



POLICE DEPARTMENT



## Crime Prevention: Don't Invite Theft! A Guide to Business Security

If you own or manage a business, the fear of a burglary, a robbery or a major shoplifting loss is probably never far from your mind.

Most often these are crimes of opportunity. They happen because the criminal spots an easy chance and takes it. So make it tough on him or her. Here's how.

### **Burglary**

Odds are, if you are careless, the burglars will hit your business sooner or later-so practice good security.

### **Doors and windows**

- Use deadbolt locks on all exterior doors. Those with glass should have double cylinder deadbolts.
- Make sure you check all doors and windows each day, before closing.
- Develop a system of key security. Make sure all keys issued are signed for and turned in when an employee leaves the company. You may even want to change locks and combinations.
- Do not identify with what they're used for. If necessary, use a coding system.
- If you have doors with outside hinges, use non-removable hinge pins. Install panel doors lined with metal to resist drilling.
- Doors and windows on the sides and rear of a building are often inviting to the burglar because they offer concealment. Steel reinforcing bars on doors and gratings or bars on windows offer good security.
- Every exterior opening offers a potential point of entry. Do not overlook security at places like fire escapes, skylights, roof openings, air ducts, doorway transoms, loading docks, sidewalk and basement openings.
- Before you leave, check all potential hiding places, like bathrooms, closets and storage areas. The last thing you want to do is to lock a burglar inside.

## **Using lights**

- Light up all entrances with vandal-proof fixtures. Burglars like a nice dark place in which to work.
- Keep some lights on inside, and place them near the rear so that an intruder's silhouette can be seen from the street.

## **Alarm systems**

- Install a good alarm system and have it checked regularly.
- Make sure it is wired to go off at all potential points of entry, including doors, windows, roof openings, loading docks and vents.

## **Your cash**

- Keep as little cash around as possible. Make bank deposits frequently, but, irregularly so as not to establish a discernible pattern.
- Securely anchor your safe in a highly visible, well-lit location.
- Empty your cash drawers and leave them open after hours.
- Keep the premises visible from the street; avoid blocking the interior view with high window displays and/or advertisements on windows.
- Make sure trees and shrubs around entranceways are trimmed.
- Don't leave ladders or tools lying around that a burglar could use to help him break in.

## **Some additional tips**

- If a burglar does get in, don't make it easy for him/her to remove items. Bolt racks to the floor, alternate hangers on the rack, and lock small valuables in cabinets.
- If you discover a break-in, call the police immediately. Don't enter the premises until police arrive. The thief may still be inside, or you may disturb evidence.

## **Robbery**

Facing an armed robber is a frightening and dangerous experience. Most robbers carry weapons and are likely to use them if provoked or frightened.

## **Be calm**

- Your own personal safety and that of your employees and customers is most important. If confronted by an armed robber, stay calm and cooperate. Do not risk physical harm.

## **Be observant**

- A good description will be vital to police, so try to remember everything you can about the robber.
  - color of hair/cut
  - complexion
  - height
  - age
  - weight
  - eyes/eyeglasses
  - scars/marks/ tattoos
  - speech/ accent/lisp
  - beard/mustache/sideburns
  - shirt
  - coat/ jacket
  - trousers
  - shoes
  - vehicle /color/make
  - vehicle license number
  - direction of escape
  - weapon
  - right/left handed
  
- Don't compare notes with other witnesses. It's easy to become confused.

## **Be cautious**

- Try not to work alone, but if you must, leave a radio playing in a back room to create the impression that someone else is there.
- If possible, arrange counters so that customers face the street in full view of people passing by.
- Avoid turning your back on customers to answer the phone or handle paperwork.
- Keep some “bait money” in the cash drawer; record dates and serial numbers of bills so they can be traced by the police

## **Shoplifting**

Shoplifters can be pretty sharp, and if you're not careful the quantities taken will have a critical economic impact on your business. Do not take anything for granted. Even the most innocent-looking customer could be a shoplifter. They come in all ages and from every social group.

### **Watch for them:**

- Install convex mirrors, closed circuit TV cameras or, if your business merits it, use security officers.
- Train your personnel to spot shoplifters and make sure they are always on the lookout.
- If possible, greet each person that enters your business and maintain eye contact so they will know you are aware of their presence.
- Pay particular attention to fitting rooms and other isolated areas.

### **Physical arrangements**

The way you arrange counters and displays can deter shoplifters:

- Put displays in full view of all employees.
- Lock anything small, that can be easily slipped into a pocket or handbag, in counter cases, when possible.
- Keep expensive items away from entrances.

### **Prosecute**

- Shoplifters must know that you mean business, so decide on a policy of prosecuting offenders, follow through with it and then advertise you have done so.

### **Employee theft**

Many businesses suffer substantial losses each year from employee theft. Make sure this doesn't happen to you:

- When hiring, thoroughly check all references.
- Do not tempt employees by having careless security or overlooking losses.