in the Netherlands?

The Platform Energy Theft estimates an amount of 1 billion kilowatt-hours is stolen every year. This represents a value of 150 million euros, including 60 million taxes.

Basis of calculation

The Platform presumes 30 thousand hemp plantations with an average usage of 35.000 kWh per year, which is 1 billion kWh. When normally paid for this, the electricity bill would amount about 5000 euro per customer, including transport, supply and taxes. Other cases of theft were left out.

How much does theft cost an average household?

The stolen power has to be bought by the DSO on the wholesale market and costs yearly about 40 million euros (depending on wholesale prices). One third becomes part of the transport costs for consumers, the rest is paid for by enterprises. A household will pay 2 euro a year because of theft.

What do energy companies (DSO's) about tracking down hemp plantations?

DSO's work closely with the different police districts. The police shuts down the plantation and the DSO looks if energy was stolen. The initiative for police action can come from the police as well from the DSO. The police decides.

DSOs meet each other to talk about the approach of theft within the Platform Energy Theft by branche-organisation Netbeheer Nederland. The platform is trying to get theft higher on the priority list of the police and justice department. Not just the theft by hemp plantations but all cases of theft.

DSOs also take care that, when the police shuts down the plantation, it's safe to enter the premises. Sometimes plantations are 'secured' through power on metal parts of the installations.

How much of the stolen electricity can be recovered?

On a yearly base between 100 and 150 million kWh of stolen electricity is recovered, this is about 10 to 15% of the estimated yearly amount of theft.

Do DSOs on own initiative provide police and the justice department with data of customers with a high use of electricity?

No. DSO's only provide data when requested by police or the justice department.

How much employees of DSOs are working on theft?

In the Netherlands about 90 employees are full time working on the subject.

Does the number of plantations that are shut down rise according to the DSOs?

The number of plantations that are shut down is the same for the last couple of years. In more and more municipalities covenants are set up with all related organisations. This cooperation begins to bring results.

What are the activities of the Platform?

The two goals set by the platform are:

- getting support on national level for reducing energy theft in any form;
- sharing knowledge between DSOs on the approach of reducing energy theft.

What are the most important barriers that frustrate reducing theft?

The approach was very local. Police districts set their own priorities and cooperation with one district is much better than with another district. There is no national policy to improve this situation.

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