

# **Security Recommendations for the Small Business**

Adapted from *Security and the Small Business Retailer*  
U.S. Department of Justice

# Recommendations for Business Security - Robbery

Because of the potential harm to employees and customers, robbery is a major concern to businesses, especially those engaged in cash transactions. A firearm is used in about 50% of the offenses. The key to preventing robbery and coping with it if it does occur is to be prepared for it. Never assume that it couldn't happen in your place of business.

The following prevention strategies have been successful in reducing the opportunity for robbery.

## 1. Store Appearance

- 1.1 Maintain a neat, attractive business setting. It is a sign of attentive management and serves as a signal to the robber that it is likely that security measures have been taken.
- 1.2 Avoid cluttering windows with signs and merchandise. Attempt to create a fishbowl effect where it is possible to observe from the interior and exterior.
- 1.3 The exterior and interior of the business should be well lighted. One further strategy is to over-light the area where the cash register is located.
- 1.4 Minimize outside hiding places which may permit robbers to "stake out" your business.
- 1.5 Install and use adequate exterior and interior security lighting.

## 2. Cash Control

- 2.1 Minimize the amount of available cash. In short, remove the reason for the crime. Use a drop safe or make frequent deposits to a more secure place, such as the bank of a main safe.
- 2.2 Place signs in conspicuous places indicating that a minimum amount of money is kept in the registers and that safes are on a timing device and cannot be opened by employees.
- 2.3 Cash registers should be located toward the front of the store or at a location which offers the greatest visibility. This places the robber at a disadvantage in that his chances of being observed are increased.
- 2.4 Bank deposits should be made on an irregular, but frequent, basis. Deposits should be carried in an inconspicuous manner.

## 3. Increase the Perceived Risk for the Robbers

- 3.1 If practical, elevate the cash register area so that it is higher than the rest of the floor. The criminal is placed at a disadvantage when he has to look up to rob someone.

- 3.2 Place height markers at the door as a guide to the robber's height.
- 3.3 Install closed-circuit television cameras if the risk merits it.
- 3.4 During periods of high risk, particularly at night, restrict access into the building to perhaps one entrance.
- 3.5 If necessary, have two clerks working during high risk time periods.

#### 4. Employee Training

- 4.1 Train employees in prevention techniques to keep robberies from occurring
- 4.2 Train employees how to respond if a robbery to keep the robbery from escalating to a more serious crime - murder, rape or assault.
- 4.3 Train employees to make eye contact with customers and to speak to everyone as they enter the business.
- 4.4 Instruct cashiers to move away from the cash register as often as possible. It is more difficult to commit a robbery when there is no one at the register.
- 4.5 Instruct employees to deny access to customers prior to the opening of the business and immediately following the closing at the end of the business day.
- 4.6 Prohibit employees from carrying firearms for personal protection.

#### 5. If a Robbery Occurs

- 5.1 Train employees so they are better equipped to cope with a robbery in the event that it occurs.
- 5.2 Assist the robber in making the act a smooth operation. Do nothing to upset him. If other employees are present, but out of sight, inform the robber so he is not startled.
- 5.3 Cooperate with the robber. Give him the money as quickly as possible.  
**However, if you feel that they robber is likely to or is about to cause you serious physical harm - fight for your life and use whatever means you have at your disposal.**

5.4 Concentrate on the robber's description. As soon as he leaves, call the police and write down the details of the robbery and his description. Be sure to note the following:

- age
- race
- height
- hair color and style
- complexion
- facial hair, scars, tattoos, limp, etc.
- clothing
- type of weapon used
- vehicle make, model, color, license number
- direction of escape
- time of departure

5.5 Do not resist or chase the robber.

5.6 Do not touch anything the robber may have touched in order to preserve fingerprints.

5.7 If practical, lock the door until the police arrive. Customers entering the business after the robber may destroy valuable evidence.

# Business Security Check List - Robbery

**YES answers identify higher risk locations and security deficiencies.**

<b>Is the business a likely target for robbery?</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Is the business isolated from other businesses?	_____	_____
Does the business operate late at night?	_____	_____
Does the business make change after dark?	_____	_____
Is the business known to keep large amounts of cash on hand?	_____	_____
Is cash transferred according to a set routine?	_____	_____
Is the business obviously operated by a single cashier?	_____	_____
Does the business have insufficient exterior lighting?	_____	_____
<b>Can a robber approach the business without detection?</b>		
Do posters and displays block visibility in and out?	_____	_____
Are there blind or hiding spots adjacent to the business?	_____	_____
Are there blind or hiding spots within the store/	_____	_____
Is the entrance close to the cash register?	_____	_____
<b>Can a robber easily carry out a robbery in the business?</b>		
Is the cash register within easy reach of the customers?	_____	_____
Are there blind or hiding spots near the cash register?	_____	_____
Are cash registers hidden from the site of other employees?	_____	_____
Is the safe or cash container easy to open?	_____	_____
Is the exit close to the cash register?	_____	_____
Do business doors open both ways?	_____	_____
<b>Can a robber make a clean getaway from the business?</b>		
Is customer parking adjacent to a thoroughfare?	_____	_____
Are there blind spots in the parking area?	_____	_____
<b>Can robbers "get away" with robbing the business?</b>		
Are there no standard procedures for reporting crime to the police?	_____	_____
Are serial numbers of large bills not recorded?	_____	_____
Are clerks untrained in dealing with robberies?	_____	_____
Are cash totals not recorded regularly?	_____	_____
<b>Can robbers be successfully prosecuted if arrested?</b>		
Are you not willing to participate in a trial or other legal proceeding?	_____	_____
Do you have no systematic procedures for maintaining evidence for police use?	_____	_____

# Recommendations for Business Security - Burglary

## 1. Fences and Gates

- 1.1 If indicated by your analysis of risk, the entire perimeter of the property should be fenced. When not in use, gates should be secured with good padlocks and chains. In some instances, barbed wire toppings are necessary.
- 1.2 Privacy fences and other opaque barriers should be avoided. For aesthetics, the best combination may be a wire fence lined with shrubs.

## 2. Parking Areas and Open Spaces

- 2.1 Post warning signs encouraging customers and employees to lock their vehicles and place valuables in the trunk.
- 2.2 Deny access to the roof by securing ladders, pallets, boxes, and crates away from the building.

## 3. Exterior Lighting

- 3.1 Illuminate your property. Do not depend on nearby municipal lighting.
- 3.2 Inspect lighting to ensure that it provides adequate visibility for the protection of customers and employees.
- 3.4 Make sure that lighting does not cause glare to customers, employees or passing police patrols.

## 4. Doors

- 4.1 Panels and glass should be protected against being kicked in or knocked out.
- 4.2 Install metal lining on exterior wooden doors to resist drilling or sawing.
- 4.3 Secure double doors with heavy duty, multiple-point, long flush bolts. Make sure the frame is as strong as the door.
- 4.4 All exterior doors should be constructed of steel, aluminum alloy, or solid-core hardwood, with minimum 16 gauge steel on side and rear doors. Glass doors should have burglar-resistant glass installed.

## **5. Locks and Hardware**

- 5.1 Exterior swinging doors should have a minimum one inch deadbolt lock, one inch throw bolt with a hardened insert, and free turning steel or brass tapered-cylinder guard. steel strike plates should be used on aluminum door frames. All outside hinges should have non-removable hinge pins.

## **6. Padlocks**

- 6.1 The most common assaults on padlocks are made with bolt cutters or pry bars. Quality padlocks should have the following features: laminated or solid body case, hardened steel shackle with a minimum diameter of 9/32", a double locking mechanism providing "heel and toe" locking, and at least 5 pin tumblers in the cylinder.

## **7. Windows**

- 7.1 Windows should offer light, ventilation, and visibility, but not easy access. Locks should be designed so they cannot be reached and opened by breaking the glass.
- 7.2 First floor windows should be protected with burglar-resistant glass, bars, grilles, grates, or heavy-duty wire screening to provide optimum window security.

## **8. Security Room**

- 8.1 Many businesses have or need a security room to provide extra protection for valuable assets. If your business has such a requirement, the room should contain a door constructed of metal, with a minimum one inch deadbolt lock. The number of personnel having access should be limited.

## **9. Safes**

- 9.1 Standing safes should be well illuminated and visible from outside the building. They should be anchored to the floor. Cash amounts should be kept at a minimum by frequent banking. Never leave the combination written where it can be found.
- 9.2 Keep a complete list of serial numbers of all company equipment. When completed, lock the list in the safe and update it as needed.

## **10. Tools and Equipment**

- 10.1 Unsecured tools or equipment may be stolen or used by a thief on your doors, safes, security room, cabinets, and so on.
- 10.2 Tools and portable equipment should be secured in locked drawers or cabinets at the close of the business day.

- 10.3 Business machines should be protected by installing appropriate locks which secure the equipment in place.
- 10.4 Blank checks, credit card slips, and related machines and supplies should be locked in a safe when the business is closed.

## **11. Interior Lighting**

- 11.1 Keep the interior of the business well lit. Burglars prefer darkened areas. Leave your blinds and drapes open and install locks on outside fuse boxes.

## **12. Alarms and Security Systems**

- 12.1 Alarms can provide added protection to your business. Installation of an alarm does not mean that other security measures are not necessary.
- 12.2 There are two basic types of intruder detection systems: audible and silent. The audible alarm typically sounds on the building while the silent alarm is monitored by a central station which notifies the police when the signal is activated.
- 12.3 Alarm systems should contain a back-up, fail-safe system, a fire sensing capability, and a testing feature.

## **13. Key Control**

- 13.1 Key control is an absolute necessity in all businesses. Master keys, safe keys, and others should be secured. A procedure should be established for issuing master or sensitive keys to employees on an as needed basis.

## **14. If a Burglary Occurs**

The following suggestions are offered in the event of a burglary to your business.

- 14.1 Provide your law enforcement agency with the names and telephone numbers of employees that should be called if a burglary occurs. The designated employees respond to the burglary and assume responsibility for securing the building and assisting police in determining what has been stolen.
- 14.2 If you discover a burglary and believe there is a chance the burglar may be inside, do not enter. Go elsewhere and call the police.
- 14.3 Upon discovering a burglary, leave the scene intact until the police arrive.
- 14.4 Do not open the business until the police have completed their investigation. Otherwise, valuable evidence may be destroyed by employees or customers.
- 14.5 Be prepared to furnish the police with a list of stolen property, its description, serial numbers, and value.
- 14.6 Cooperate with the investigation and prosecution by providing information as requested and testifying in court.

# Business Security Check List - Burglary

**YES answers identify high risk locations and security deficiencies.**

<b>Is the business a likely target for burglary?</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Does the business lack perimeter protection?	_____	_____
Does the business store items of significant value?	_____	_____
Is the lighting of the business exterior inadequate?	_____	_____

**Can the business be cased by burglars easily?**

Can a burglar approach the business without being observed from outside?	_____	_____
Is the cash drawer left closed after business hours?	_____	_____
Is the safe hidden from outside view?	_____	_____
Has the business decided not to use a burglar alarm system?	_____	_____

**Is the business easy to break into?**

Are there unprotected openings larger than 96 square inches?	_____	_____
Can hinge pins be removed from exterior doors?	_____	_____
Are exterior easy to jimmy or pick?	_____	_____
Are locks and doors of poor quality?	_____	_____
Are locks and other security devices poorly maintained?	_____	_____

**Is it easy to collect cash and high value items from inside the business?**

Are high value items accessible and not protected by security anchors?	_____	_____
Is cash stored in the business during non-operating hours?	_____	_____
Are cash and high value items not protected by an interior alarm system?	_____	_____

**Is it easy for a burglar to leave the business with substantial amounts of "loot"?**

Is the parking lot poorly lit?	_____	_____
Are boxes, etc. allowed to collect near the fence or building?	_____	_____
Is there an exit leading to an alley or driveway?	_____	_____
Are some door equipped with weak locks?	_____	_____

**Can burglars be successfully prosecuted if arrested?**

Are you not willing to participate in a trial or other legal proceeding?	_____	_____
Do you have no systematic procedures for maintaining evidence for police use?	_____	_____