

# Theft of Lightning Preventors

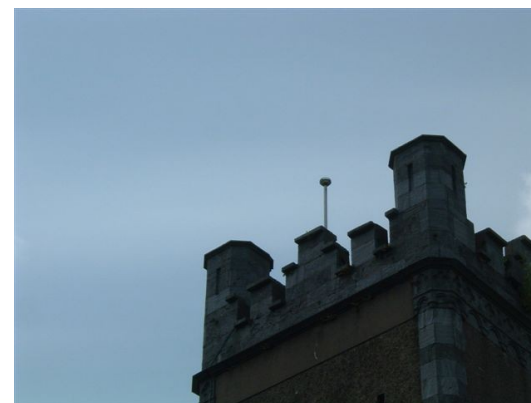
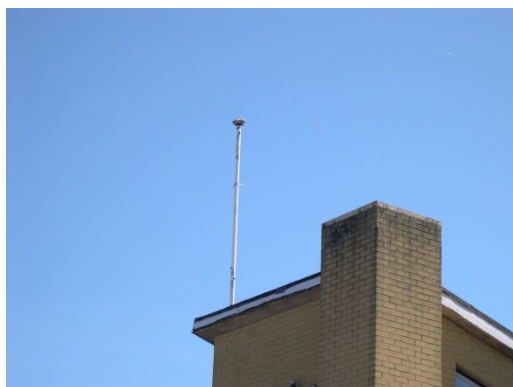
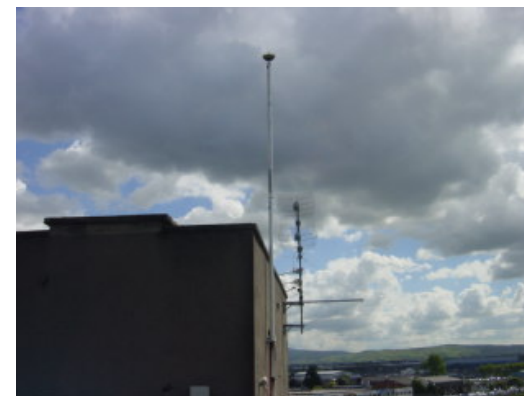
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# Content of Presentation

- Recent theft of Lightning Preventor Heads from the Premises of a Steeplejack Company
  - *Company Based in Swords, Co. Dublin*
  - *Theft Occurred in September–October 2013*

# Typical Exotic Locations



# Preventor Heads – Up Close & Personal



# Typical Scenario – Following Theft/Loss



**[Case #1]**

Possible Final Resting  
Place

Starting Point



On top of 10 storey Building

**Defeat: Preventor Head Never Found**

# Typical Scenario – Following Theft/Loss



**[Case #2]**

Starting Point



Final Hiding Place



On top of Church



**Success!**

# Most Recent Theft of Sources

- 7 Preventor Heads in total
- *Each Head :*  
*Made from Copper which is stove enamelled and **Contains 9 radioactive foils***  
*(4 Heads with Ra-226 (27 MBq) &  
3 Heads with Am-241 (143 MBq) )*
- Preventor Heads Were Held in a Locked Red Metal Box inside Pb lined concrete Bunker
- ***Alarm sensors on Lid***
- Premises of a Steeplejack Company

## Licensee (sort of ...)

- Steeplejack Company who accumulated the Preventor Heads over many years
- *Licence expired on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2011*
  - Failed to renew licence citing financial difficulties
  - Commencement of enforcement procedures
- Went into Liquidation in January 2012
- *Significant interaction between RPII and Liquidator*
  - *Threat to prosecute*
  - *Onerous assets under Companies Registration Act*
- *Decision made to seize and dispose of sources (30 Sept 2013)*

# Red Metal Box

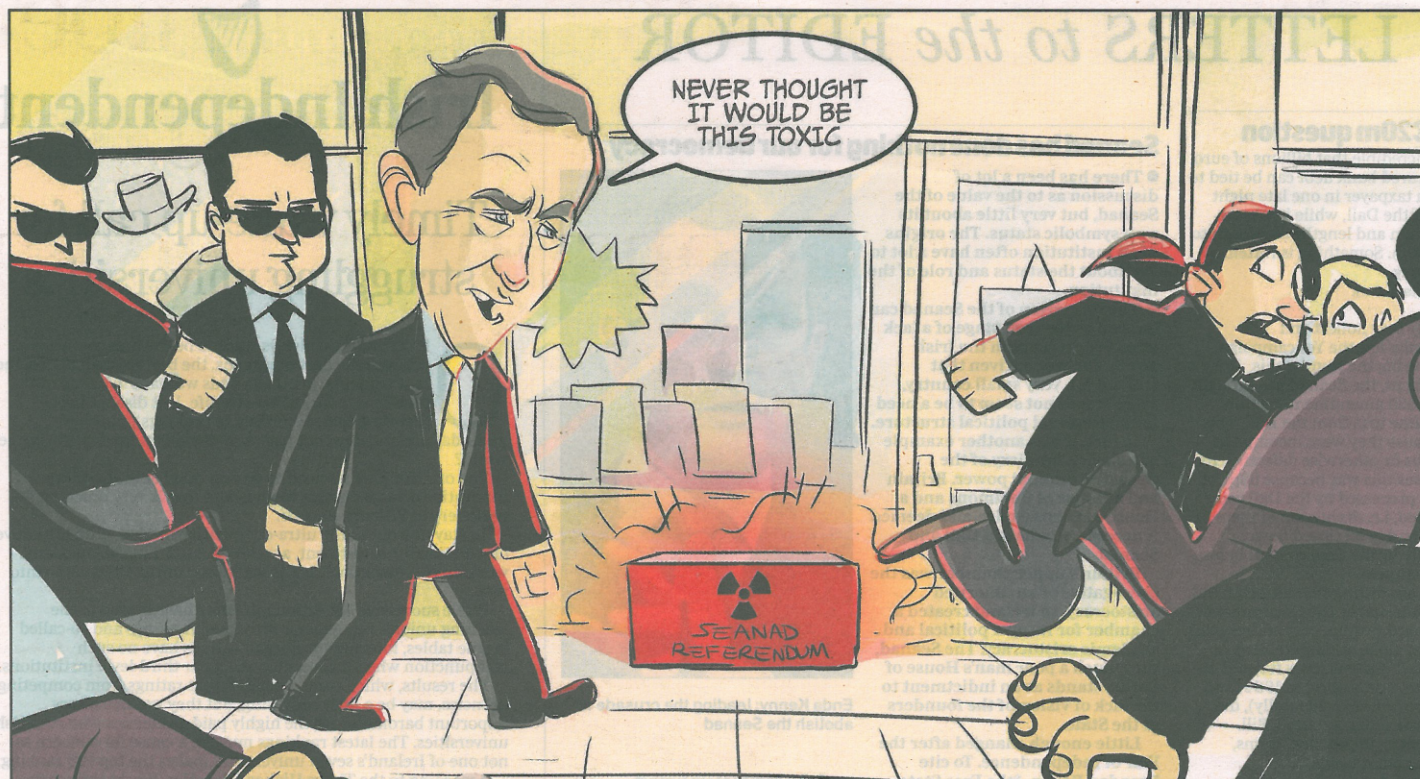


**This Box and its “Toxic Contents” have entered the Annals of Folklore !**

# Red Metal Box

Irish Independent  
Thursday 3 October 2013

Comment 3



# Pre-Crime Crime Scene



**Concrete  
Bunker**

***Pb Lined***



***Alarmed:  
Sensors on Lid***

# Crime Scene



Garda were unsure if this was the normal state or was as a result of the Crime ?



Empty Sarcophagus



Stripped Pb left behind

**Conclusion: Preventor Heads were Missing**

# Incident - Log

- Sources were stolen sometime between 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> September 2013
- *Theft reported to Garda on the afternoon of Monday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013*
- Solicitor for the Liquidator reported the theft to the RPII Solicitor on the afternoon of Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013
- *RPII solicitor immediately advised Regulatory Service*

Crucial Time lag of possibly 5 days before Regulatory Service was advised of the Theft

# RP11 Response

- Garda were contacted and briefed on the nature of the stolen items
- *Incident Response Team was established*
- Regulatory Inspector visited the premises to:
  - *Confirm that the sources were missing and*
  - *Had not been dumped in the Industrial Estate in the immediate vicinity of the premises*

## RPII Response – Condt.

### Public Alerts from Cards & the RPII



IAEA Incident Handling Notification was made  
 INIS Response Level 0

## RPII Response – Condt.

- *Significant interaction between RPII, DECLG, Garda, HSE, Dept. Of Justice, Defence Forces*

(Emergency Planning & Regulatory Service of RPII)

- Risk Assessments of potential doses to members of the public were carried out for a number of scenarios

(Emergency Planning & Regulatory Service of RPII)

(1) *Someone remaining in close proximity to the preventors*

(2) *Someone handling the preventors*

(3) *Someone cutting up the preventors and*

(4) *The preventors being dumped in a drinking water reservoir or put on a bonfire*

# Response Protocols

- *Dealing with possible contaminated persons*  
(HSE & RPII)
- *Recovery operation in the event of a successful conclusion to the incident*  
(RPII)

All Risk Assessments and Protocols were circulated to relevant Departments and Agencies

# What did we learn

- National Emergency Framework for Major Incidents was followed in this Minor Incident
- The Garda have commented:
  - *Exists a lot of good documents/protocols but they relate mainly to large scale incidents and not smaller incidents like this one*
  - *Key players need to liaise earlier as inter-agency co-ordination is very important*
- Social media used by RPII – estimated reach of 1 million people

Preventor Heads are still out there!!

# Conclusion

- *At all times the incident was treated as a benign metal theft event as no information was received from the Security Forces to make the RPII think that this was a malevolent act*
- *Significant RPII capital in terms of Regulatory Resources and Assets and other RPII Assets in addition to other National Resources and Assets were mobilised to deal with this incident as it involved a Class 7 Material*  
*(Regulatory Service effectively closed for Routine Business during October 2013)*
- *EPA will move to seize sources must faster in the future*