

Local police ask the public to be on alert following rise in copper thefts throughout the region

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Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers are investigating an increase in copper thefts across the region.

“These thefts involve telephone wires, utility lines, and cable boxes, and are primarily occurring in rural or poorly lit areas, including parks and other secluded locations, often during the overnight hours. In many cases, the wires are cut from utility poles, dragged to the roadside, and then retrieved at a later date,” said the Dufferin OPP in a recent statement.

There have been reports to the Dufferin OPP of individuals committing these thefts in broad daylight, while wearing reflective gear in an effort to pose as legitimate road or utility workers.

“This deceptive tactic is used to avoid drawing suspicion from the public,” said Dufferin OPP.

On Sept. 7, Dufferin OPP officers responded to an incident involving a vehicle suspected in a copper wire theft and a collision.

Shortly after 1 a.m., officers responded to a reported collision in the area of County Road 2 in Melancthon.

“It is believed that the vehicle in question was attempting to remove copper wire from utility poles when it was confronted by a passerby. In response, the suspect vehicle struck the concerned citizen's vehicle before fleeing the scene,” said Dufferin OPP. “A short time later, the suspect vehicle was located in the middle of the road, blocking traffic.”

Dufferin OPP describe the suspect vehicle as a black 2003 Chevrolet Silverado. The male suspect is described as a middle-aged white male, approximately 6 feet tall.

Anyone who may have witnessed the incident or who has dashcam footage from the area around that time to contact police at 1-888-310-1122.

With this recent copper theft and others plaguing the community in recent weeks, the OPP is reminding residents that tampering with live utility infrastructure is not only a crime but also a serious public safety hazard.

Anyone who witnesses suspicious activity, such as individuals cutting wires, handling utility equipment, or vehicles parked on road shoulders, please contact police immediately by calling 911.

“Members of the Dufferin OPP remain committed to public safety and to working in partnership with the community to prevent and investigate crime. Your vigilance plays a critical role in helping to keep our communities safe,” said Dufferin OPP.

Anyone with information about suspected unlawful activity, contact the OPP at 1-888-310-1122, or report anonymously through Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS).