



Damage caused by metal theft. © Ecclesiastical

Theft From Places of Worship

 Modified 10 September 2021

Historic England fully appreciates the frustration and distress caused by crimes affecting historic places of worship, particularly metal theft.

When lead or copper roof coverings have been stolen, we understand it may be too risky to replace with the same materials. We have found that the most appropriate and long-lasting alternative is terne-coated stainless steel (TCSS). In some circumstances, natural slates or clay tiles may be suitable alternatives, if they are historically, geologically and technically appropriate. A well-detailed design, good specification and experienced contractors are key to ensuring the performance of the replacement roof covering. We have commissioned technical guidance about using **terne-coated stainless steel for church roofs** (<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/church-roof-replacement-terne-coated-stainless-steel/>) to address commonly raised questions.



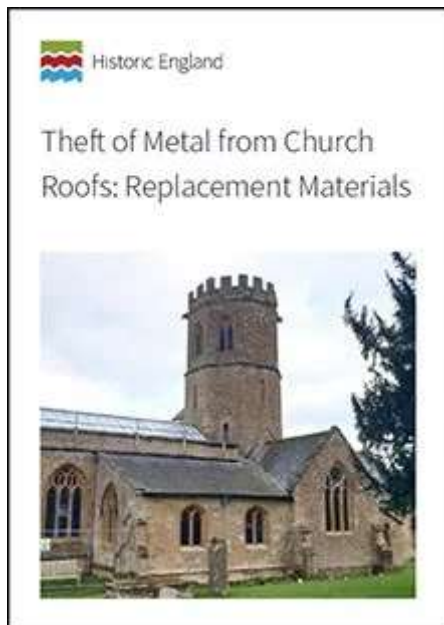
Metal stripped from the roof of a church © Historic England

Historic England advice notes on metal theft

Our advice notes set out our response to lead theft, which continues to affect historic parish churches. We recognise that these heritage crimes are upsetting, expensive and challenging for congregations. Preventing future thefts is paramount but dealing with the aftermath in an appropriate way is also very important.

Theft of Metal from Church Roofs: Replacement Materials

We have addressed this note specifically to those who carry the responsibility for replacing stolen church roofs. It is intended to give maximum clarity to congregations that are considering alternative roofing materials and replaces our 2017 metal theft advice note.



Theft of Metal from Church Roofs: Replacement Materials

Published 10 September 2021

This note deals mainly with replacing lead and copper roofs on historic churches but also applies to other buildings with traditional metal roofs.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/theft-metal-church-roofs-replacement-materials/>

Church Roof Replacement Using Terne-coated Stainless Steel

We have commissioned a technical guidance note about using terne-coated stainless steel for church roofs to address commonly raised questions.

Church Roof Replacement Using Terne-coated Stainless Steel

Published 28 February 2020

This note collates current best advice for construction of new fully supported stainless steel roofing to replace stolen lead on historic churches.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/church-roof-replacement-terne-coated-stainless-steel/>

Theft of Metal from Church Roofs: Prevention and Response

We are working actively with police forces, the Crown Prosecution Service and local authorities to share information and identify, arrest and punish metal thieves. We encourage parishes to help by undertaking appropriate preventative measures and to ensure that all heritage crime is reported to the police.

Our new advice note is addressed to congregations and deals with preventing theft, dealing with the immediate impact and helping the police to get a conviction. It replaces our 2017 metal theft advice note.

Theft of Metal from Church Roofs: Prevention and Response

Published 10 September 2021

This note deals with measures to prevent theft and how to respond if a theft has taken place.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/theft-metal-church-roofs-prevention-response/>

Further information can also be found on our **Heritage Crime pages**

(<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/heritage-crime/>).



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