



## Crime Prevention Information



### Shoplifting Prevention

The following guidelines will help store managers create policies, procedures, and physical deterrents to minimize the chances of shoplifting losses. For additional assistance in employee training and for a security survey of your business, contact the Crime Prevention Unit.

#### **VISIBLE DETERRENCE**

**SHOPLIFTERS WILL BE PROSECUTED.** Establish and follow through with this policy. Use posters available on this website. Understand that initially your employees will have to spend some time in court, but after a few incidents and establishing a reputation for prosecuting, the problem will lessen.

Uniformed personnel, store detectives and guards have an effect in deterring shoplifters.

**ALWAYS** staff the store with at least 2 employees, more depending on business, merchandise type, and coverage area.

Increase visibility in and out of your store. Limit advertising posters, move them very high or very low on the glass so passersby can see activity inside, and employees can see people approaching and leaving the store.

#### **VIDEO SURVEILLANCE**

In-Store Video Surveillance should be *monitored and recorded* to DVD or hard-drive.

Place cameras with overlapping fields of view, and post at least one monitor in view of the front entry to prove cameras are real. This will have an instant affect on shoplifters entering the store.

Keep video recordings for at least one month in case you need to go back to look at someone from a previous date. Make sure there is always someone working who knows how to operate the system and to produce a DVD for investigating officers.

#### **FLOORPLAN CONSIDERATIONS**

Place cash registers away from doors, but in clear view from the outside.

The cashier should have an unobstructed view of the store.

Raise the floor behind the register so staff can better survey the store.

Display merchandise so that employees can easily watch the movement of customers.

Avoid narrow, cluttered aisles and maintain an open, neat appearance throughout the store.

Avoid long, unbroken aisles and leave space between display cases. (continued)

Keep displays at a medium height so that employees can see across the top of them.

Arrange items neatly so that anything missing can be quickly noticed.

Make sure the entire store is well lit.

Optical, mechanical, and electronic devices can be used against shoplifters.

Convex mirrors should be placed so that several areas of the store can be seen in one glance.

Peepholes and one-way mirrors are also useful for observation of customers from within offices and storage areas.

Consider the use of a closed circuit television surveillance system (above) and electronic theft detection devices.

## **STRATEGY**

Control entry and exit at the store. Consider one-way turnstiles or separate doors for entry and exit.

Divide the store into sections assigning each employee specific sections of coverage.

Never leave a section unattended.

Schedule employees' working hours with adequate floor coverage in mind.

Employees should circulate throughout their sections constantly and not group together.

Greet and serve all customers as promptly as possible. If a customer enters the store while another is being helped, the newcomer's presence should be acknowledged with the words, "I'll be right with you."

Develop a warning system for alerting employees that a shoplifter is suspected.

## **MERCHANDISE CONTROL**

Post signs that require every customer to check packages at the door or with a checker before they shop.

Seal packages which are sold so that they cannot be used to conceal other items.

If merchandise is sold in pairs, display only one of the pair.

Remove empty hangers from clothing racks after articles of clothing have been purchased.

Require customers to check articles of clothing when entering and leaving fitting rooms.

Post signs indicating the maximum number of clothing articles allowed in a dressing room at one time. Many stores have found three items to be the maximum controllable limit.

Do not place more than one valuable item on a counter at the same time.

Keep the more expensive items in locked display cases or counters

Never leave a display case unlocked.

## **AT THE REGISTER**

The register should be open only while it is actually being used.

The cash drawer should be closed before merchandise is packaged.

Cashiers must be alert - avoid distractions from other customers while helping someone at the cash register. (these distractions could be planned!)

Keep cash registers locked and remove the key when they are not in use.

At check-out counters, look inside items such as trash cans, ice chests, tool boxes, shoe boxes, and purses for concealed merchandise.

Cashiers should double check the price of any item which seems to be inaccurately marked.

Check out lanes should be closed or blocked off when not in use.

Give customers receipts for all purchases. REQUIRE a sales receipt for any refunds.

Keep the store clear of discarded sales receipts (they can be used for false returns).

## **SPOTTING SHOPLIFTERS – SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR:**

Customers who spend more time looking around for staff and cameras than merchandise

“Jittery” eyes and nervous hands

Customers who just wander about the store

Customers who avoid the attention of employees

People who wear baggy clothes or heavy outer garments out of season

Persons carrying bundles, bags, boxes, briefcases, top coats, umbrellas, oversized packages, musical instruments, or books to conceal merchandise

Customers who try to divert the clerk’s attention or cause a distraction - Shoplifters sometimes ask for more articles than the clerk can control, disrupt a display or simply engage a clerk in conversation while an accomplice does the thieving.

**Remember, a store with a reputation for good security and a tough prosecution policy is a less likely target for shoplifters.**

For more information on this and other topics contact:

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