

# **SAFETY & SECURITY HANDBOOK**

***APPLYING CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH  
AWARENESS, TRAINING AND ENVIRONMENTAL  
CONCEPTS***



**Atlanta Retailers Association**

# Introduction

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The purpose of the ARA *Safety & Security handbook* is to help:

- **identify** common convenience store (C-Store) crime problems.
- **define and identify** recognized convenience store crime prevention concepts.
- **suggest** methods for implementing C-Store crime prevention solutions.

## Convenience Store Crime

Common problems challenging the C-Store industry include:

- burglary and theft of property
- robbery and its potential for more violent crimes
- identity theft and compromising personal information of customers and employees
- theft of property, goods, services or information from internal and external sources.

Each industry faces specific variants of these crimes. Security measures can decrease insurance costs, reduce potential liability, and reduce losses.

## Crime Prevention through Environmental Design

Most law enforcement agencies promote the principles of Crime Prevention through training, awareness and Environmental Design as the most effective way to confront crime. This holistic approach incorporates **employee training**, **access control**, **territorial reinforcement**, **natural surveillance**, and **maintenance**.

**Employee Training**- By providing training to sales associates both on proactive and reactive measures they can incorporate in to their daily work, employees can learn to deter and /or identify situations before they arise and if they do occur, how to best deal and react to those situations

**Access Control**- By designing elements of the exterior to guide access by customers, one can deter access to potential targets of crime. Anything out of the ordinary would be easily noticed and reported to law enforcement. Eliminating secluded areas and providing adequate lighting at night can discourage criminal activity.

**Territorial Reinforcement**- This concept uses the exterior design to show that the property is owned and enlists territorial reinforcement strategies. Specific landscaping, adequate lighting, strategic walkways, decorative fencing, and clear signage indicate that trespassers are not welcome.

**Natural Surveillance**- This common-sense method offers little opportunity for a would-be criminal to succeed because of the high visibility of all sides of the property. Well-lit parking lots and the interiors of buildings, and trimmed landscaping discourage crime. Also, businesses that are located in a mixed-use area of commercial buildings have a decided advantage.

**Maintenance**- It is an important message that a well-maintained property sends to a potential criminal: the owner takes pride in the neighborhood and takes responsibility for his/her property. Positive attitudes manifest themselves in immediate graffiti removal, landscape maintenance, and on-going repair of buildings.

# Implementing Crime Prevention

The contents of this *Safety & Security Handbook* suggest effective and efficient solutions to C-Store crime prevention problems. Among the topics included are:

- ***Physical Security*** issues, such as lighting, alarms and landscaping.
- ***Robbery Prevention*** techniques, including an employee training guide.
- ***Shoplifting Prevention*** strategies (Confronting Strangers).
- ***Car Jacking*** warnings about recent increase in car jacking
- ***Internal Theft Prevention*** tips.
- ***Personal Safety for Employees.***
- ***Facility Audit***, site review of preventative measures in place
- ***ARA Robbery Deterrence Signage***, available from ARA or your local MSR

# Burglary



## Lighting

Most commercial burglaries occur at night. Because darkness can conceal a burglar, it is necessary to provide high visibility by flooding all sides of your buildings, parking lots, storage areas, and trash depositories with adequate lighting. Protective lighting priorities begin with perimeters and vulnerable areas or structures.



Exterior lighting usually needs lower intensity than interior spaces. Contact your local power utilities company to inquire about exterior lighting programs designed to help C-Stores use lighting in an efficient manner while maximizing coverage. Additionally, in some areas, your utilities provider may furnish fixtures for your business. Contact them for more details.

Security lighting should:

- discourage unauthorized entry.
- enhance detection of intruders.
- detect and prevent internal pilferage.

Additional considerations include stand-by lighting, maintenance, and periodic testing of systems. Replace or repair inoperative lamps immediately.



## Addresses

Illuminate your building to facilitate emergency response. Address numbers should be easily read from the street at night (lit or back-lit numbers are the best). The rear of your business should also be identified. Numbers should be clearly mounted against a contrasting color and should measure at least 5 inches. The rear of your business should also be identified.

Placing addresses numbers on the rooftop can aid helicopter patrol.

## Landscaping



Keep plant growth from obscuring doors and windows to allow maximum visibility and better security. Consider using security plants (those with prickly leaves or thorns) as a natural barrier to intruders. They are most beneficial when planted below windows and along fence lines.

## Protective Barriers

Creating protective barriers incorporates three concepts of prevention. The first is to *prevent entry*, except at controlled areas. The second is to *prevent exiting*, except through controlled points. The third goal is to *prevent access* to certain buildings or areas within the property. These three concepts can be implemented with a system of barriers in layers. Protective barriers do not always require fences, since natural barriers are often available.

### Restrict Building Access



Keep stackable items stored in a locked area and away from the building to avoid theft of tools, pallets, and ladders that could be used to aid a burglar. Secure ladders attached to the building with locked ladder covers.

If your building has large windows or weak walls, install bollards to prevent “smash-and-grab” drive-through burglaries. Bollards allow unrestricted pedestrian, bicycle, and wheelchair traffic, while impeding cars and trucks.

Do not overlook utility openings such as sewers air and water intakes, roof hatches and skylights, storm drains, exhausts, and others that breach the perimeter or building structures. A good guideline is to protect any opening more than ten inches. You may need heavy screening (16-gauge sheet metal or stronger), chain-link fencing welded or bolted in place, or welded-in hardened bars or pipes.

Reminder: Trash bin areas should be well lit, away from buildings and **locked**.



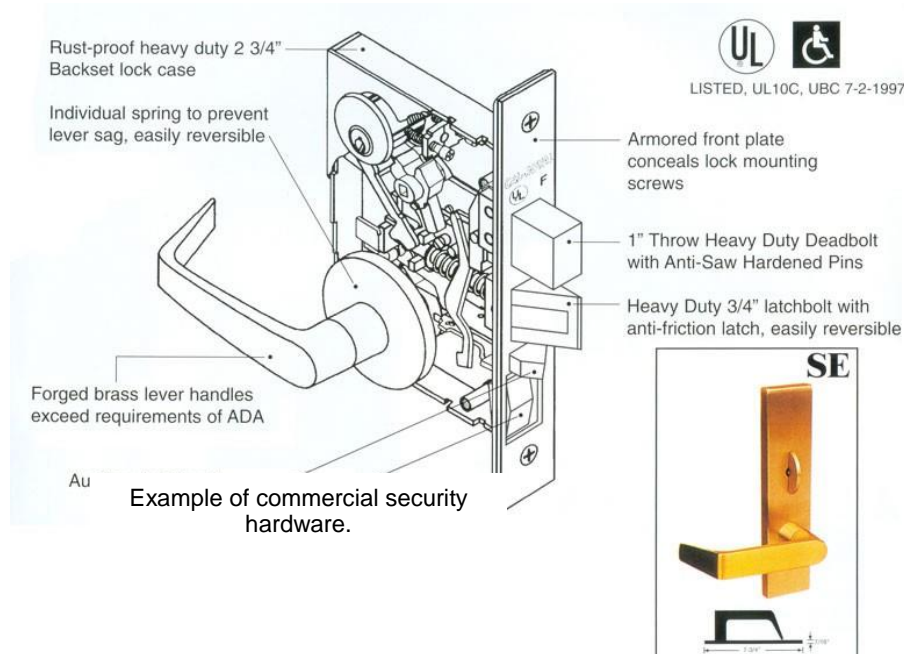
If your building is located within a complex, chances are that you share a common attic or hollow walls that make it easier for a thief to move between offices. This means **your security is only as good as your neighbor's**. Seal off or alarm these areas with motion sensors to detect intruders and encourage your business neighbors to also use the security practices recommended in this *Guide*.

## Doors

All exterior doors should be solid core. Mail slots in doors compromise security and should be sealed.

### **Dead-bolt lock** specifications for commercial doors:

- Throw should be at least one inch.
- Cylinder guard should be tapered
- Case trim should be steel, bronze or solid brass
- Locking mechanism should have a five-pin tumbler.



Panic deadbolt hardware is available to secure secondary exits. A panic deadbolt push-bar is advisable. These devices are a combination of a door knob or push-bar and a dead-bolt, where the dead-bolt is released when the knob is turned or the bar is pushed. These are available with alarms and without exterior keyways.



For single glass doors, swing locks should be of case-hardened steel with steel or ceramic inserts and a throw at least 1 3/4 inches.

Double doors should have three-point panic flush bolts installed on both doors. It is important that the bolts have at least a one-inch throw and are made of steel rather than nylon.

Astragals or latch-guards attach to exterior doors to protect the locking bolt against prying.

A 180-degree viewer should be installed



on all delivery, alley, and back doors.

4-inch strike plate  
with 3-inch

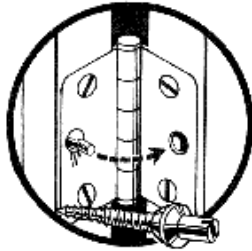


With all locks, use high security strike plates with three-inch screws anchoring securely into the wall stud. Metal door reinforcements provide even greater protection against kick-in attacks. Ensure full throw of the bolt is in its receptacle.



*Exposed hinge pins* can be easily removed by a burglar and the door opened from the hinge side. Here are ways to secure ways to secure the hinge pins:

- Install commercially-made secured hinges.
- Spot-weld the hinge-pin to the hinge.
- Pin the hinges.



**Pinning Hinges**  
Insert long screws or duplex nails into the door jamb just above each hinge. Allow each to protrude about ½". Close the door until the screw or nail comes in contact with the door. Drill a larger hole into the door at the points of contact.

## Windows

**Good visibility allows employees to be aware of suspicious activities outside the store.** It also increases the chance passerbys will observe robberies taking place inside the store.

- Limited signage and good visibility allows for employees to be alert to situations outside the store
- Limited signage allows for customers and law enforcement to clearly see inside the store and identify if a crime is underway
- By having a clear line of sight to the pumps, employees can be vigilant to activity at the pump ranging from credit card fraud to vehicle theft



## Interior

### **Visibility**

Do not crowd windows with posters or displays. In addition to adequate exterior lighting, keep lights on in the interior during hours when the business is closed.

### **Annunciators/Mirrors/CCTV**



Surveillance devices serve as deterrents. They also create awareness and thereby discourage criminal activity. *Annunciators* alert store personnel to entry and exit of customers and patrons. *Convex mirrors* help to reduce shoplifter's opportunities. *Closed circuit television (CCTV)* reduces the likelihood of robbery when placed in register area.



## Alarms

Burglar alarms are an excellent investment in protection. Consult a reputable alarm agency for your needs. Advertise your security to would-be thieves. An adequate system for detecting intruders will include these four elements:

1. **Sensors-** Sensors detect a change in conditions and include:

- Duress alarms (“panic buttons”)
- Photoelectric sensors detecting changes in available light or in projected beams or lasers.
- Metallic foil sensors on breakables
- Stress detectors connected to structural elements
- Vibrations sensors

Motion sensors may be infrared, microwave, ultrasound or Doppler-effect.

Remember: Sensors cannot distinguish between **authorized** and **unauthorized** entry.

2. **Controls-** Controls receive information from sensors, evaluate it, and transmit the result to the annunciator device (s)

**Annunciation-** The electronic signal passed on by the control device alerts a human monitor. The monitor may be on site, as a security guard or a resident, but it is usually off-premises in a distant monitoring station, sometimes out-of-state. The annunciator may be a bell, siren, buzzer, or complex computer output.

3. **Response-** While an alarm may scare off a potential intruder, and the mere presence of a detection system may ward off some intruders, no alarm system is complete unless someone is alerted to investigate the cause of the alarm.

Your decision about an intrusion detection system should include consideration of the following:

- ▶ How well the system meets your specific needs.
- ▶ The value of the property being protected.
- ▶ Environmental factors of construction, ambient noise levels, climactic conditions, radio, and electrical interference.
- ▶ Availability and response times of monitors.
- ▶ Types of threats likely to be encountered (burglary, vandalism, hacking, etc.).
- ▶ Employees’ ability to operate the system correctly to avoid false alarms.
- ▶ Be sure to research and understand local codes and penalties relative to false alarms





## Safes

Decide whether your circumstances require a *fire safe* or a *burglar-resistant safe*. For any safe:

- ▶ Bolt or anchor to the floor.
- ▶ Keep in a low-profile area
- ▶ Restrict access to keys or combination.



Time Access Cash Control safe restricts amount that can be dispensed by sales associate

Display signage that alerts customers that employees have limited amounts of cash on hand and CANNOT access the safe

ARA Provides a Robbery Deterrence Kit for Members free of charge. Call ARA at 770-455-4455 to request one.

For placement instructions, please call your MSR. They can guide you on the most effective locations to place signage



**TIME LOCK SAFE—  
CLERK CANNOT OPEN**

# Robbery

Robbery is the unlawful act of taking personal property from a person or in his presence, by force or fear of injury. Robbery is a violent crime. This may include the use of a weapon. Robbers often case the area for likely victims. Take measures to make your business less tempting to robbers. Keep in mind, would-be robbers look for these elements: *surprise, lack of witnesses, and cash on hand.*



***To avoid becoming a robbery victim, you must stay alert to your surroundings and customers and use common sense.***

## REDUCE YOUR RISK!

- Keep windows and counters clear-not cluttered with signs and displays.
  - Situate the cash register so that it is visible from the outside.
  - Use a **drop safe** and keep very little cash at the register. Always keep your safe locked when access is not required.
  - Display signs indicating that employees don't not have access to the safe.
- A rectangular sign with a black border. The text is centered and reads: "TIME-LOCK SAFE" in black, followed by a horizontal line, then "EMPLOYEES DO NOT HAVE ACCESS" in red.
- Be unpredictable about moving money from the business to the bank. change time, routes, and methods of concealment. if you use an armored car service, always be prepared for their pick-up and delivery.
  - Keep doors that lead to unauthorized areas locked!
  - **Never re-open** your business for anyone after you have closed! Be wary of the caller who states that your business has just been broken into and asks you to come down. Always confirm (by calling back) that the call was from a law enforcement agency or your alarm company before entering your business.
  - **Avoid working alone.** If you must, keep a television or radio playing in the backrooms to suggest that someone else is present.
  - **Encourage law enforcement** to visit your location frequently. Offer free fountain and coffee to law enforcement officers and try to build a relationship with your local officers
  - Train your employees about what to do during a robbery.
  - **Know what is happening outside the store.** Post "No Loitering" signs. Look for anyone watching the store or acting suspicious. Make sure that exterior lighting is adequate.
  - Install a hold-up alarm surveillance camera. Use highly visible signs to advertise your security system.
  - **Record** descriptions of suspicious persons or vehicles.
  - **Be alert** to your customers and surroundings, especially at opening and closing. Two employees should open and close, if possible.
  - **Greet all customers**, making eye contact as they enter the business. Ask if they need assistance. Customers and clients like attention; robbers do not!
  - Move away from the register when there are no customers at the sales counter. Lock the register when it is unattended.
  - Find out whether you are obligated to allow customers to use your restrooms. Different establishments have different policies.
  - Place colored height marks at all exits to estimate a suspect's height.
  - Develop a mutual aid system with neighboring merchants to keep an eye on each other's businesses and watch for suspicious activity. An inexpensive buzzer system can alert adjoining businesses to an emergency situation (see "*Business Watch*").

# Robbery Training Guide



*Remember that every robbery situation is different. You will need to assess yourself, the robber, and the situation to determine what you should do. With that in mind, here are some tips:*

## ACT CALMLY.

By acting calmly, you may avoid a more dangerous situation.

Do exactly what the robber says. Keep your movements short and smooth to **avoid startling** the robber.

If you remain calm, you will be better able to provide an accurate description.

## DO NOT RESIST!

Cooperate for your own safety and the safety of others. Robbers usually are excited, and may be high on drugs, and are easily provoked. Tell the robber about any possible surprises, such as movements you may have to make or that someone is in the back room, etc.



Activate an alarm only if it is silent and can be done surreptitiously. Know how to activate it by touch.

## OBSERVE CAREFULLY!

You will have less than two minutes to:

- Study his face.
- Remember his clothing.
- Note the direction of travel.
- Obtain the license, color, and make of the car (if it is safe to do so).
- **DO NOT FOLLOW THE ROBBER OUTSIDE THE STORE**



## AFTER THE ROBBER LEAVES, IMMEDIATELY:

- **Lock the door.** Discontinue regular business until deputies have searched the scene.



- Call **9-1-1**.
- If you **act quickly**, the robber may be apprehended. Call law enforcement before you call the owner or anyone else.

- **Preserve the scene.**  
Cover any surfaces the robber may have touched and keep away from areas the robber may have been.  
Ask witnesses to remain. If they are unable to stay, get names and phone numbers. Verify with their driver's license or ID.
- Complete the suspect information form. **Write down** everything you can remember about the robber and the crime itself.



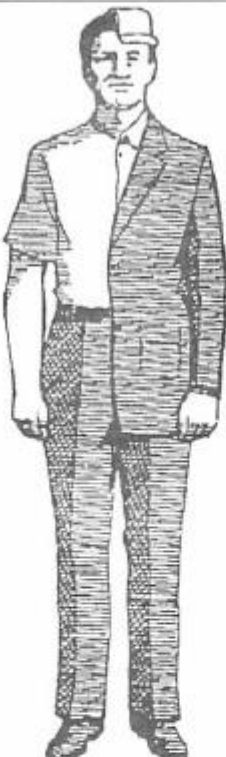











- **Do not discuss** the robbery with others until all statements have been taken.

**TIME LOCK SAFE—  
CLERK CANNOT OPEN**

**USE THIS GUIDE TO TRAIN / REVIEW WITH YOUR EMPLOYEES!**

# Suspect Identification Form

Suspect Description Form			Indicate Type Weapon Used	
Sex Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Race White <input type="checkbox"/> Black <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Age	 Large Automatic	 Small Automatic
Height		Left/Right Handed	 Pump  Automatic  Single Shot  Sawed-Off Shotguns	
Weight		Hat (Color/Type)		
Hair (Color/Style)		Tie		
Eyes		Coat	 Long Barrell Revolver  Snub Nose Revolver	
Glasses Type		Shirt		
Tattoos		Trousers		
Scars/Marks		Shoes	 Bolt-Action  Lever  Sawed-Off Rifles	
Complexion		Weapon		
Facial Hair		Accent		
			Other Weapons	

## Additional Information - Be Specific

What Suspect Said _____			
Type of Vehicle (License Number, Make, Color) _____			
Police Notified	Yes _____ No _____	Person Notified	_____
Police Badge Number	_____	Case Number	_____
Supervisor Notified	Yes _____ No _____		
Region/Division Notified	_____ Yes _____ No _____	Person Notified	_____
Medical Attention Required	Yes _____ No _____		
Date of Incident	_____	Time of Incident	_____
Name of Witnesses	1. Name _____ Address _____ Phone _____		
	2. Name _____ Address _____ Phone _____		
Print Name of Cashier/Attendant on Duty _____			
Signature _____		Date of Report _____	

**Suspect ID form available form ARA. Call ARA office or your MSR!**

## Remember these things:

- Robbers want one thing – your money or property – and they want it quickly.
- Robbery is a risky business and robbers are usually nervous. You do not want to delay a robbery in any way and increase the potential for violence. Give the robber what he or she wants and do it quickly. Do not risk your life, or another person's life, for property.

## Be Alert

- **Robberies occur at predictable times.** Opening and closing periods are particularly vulnerable times due to low staffing and large amounts of cash on hand. Lunch hours are primary times for the same reasons. Robberies increase during the holiday season due to the increased cash volume and the presence of large crowds that distract and preoccupy store and company personnel.
- **Report suspicions activity.** If you observe an individual, or occupied vehicle, lingering around your business for a time, or in a manner that makes you suspicious or uncomfortable, write down the license number, color of the car and description of the individual(s) and call the police non-emergency number. Be sure to inform other employees of your suspicion.

## Visibility

- **Good visibility allows employees to be aware of suspicious activities outside the store.** It also increases the chance passerbys will observe robberies taking place inside the store.
- **Keep doors and windows clear.** Post any necessary signs to the side, top or bottom of the display windows to allow maximum visibility into and out of the store. This will help customers see your merchandise too.
- **Locate the cash register in a central place.** Keep it in clear view of the door, with the customer's back to the entrance. The register should be visible from the outside
- **Keep counter displays low.** This allows employees to see over the top. You can also rearrange displays to allow surveillance up and down both sides of each aisle.
- **Place wide-angle mirrors in strategic locations.** This will assist with visibility in blind areas of the store.
- **Make sure interior lighting provides good visibility in the store at all times.** Outdoor lighting should be even and directed toward the sides of the building, not outward where glare can create hiding places for robbers.



# Cash Control

- **Do not keep unnecessary amounts of money in the till.** Keep only the amount you will need to conduct normal business, and transfer the rest to the bank or a safe. Provide an anchored drop-vault for employees and do not provide them with the key to the safe. Post the fact that you use a drop-vault and, therefore, cannot make change for large denominations.
- **Drop all checks and food stamps.** Allow customers to see you do this and explain why. Ask customers for exact change or the smallest bills possible.
- **During the evening, take even greater precautions.** Check to see that outside lights are on and working. In money order sales, collect money and make your drop before printing the money order. Open unused register drawers and tip them for display.
- **Make trips to the bank often, varying travel times and routes to reduce predictability.** Carry money in a disguised container and have someone accompany you when possible. Do not transport money at the same time every day and do not use the same route every time. If you are making a night deposit, do not approach the deposit unless it is clear of other people. For high risk areas, or when transferring considerable amounts of cash, consider employing an armored car service.
- **List some serial numbers from larger bills before going to the bank.** Be aware of any suspicious persons lingering near the store. Call 9-1-1 if necessary.
- **Drive or walk directly to an open business, police precinct or fire station, if you feel you are being followed while transporting money.**
- **Prepare marked money.** Record non-consecutive serial numbers and series dates of five and ten-dollar bills. Do not use these bills in normal transactions; rather place the money in a till to be included in the money given to the robber. Keep the record of the marked bills in a secure location other than the till or the safe.
- **Post store policy that no more than some pre-determined amount (often \$25 to \$50) is kept in the register at one time and that the store will accept no larger than \$20 denominations.** When the clerk receives the \$20 bill it should be dropped immediately. Never place large bills in the drawer under the tray. Robbers know this practice.





# Identification

- **Greet each customer.** Establish eye contact and remember their general appearance. Good customer service discourages hesitant robbers as well as other thieves. This attention to detail conveys control and puts people on notice they have been observed and can be identified later.
- **Place height markings along the vertical frame at the entrance.** This allows employees the ability to tell how tall the robber is at a glance so employees can tell at a glance how tall the robber is.
- **Consider installing a quality surveillance camera and recorder kept high on the wall but visible.** Don't use fake cameras. Robbers know the difference. Have several cameras connected to the system, some visible, some not. Only the managers should have access to the tape.

# Policy Considerations

- **Check references of prospective employees. Do a background check of previous employers.** Additionally, consider contacting the Police Department to have a job applicant's criminal history examined.
- **Keep a file on all employees, including their pictures.** Past employees know store procedure and where money is kept. They sometimes share this information with others who use it to plan robberies at the store. Pictures of suspects are much more useful than verbal descriptions.
- **Re-key locks and alter safe combinations or codes when employees are dismissed for cause.**



- **Establish clear and consistent policies regarding money in the till.** Establish how much money will be kept in the till, what bill denominations employees will accept, how to respond to “suspicious” inquires and how to handle loiterers. All employees should be trained and given a written description of store policy. Stress that their commitment to security procedures will reduce their risk of criminal confrontation and physical harm.
- **Staff should never admit customers to premises after closing hours, particularly when the employee is alone.**
- **Always maintain adequate staff levels.** Be especially careful during opening and closing periods, lunch hours and holiday seasons when there is more money on the site and more distractions.
- **Store clerks should remain alert to what is going on outside their store.** Carefully observe parked cars with people inside and loiterers in the vicinity. Many robbers like to watch and wait for the right opportunity. If a parked car containing several people has been noticed on many occasions, get the license number and a general description of the occupants. Notify the police. A discreet investigation can be made and no one embarrassed in case the situation is an innocent one. Be sure to notify the individual(s) following your shift of suspicious circumstances.

## Robbery Prevention

### Guidelines for “Challenging” Strangers

Having policies and procedures in place for the whole building, as well as each individual organization helps tenants take responsibility for challenging strangers in their workplace. When you “challenge” a stranger, you do not have to be rude or threatening. Remember to be polite but assertive. The best thing to do is to ask the person, “can I help you find something?”

If the person seems calm, and answers you directly with a product name or description. A legitimate customer will appreciate the assistance, while the potential thief will probably look for an easier target.

If you approach a stranger, asking if they need assistance, and the stranger says he or she does not remember the product, or gives vague or partial answers like, “just browsing” or “I can’t make up my mind” encourage him or her to by asking additional questions such as would you like a fresh cup of coffee or have you tried our new food items? We strongly encourage you to not allow anyone to wander or browse around your store, especially if their answers do not seem legitimate.

**The best thing to do is to ask the person, “Can I help you find something?”**

# After the Robbery

- **Call the police immediately.** If you act quickly, police might be able to arrest the suspect quickly. When you dial 9-1-1, the procedure is always the same. You will be asked if your emergency involves police, fire or medical. Request police. Then briefly indicate to the call taker what the problem is, when it happened, where you are, who did it, who needs help and whether there were injuries or weapons involved. Remember to stay on the phone with the emergency operator. After calling the police, keep your telephone line clear until the police arrive. The officers may need to call you.
- **Lock all doors and allow no one in.** Ask witnesses to remain on the premises until police arrive. Do not touch anything the robber may have touched.

## "BUSINESS ARMED ROBBERY PREVENTION TIPS"

### BEFORE ROBBERY

- Greet everyone who enters your business.
- Keep doors and windows clear of signs and posters to allow good two-way visibility.
- Use video surveillance and make it well known.
- Make bank deposits at least once a day.
- Place a surveillance camera behind the cash register facing the front counter.
- Install an emergency (panic) alarm.
- Make your sales counter clearly visible to observers.
- A clean environment is good for business and uncomfortable for robbers.
- Keep your business well-lit inside and outside

### DURING ROBBERY

- Stay calm and don't resist!
- Do as instructed. Don't make sudden moves.
- Keep your hands in sight at all times.
- Get a look at the robber but don't stare.
- If safe - Get a description of the robber's vehicle and direction of travel.
- Activate the panic alarm ONLY when it's safe.
- Personal safety first! Money and merchandise are not important.
- Don't chase or follow the robber out of your place of business. Let the police catch the robber!

### AFTER A ROBBERY

- Close the store and lock the doors.
- Call the police; even if the alarm was activated.
- Don't touch anything the robber may have touched.
- Ask witnesses to stay until the police arrive.
- Only step outside when the police arrive and contact you via telephone.
- Call your business owner, manager or other designated person.

### TIPS

- Use a drop safe that is secured to the floor.
- Post signs indicating limited cash on hand.
- Professionally install security cameras to capture the best images of the suspects.
- Trim landscaping for good view into and out of your business

- **Do not discuss what happened with any other witnesses.** Your own impressions should be kept untainted until you have talked with authorities.
- **Complete your incident-suspect-vehicle description form while waiting for police to arrive.** The responding officer will want this information immediately to broadcast to other police cars in the area. Be as complete as possible. Consider keeping a portable tape recorder nearby to preserve your first impressions. Sometimes you will be trembling too much to write quickly or may feel more comfortable verbalizing the episode than writing about it.
- **Finally, remember that robbery response strategies require planning and coordination between employees and management.** Give some thought to how you might react in a robbery situation and discuss your concerns with co-workers and employers. Common sense, caution and adherence to established policies and procedures can reduce the amount of money stolen and minimize the chance for injury and loss of life.

# Shoplifting

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Shoplifting can cost your business thousands of dollars each year. Shoplifters may be any age, sex, economic or ethnic background. There is no “typical” shoplifter. Often they work in pairs or groups to divert clerks’ attention while they steal. Certain times of the day, when employees are apt to be less alert, are critical: store opening or closing, as well as during lunch, dinner and shift changes. Shoplifters learn to take advantage of crowded stores during peak hours. Effective prevention begins with an aware and alert staff.

## PROTECTIVE MEASURES

You can begin to combat the shoplifting problem by establishing effective deterrents within the store. Preventive measures must accomplish two goals: to heighten a shoplifter’s feeling of being watched; and to minimize potential shoplifters’ access to merchandise without inconveniencing customers.

Post placards warning against shoplifting and the consequences: that you will and do prosecute.



The best way to discourage shoplifters is by taking a “get tough” attitude and prosecuting even on the first offense. *Keep your business from being tagged an “easy mark.”*

Watch for customers with loose or baggy clothing inappropriate for the weather, large bags of other props such as newspapers, strollers, briefcases, or umbrellas. These items can easily conceal merchandise. Consider checking patrons’ parcels upon entering the store.

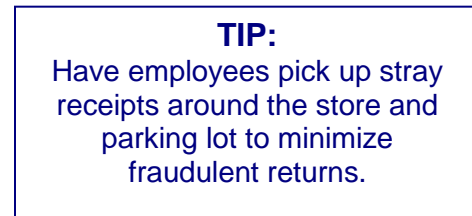
Both amateurs and professionals employ similar strategies to confuse and distract clerks. When working in teams, one of the suspects creates a disturbance, such as loudly complaining, staging a medical problem, or knocking over a display, while the accomplice works without being noticed.

Attentive sales associates who are trained to be helpful and enlist customer service techniques, especially toward a suspicious

patron, can reduce shoplifting incidents. Acknowledging each person with a “May I help you?” or “I’ll be with you in a minute,” warns a potential thief that he/she is being watched.

Cashiers familiar with store prices help curb the “price switch” method.

Merchandise return policies should require a receipt for cash returns. Require an ID and signature for returns without a receipt. Offer store-credit-only vouchers.



Returned merchandise should be inventoried against receipts on a regular basis to catch false returns (return transactions without returned merchandise).

## DISPLAY STRATEGIES

Keep display and clothing racks away from doorways and exits to discourage “hit and run” thieves. Alternate hangers front-to-back to deter thieves from grabbing bundles of display merchandise.

*Keep small and expensive items out of reach or in locked display cases.* The stores most vulnerable to shoplifters are those that sell small, concealed items such as jewelry, hardware, clothing, drug stores, department and variety stores. Show only one item at a time and wait on only one customer at a time

# Who to call when...

## **When to Call Emergency and Non-Emergency Numbers**

It is important to know how to identify and report crimes and suspicious activity. The following are guidelines for deciding whether an incident is an emergency or non-emergency, and if it should be reported to emergency (9-1-1) or non-emergency

### **Call emergency 9-1-1 when:**

- A crime is in progress
- A situation is about to escalate into an emergency (endangering life or major property)
- A crime has just occurred (especially if you can describe the suspect and the direction in which he or she fled)

### **Call the non-emergency number when:**

- Your business was burglarized last night
- Your business car was broken into last night
- You need to add additional information to a report you made last week
- Your business received a bad check last Tuesday

The non-emergency number can be accessed 24-hours a day for non-emergency police help. Using the non-emergency number keeps 9-1-1 available for true emergencies.

When dialing the non-emergency number you will go into a voicemail system. By selecting the correct options you will be able to speak to an operator.

Some suspicious activity may not be obvious, and what is considered suspicious activity in one building may be common in another. Keep in mind that behavior or activity that is not normal for your building could be an indication that a crime is about to happen. It is important that tenants are familiar with their neighbors so when asking strangers if they need assistance they will be able to evaluate the answer.

Watch for people wandering around aimlessly, trying to open closed doors, loitering in restrooms, and selling or pretending to sell something. Someone wandering around the common areas of your floor or building might be a client of another tenant, but they could also be someone "casing" the floor or building for hiding places or under-monitored offices.

**Using the non-emergency number keeps 9-1-1 available for true emergencies.**



# Personal Security

Security precautions should not create additional hazards for facility occupants. For example, barrier devices should not interfere with the ability of building occupants to leave quickly in the event of fire or other emergency.

Security enhancement can be as simple as insisting that employees lock up purses and other belongings or encouraging employees to protect their vehicles from theft and burglary.



## **ASSAULT PREVENTION**

Burglars, robbers, and thieves seek primarily to remove cash or property. Nevertheless, many such intruders are capable of harming people with little provocation. In general, facility occupants should be trained to avoid confrontation with the criminal. Instead, they should report the incident as soon as they feel it is safe to do so.

The “buddy system” (safety-in-numbers concept) is recommended for the following vulnerable times:

- **Opening the business**--If possible, schedule two employees to meet and unlock the business together. One should stay outside, while the other checks the interior. After assuring that all is clear, they may enter the building.
- **Closing the business**--Employees should have partners accompanying them to their vehicles, especially at night. If this is not possible, request that a security guard for the shopping center escort the last employee to his or her car.
- **Bank deposits**—Making bank deposits alone can be dangerous. If employees must make deposits, they should go in pairs. If you are alone, vary deposit times and carry the deposit inside a purse or bag other than a shop-named bag or bank bag. Deposits should not be made after closing by a lone employee who just closed the shop. This is an ideal time for a robbery!
- **Taking out the trash**—Doing this in pairs is much safer, both for the employees and for the business.

*Controlling access enhances personal security.*

- Keep secondary exits locked, but still in accordance with local fire codes. Limit secondary exits by non-employees (this includes ex-employees) by having the doors alarmed and labeled “EMERGENCY EXIT ONLY!”, or by limiting access to the area around the door

# Car Jacking

In the past few months, car jacking has become one of the most prevalent crimes in recent times. Most carjackings occur for the sole purpose of taking the car regardless of contents .

You can protect yourself by becoming familiar with the methods, ruses, and locations commonly used by carjackers.

## AVOIDANCE

The first step to avoiding an attack is to stay alert at all times and be aware of your environment. The most likely places for a carjacking are:

- High crime areas
- Lesser traveled roads (rural areas)
- Intersections where you must stop
- Isolated areas in parking lots
- Instances where vehicle is left unattended

Learn to avoid these areas and situations if possible. If not, take steps to prevent an attack.

When stopped, use your rear and side view mirrors to stay aware of your surroundings. Also keep your doors locked and windows up. This increases your safety and makes it more difficult for an attacker to surprise you. Always be aware of who is around your vehicle when you park. Avoid being distracted by using a phone while you drive or when you park.

## DURING A CARJACKING

In most carjacking situations, the attackers are interested only in the vehicle. Try to stay calm. Do not stare at the attacker as this may seem aggressive and cause them to harm you.

There are two options during an attack: NON-CONFRONTATIONAL behavior and RESISTIVE behavior.

In the NON-CONFRONTATIONAL situation, you would:

- give up the vehicle freely.
- listen carefully to all directions.
- make no quick or sudden movements that the attacker could construe as a counter attack.
- always keeps your hands in plain view. Tell the attacker of every move in advance.
- **make the attacker aware if children are present. The attacker may be focused only on the driver and not know children are in the car.**

In a **RESISTIVE** response, you would make a decision to escape or attack the carjacker. Before doing so, consider:

- the mental state of the attacker.
- the number of attackers; there is usually more than one.
- the use of weapons. (Weapons are used in the majority of carjacking situations.)

**IN ALL INSTANCES, IT IS SAFEST TO GIVE UP YOUR VEHICLE**

## **AFTER THE ATTACK**

### **Safety**

Always carry a cell phone or radio on your person. Get to a safe place before contacting someone to report the incident.

### **Reporting the Crime**

Describe the event. What time of day did it occur? Where did it happen? How did it happen? Who was involved? Describe the attacker(s). Without staring, try to note height, weight, scars or other marks, hair and eye color, the presence of facial hair, build (slender, large), and complexion (dark, fair). Describe the attacker's vehicle. If possible get the vehicle license number, color, make, model, and year, as well as any marks (scratches, dents, damage) and personal decorations (stickers, colored wheels).

## **CONCLUSION**

**Avoidance is the best way to prevent an attack. Use your judgment to evaluate the situation and possible reactions. Know safe areas to go to in an emergency. Always carry your cell phone and ALWAYS be aware of your surroundings!**

For more information, visit the U.S. Department of State at:

<http://www.state.gov/m/ds/rls/rpt/19782.html>

# Facility Security Audit

Performing regular security audits is a best practice that every store owner should follow. Every location is vulnerable to threats, be they physical theft, credit card information theft, life safety risks to employees and customers and/or acts of God.

The best planned security systems and security procedures lose their effectiveness if they are not continuously monitored. Store owners should perform regular security audits, document all findings and deficiencies and ensure corrective action is taken to correct said deficiencies. In addition, all staff members should be trained on any new features added to security system.

Security audits can encompass a wide array of areas; however, a cursory checklist is listed below:

## **Physical layout of the facility and surrounding area**

- Is there a clear view for law enforcement and customers of the store interior from the store exterior?
- Does the landscaping offer locations to hide or means of access to roof tops or other access points?

## **Lighting**

- Is there sufficient lighting to allow law enforcement, employees or others to see places of possible concealment or access?
- Are access points obscured by low light?

## **Alarms – Including fire, intrusion, tamper and motion**

- Are doors, windows and gates monitored for egress and ingress?
- Are means of ingress able to be audited to identify who accessed those areas?
- Is the premises monitored for fire or smoke? Does the system alert the local fire department?
- In the event of a forced entry, who does the alarms system notify?

## **Physical Barriers –Including fences, bollards and gates**

- Are fences tall enough to reduce unauthorized access to the property? Is the fence checked regularly by staff for holes, damage or access points?
- Are bollards in place to prevent damage to buildings or access points by vehicles?
- Are gates secured and operating properly?

## **Surveillance system**

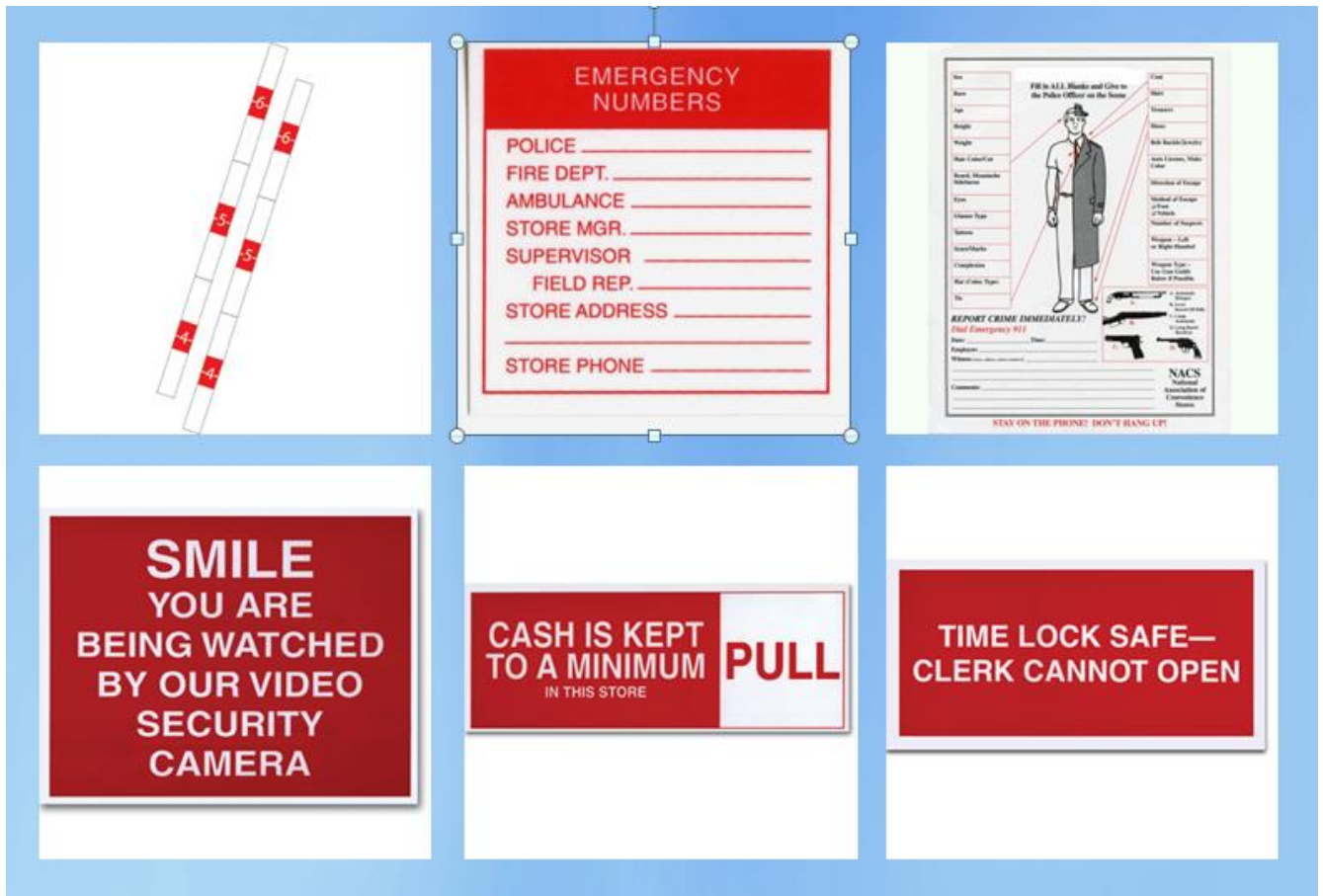
- Are the perimeter of the building and the perimeter of the property adequately covered by cameras?
- Are the building entrances and exits monitored by cameras?

## **Access to property**

- Have past and/or terminated employees still have keys/access cards to the building?
- Have past and/or terminated employees been removed from having access to the property?

Performing a security audit on a regular basis will help your business minimize loss and increase the safety of your employees and customers. With each audit, your store will become increasingly less vulnerable. A security audit takes minimal time to complete and will have lasting effects on increasing the safety and security of your location.

# ARA Signage Kit



Available to all ARA Members by calling ARA office or local MSR!