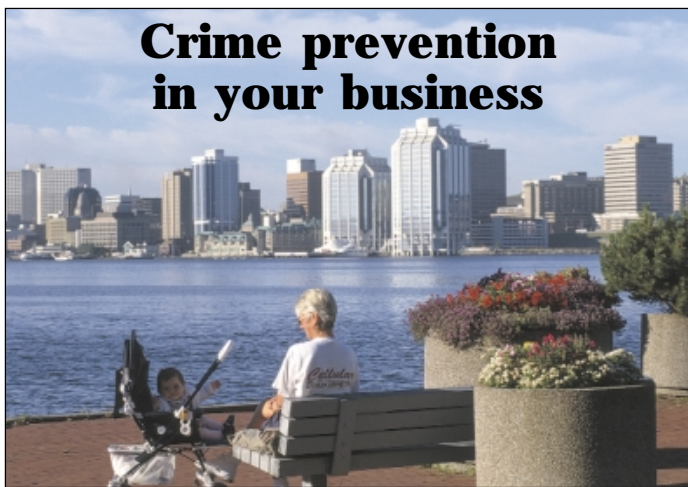


Crime prevention in your business



BURNSIDE BUSINESS WATCH

*Keeping Your Business Community
Crime-Free*



PROTECTING YOUR BUSINESS

What is the cost of Crime?

This question has been the subject of discussion many times. Statistics indicate that the financial losses through criminal activity reach staggering proportions annually.

More important, however, is the devastating effect on its victims and the impact it has on their quality of life.

While immunity from crime can never be guaranteed, by following the suggested guidelines in this publication, you and your business are less likely to become victimized.

LIGHTS

- * Light up all entrances, including alleys, with vandal-proof fixtures.
- * Leave some lights on inside your premises.

CLEAN UP

- * Avoid high displays near windows that could keep a passerby from seeing in.
- * Keep the exterior of your premise free from all weeds, shrubbery and debris especially around windows and doors.
- * Lock up ladders and all tools that could invite a break-in or make a burglar's job easier.

BE SAFE

- * Keep cash to a minimum with frequent, irregular bank deposits.
- * Don't expect a "fire safe" to do the job of a "burglar-resistant" safe.
- * Anchor your safe to the floor in a well-lit, highly visible location.
- * Leave empty cash drawers open after hours to prevent damage.
- * Keep an accurate inventory of all valuables.

LOCKS FOR DOORS AND WINDOWS

WINDOW SECURITY

Most window locks can be pried open and therefore provide little security. A secondary lock should be installed on all windows.

BASEMENT WINDOWS

One common way of breaking in is through basement windows because they are usually concealed from view. These windows should be made of plexiglass or a polycarbonate material that can resist pounding with heavy objects.

Security bars can also be used for extra protection.

Some windows may be permanently secured if they are seldom used. Ensuring that windows are not obscured by trees and shrubs will make your property less inviting to a would-be thief.

DOOR SECURITY

Hollow core and glass doors are not secure. A good door should be solid wood/metal. Glass doors should have tempered glass or plastic equivalents. Good locks are essential to good security.

Key-in-the-knob locks are not reliable. They provide very little security.

All doors should have a good strong 1" dead-bolt lock that should be kept locked at all times except when in use.



ALARM SYSTEMS/PERSONAL SAFETY

A good alarm system should be installed professionally and checked regularly to ensure that it is functioning properly and to reduce the possibility of false alarms.

A notice should be posted prominently on a window or door indicating that the property is protected by an alarm system.

An alarm is an excellent deterrent to crime – when shopping for an alarm you should consider talking to other clients who have installed an alarm from the company you are dealing with to see what their satisfaction is from the alarm company as well as checking with the Better Business Bureau for the company you are considering.

PERSONAL SAFETY

As a business operator the safety of your staff is an important part of business management, as well as an obligation under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Exposure to Workplace Violence, like any other workplace hazard, needs to be reduced or, if possible, eliminated. Both you and your staff need to be aware of the hazards which may originate with those planning a robbery or theft, unhappy clients or even members of your staff. Your precautions can avoid an unpleasant experience that could be harmful to those involved, and your business. Your Robbery and Violence Prevention Plan should help you prevent robberies and client violence, but if something occurs, your staff need to be trained in what to do.

To avoid becoming a victim, staff should have a plan of what to do in the event of a potentially violent situation - develop one with them, and ensure they understand. Your plan may include:

1. Get out of the danger zone if possible. Know where your exits are and how to escape.
2. Don't try to be a hero or take dangerous risks, comply with instruction, especially if the person has a weapon. Give them the cash or products they demand. Do not keep weapons of any kind in your business.
3. If you can do so safely, make a noise – yell and scream, blow a whistle, use a personal safety alarm or whatever - criminals hate attention. Let them know if someone else is in the store or business to avoid startling them.
4. Call 911 if you have a chance, use the phone, a cell phone, or pay phone – no coin is required for 911 calls.

5. Only if you believe the person intends to injure or assault you and you have no escape should you attempt to fight – this is a personal assessment.

REMEMBER:

It CAN happen to you or your staff. Be prepared for the situation and know what your plan is.

Don't stereotype those who may pose a hazard. Criminals come in all shapes, sizes, colours and gender. All people should be treated with courtesy and respect . . . keeping in mind that anyone may have a criminal intent.

SHOPLIFTING

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST SHOPLIFTING

What to watch for:

- * Two or more shoppers together – one might try to attract your attention away from the other(s).
- * People who place bags on the floor while sorting through racks - articles can be dropped into the bags.
- * People who carry a large package – they may try to hide a stolen item between themselves and the package.
- * Items may be slipped into rolled umbrellas.
- * A woman with a pram who may fuss over a baby – she may conceal goods beneath blankets and the mattress.
- * Groups of children who loiter around counters containing sundry items – many children regard shoplifting as a game.

STAFF SUPERVISION

- * Advise staff that they should give customers prompt attention as soon as they enter the store.
- * SUPERVISE the staff. Company policy concerning dishonesty should be clearly understood by all employees.
- * Every store should hold regular staff meetings on the prevention of shoplifting.

It is also important that management makes sure all new staff are fully aware of shoplifting prevention programs.

DETECTION

Display signs warning anyone caught shoplifting will, without exception, be reported to the police immediately. AND DO IT!



HOW TO AVOID FRAUDULENT CHEQUES

BEFORE ACCEPTING A CHEQUE

- * Do not let anyone rush you.
- * Compare the signature on the cheque with those presented on identification documents.
- * Insist upon positive identification. Make sure it's current. A driver's licence alone is not enough.
(ie: Credit cards)
- * Make sure the cheques are properly dated. Make sure the total amount matches the written amount. Make sure it is signed.
- * If any cheque shows signs of alteration, do not cash it.

- * Never accept post-dated cheques. Do not hold a cheque until some future date when there will supposedly be sufficient funds on deposit.
- * Do not accept second-party cheques.
- * Do not accept cheques for amounts greater than the purchase price.
- * Business and government cheques may be counterfeit or stolen. Just because they look "official", doesn't necessarily mean they are. If in doubt, call the business for identification.
- * Use caution when cashing cheques after banking hours.
- * Avoid cashing cheques presented by juveniles.

To reduce loss from bad cheques, always keep in mind that you are under no obligation to accept any cheque. If you are uncertain about the authenticity of the cheque, have the person submitting it wait while you check with the bank, company or government agency involved.

Not all staff members should be able to initial cheques. This responsibility should be designated to certain employees only. If you come across a forged or stolen cheque, try delaying the passer(s) but do not try to apprehend them. **Call the police immediately** and if the passer runs, note his/her physical description and vehicle description. Retain the cheque in a secure place and handle it as little as possible. It is a valuable piece of evidence. Preserve it and be prepared to prosecute.



CREDIT CARD FRAUD

Credit Card fraud is a growing problem in all communities, and while there is no precise estimate of the value of goods and services stolen each year, the loss is substantial – involving millions of dollars.

Using credit cards instead of money has created a new type of criminal who purchases goods and services by using other peoples' credit cards. These frauds contribute to the rising cost of goods and services as the consumer must pay for the loss.

The most common credit card thief is the "loner". He or she steals or buys a credit card and uses it to obtain merchandise that is sold to either friends or others engaged in criminal activities. Sometimes small, loosely-organized gangs obtain credit cards from mailboxes, automobiles, stolen wallets and purses.

HOW BUSINESS PERSONS CAN SPOT TROUBLE

Police, prosecutors, courts, credit card companies, credit card holders and merchants all have a role to play in preventing credit card fraud.

Retail merchants and their employees have the greatest opportunity to catch the criminal because this is the stage of the crime where the criminal must show him/herself.

The following is a list for employees to be aware of:

- * Be aware of nervous, in-a-hurry shoppers. Stealing makes many people nervous so they hurry to get the job done quickly.
- * Be suspicious of someone who buys many items of clothing and does not wait for alterations. People who buy clothing to resell do not care if they fit them or not. Also keep an eye on someone who buys several sizes of one item.
- * Watch for the customer who produces the credit card from a pocket rather than a wallet or purse.
- * Be aware of someone who buys a variety of items especially when they are not concerned about prices. They could very well be stocking up for resale.
- * Be suspicious of customers asking about the floor limit. A criminal may enquire about the limit in order to avoid an authorization check when leaving.

- * Look at the card. Is it damaged in any way? Cards are sometimes mutilated to avoid proper verification.
- * Be aware of the customer who buys large items such as a television set and insists on taking it with him rather than having it delivered.

Just remember to always look for alterations. Check expiry dates and compare signatures on invoices with that on the credit card.

Always ask for identification if you are suspicious.

INTERNAL THEFT

Take positive steps to reduce the risk of internal theft.

PAPER WORK

Keep a good paper trail – record where things are, when and how they got there, and who was involved in the transactions.

Use successively numbered forms. Have all voided entries checked and initialed by yourself or a supervisor immediately. Account for all forms daily.

On returns and refunds, require a dated receipt and the name and address of the customer.

CASH REGISTERS

- * Only let authorized personnel use.
- * Keep register clear.
- * Operator should never do his/her own tally.
- * Keep internal tape locked.

EXITS

- * Restrict access to keys.
- * Areas near exits should be kept clear of containers which could be used to conceal stolen property.
- * Require employees to use designated and supervised exits.
- * Check employee packages, coats etc. either regularly or at unannounced intervals.

STORAGE/SERVICE AREAS

- * Keep free of hiding places.
- * Restrict access. Regulate employee time there.
- * Arrange most valuable items so shortages are immediately evident. Check often.

SHIPPING/RECEIVING AREAS

- * Restrict access.
- * Compare incoming shipments with packing slips before signing receipt.
- * Supervise on and off loading of valuables.

EMPLOYEE SELECTION/TRAINING

- * Require comprehensive written application and oral interview.
- * Carefully check references.
- * Train thoroughly. Rebrief on operating procedures and company policies.
- * Know your employees. Encourage their participation.

ACCOUNTING/OPERATIONS

- * Keep these separate.
- * Never allow the person responsible for receiving or disbursing goods, services or money to do the accounting for it.

PROBLEMS

- * Deal with dishonesty swiftly, firmly and visibly.
- * Do not allow internal theft to go unpunished.

ROBBERY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION

An active Robbery and Violence Prevention Plan is the best way to avoid robberies or violence in your workplace. Preventing robberies or violence from occurring in the first place is much better and safer than dealing with the real thing. A safe store or business is attractive to customers, more pleasant for you and your staff, and discouraging to robbers or others who may pose a danger.

Start your Robbery and Violence Prevention Plan with an assessment of the hazards, then eliminate or reduce the hazard:

Have you had experience of robberies or violence? What about similar businesses, or other businesses in your area?

Are there factors in your business that increase your risk such as: cash, people working alone, especially at night; power over others such as security; sale of alcohol or legal drugs; frequent irate customers . . . etc.?

Reduce your risk factors:

- * Maintain low cash levels.
- * Control access to parts of your business, limit inventory of attractive items.
- * Reduce hours, or use a "pick-up window" where possible.

Assess your physical conditions and ensure they prevent robbery or violence:

- * Good visibility allows employees to keep an eye on suspicious customers and increases the possibility someone outside would see a robbery, theft or violence. Criminals don't like to be seen.
- * Avoid window displays and closed drapes or blinds that obscure a view of the interior.
- * Consider installing an alarm and video cameras. They are a good deterrent, and cameras can provide valuable evidence should an incident take place.
- * Provide plenty of exterior and interior lighting – these will make your business more attractive to customers, and act as a deterrent to many criminals.
- * Install a drop safe if you handle cash – and advertise "no more than \$50 in cash at most".
- * Install adequate locks to secure the building or site.

Train employees on your personal safety plan, and the hazards they may encounter and how to respond; employees should greet each customer and be alert – this is often enough to deter robberies or violence. Also maintain active relations with police agencies, and call if something appears suspicious such as people loitering and not willing to move, threats, fights in the parking lot etc. BUT don't intervene.

If an employee is threatened by a client, co-worker or other person in the workplace they should:

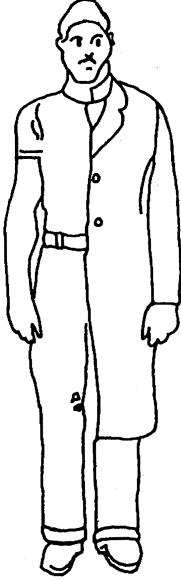

- * Advise the person making threats of your businesses policy that no violence or threats are acceptable.
- * Ask them to leave, or leave themselves if they feel their safety is threatened.
- * Call 911 to report any threat they believe to be serious, and advise their supervisor.

If a robbery occurs:

- * Don't argue.
- * Be polite and accommodating, do exactly as he or she asks.
- * Don't make any sudden moves, tell the robber what you are doing and advise of others in the store.
- * After the robbery, provide support to any injured or upset employees.
- * Call 911 and note down the details of the person, vehicle used, license plate etc. Do not pursue the robber.
- * Avoid touching anything that the robber may have touched. Lock the store or business and await police.



SUSPECT & VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION CHART

SEX MALE <input type="checkbox"/> FEMALE <input type="checkbox"/>		AGE	
HEIGHT		WEIGHT	
HAIR BLACK <input type="checkbox"/> BROWN <input type="checkbox"/> BLONDE <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER <input type="checkbox"/>		RACE WHITE <input type="checkbox"/> BLACK <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER <input type="checkbox"/>	
EYES		HAT	
GLASSES TYPE		TIE	
SHIRT		COAT	
TROUSERS		SHOES	
COMPLEXION		SCARS/MARKS	
Vehicle			
			

Color _____

Make _____

Model _____

License Number _____

Body Style _____

Damage/Rust _____

Antenna _____

Bumper Sticker _____

Wheel Covers _____

Direction of Travel _____

ARMED ROBBERY PREVENTION



CONTRIBUTING AGENCIES

Nova Scotia Department of Environment & Labour, Crime Prevention Society of Nova Scotia, Halifax Regional Police, The Nova Scotia Joint Management Committee for the Federal Department of Justice, Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Burnside Business Watch Society are pleased to work in cooperation to bring you this valuable crime prevention handout. A special thanks is given out to The Metropolitan Toronto Police and Crime Concern from Toronto for their contribution towards the content of this handout.

Emergency 9-1-1



**Working Together
To Prevent Crime**

Contact your police
for more information
on this or any other
crime prevention topic