

Cell Phone Theft on the Rise in Metro

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Cell phone thieves in the Moscow metro have been more active this year than in 2010, while the cops were able to retrieve less than one in seven stolen gadgets, city police reported Wednesday.

The total count of phones stolen from metro passengers since the start of this year stood at 455, the figure being "a bit higher" than for the same period of 2010, said the deputy head of Moscow metro police, Sergei Zheltkov.

About 60 stolen phones have been returned to their rightful owners, he [said](#) at a news conference, the video of which is available on the city police's web site.

Metro thievery in general has also been on the rise, with 902 cases of theft reported over the first five months of this year, compared with 697 in 2010, said Zheltkov's colleague Pavel Milovanov, Komsomolskaya Pravda [reported](#).

But robbery has decreased 10 percent year on year, he added. Pickpockets accounted for 85 percent of all theft in the metro.

Thieves are at their most active during the evening rush hour from 4 to 8 p.m., Zheltkov said. The most dangerous station is Komsomolskaya, with 62 incidents this year, followed by Kurskaya and Kievskaya with 49 and 48 crimes, respectively.

Cell phone theft could be curbed if owners were allowed to block stolen gadgets through their providers. But a bill drafted by the Interior Ministry is stalled in the State Duma because of implementation difficulties that could result in the blocking of legally owned phones.

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