

Copper bandits seize storm opportunity

Last Updated: Wednesday, November 7, 2007 | 3:04 PM AT

[CBC News](#)

Someone made off with 15 kilometres of copper wire during the power outage caused by post tropical storm Noel, RCMP said Wednesday.

The theft was discovered Tuesday afternoon when power was restored to Pratt and Whitney Drive near the Halifax airport but the lights were still not on.

RCMP said it appears the culprits removed access panels to streetlights, cut the connections and then pulled out the underground copper wires that connect the lights.

The thieves made off with five separate strands of wire, each one three kilometres long.

"We're trying to find \$100,000 because that's what it's going to cost to rewire those poles," said John O'Brien, spokesman for the Halifax Regional Municipality, which owns the streetlights.

He said the wire alone is worth \$40,000, but on the black market it would go for about \$10,000.

The price of copper has gone up in the last few years, prompting a rash of thefts of copper products across Canada.

Nova Scotia Power said crews out restoring power Tuesday in Pictou County reported several instances of stolen lines, which they suspect were taken for the copper wire.

In the first six months of this year, there were more than 40 break-ins at NSP facilities, with two leading to power outages that affected thousands of customers.