



Business Crime Prevention Guide



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Business Crime Prevention Guide

Crime — burglary, robbery, and vandalism — can be particularly devastating to small businesses in terms of money, customers, and employee safety. Through crime prevention, business owners can protect their assets as well as their employees.

Laying a Foundation for Prevention

Business owners should take a hard look at their businesses in areas such as physical layout, number of employees, hiring practices, and overall security to determine vulnerability to various kinds of crime, from burglary to internal theft. Once this step has been taken, crime prevention measures can then be implemented.

- Establish and enforce clear policies about employee theft, crime reporting, opening and closing the business, and other security procedures.
- Provide training for all employees on security procedures.
- Use good locks, safes, and alarm systems. Check with several companies and decide what level of security fits the needs of the business.
- Keep detailed, up-to-date business records, such as inventories and banking records, and store back-up copies off premises. If a business is ever victimized, the owner can assess losses more easily and provide useful information for police investigations.
- Engrave all valuable office equipment and tools with a unique identification number such as licence number. Do not use your Social Insurance Number. Mark equipment such as cash registers, printers, and computers.
- Keep a record of all identification numbers off premises along with other important records.
- Consider the cost of each security improvement made against the potential savings through loss reduction. Remember to assess the impact on employees and customers. Since crimes against businesses are usually crimes of opportunity, failure to take good security precautions invites crime into a business.

Burglary Prevention

- Make sure all outside entrances and inside steel security doors have Grade 1 or 2, 1” throw deadbolt with roll pin insert lock with free turning steel collar or tapered-cylinder guard. Double cylinder locks are recommended when glass is located within 1 metre of the lock mechanism or model with thumb latch that disengages with the key. Add a latch guard or astragal. An astragal is a strip of metal that runs the full length of the door, sealing off the gap between the door and the frame. Wooden door frames require a security strike with 3” mounting screws. The frame of the door must be as strong as the door being used. If security padlocks are used, they should be made of solid or laminated hardened steel and kept locked at all times. A double locking bolt

(shackle 3/8” minimum diameter) providing “heel & toe” locking; 5-pin tumbler in the cylinder and a key retention feature that prevents removal of the key until it is locked.

- All outside or security doors should be metal-lined or solid-core hardwood and secured with metal security crossbars and/or secured with heavy-duty, multiple point, slide bolts or ½ steel slide bolt with lock. Pin all exposed hinges to prevent removal or install security hinges.
- Windows should have secure locks and burglar-resistant glass or a security laminate installed. Consider security steel screen, installing bars, or metal grills on all accessible windows except display windows. An expandable security gate can be used at closing for display windows and glass doors.
- Remove all expensive items from window displays at night and make sure you can easily see into the business after closing.
- Light the inside and outside of the business, especially around doors, windows, skylights, or other entry points. Consider installing covers over exterior lights and power sources to deter tampering.
- Check the parking lot for good lighting and unobstructed views.
- Keep the cash register in plain view from the outside of the business, so police and pedestrians can monitor it at all times. Leave it open and empty after closing. You can even put the empty cash tray on display.
- Be sure the safe is fireproof, securely anchored to structure. Leave it open when empty and use it to lock up valuables at closing. Remember to change the combination when an employee who has had access to it leaves the business.
- Before investing in an alarm system, check with several companies and decide what level of security fits the needs of the business. Install an audible alarm to deter an intruder from entering your business. Learn how to use the system properly, check it daily, and run a test when closing.
- Night vision capable H.D. L.E.D. C.C.T.V. with a Digital Video Recording device and cloud backup system that can be viewed remotely and still images created.

Robbery Prevention

Robbery doesn't occur as often as other crimes against businesses, but the potential for loss can be much greater from a single incident. Also, robbery involves force or threat of force.

- Cooperate with the robber. Merchandise and cash can always be replaced - people can't!
- Employees should greet every person who enters the business in a friendly manner. Personal contact can discourage a would-be criminal.

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- Keep windows clear of displays or signs and make sure the business is well lit. Check the layout of the store to eliminate any blind spots that may hide a robbery in progress.
- Provide information about the security systems to employees only on a “need-to-know” basis.
- Instruct employees to report any suspicious activity or person immediately and write down the information for future reference. Ask for a Robbery Prevention kit from the Crime Prevention Officer, Constable Gord Reid, (416)808-1529.
- Keep only small amounts of cash in the register to reduce possible losses. Use a drop safe into which large bills and excess cash are dropped by employees and cannot be retrieved by them. Post signs alerting would-be robbers of this procedure.
- Make bank deposits often and during business hours. Don’t establish a pattern; take different routes at different times during the day.
- Ensure the address is visible so emergency vehicles can easily find the business from front and also the rear of the premise.
- Secure the property. Ask the Crime Prevention Officer to conduct a security survey of the business. Ask for advice on lights, alarms, locks, and other security measures.

Vandalism Prevention

Annual damage estimates due to vandalism are in the billions, and businesses pass the costs on to customers through higher prices. Most vandals are young people — from teens to young adults.

- Clean up vandalism as soon as it happens — replace signs, repair equipment, paint over graffiti. Then, use landscape designs, building materials, lighting or fences to discourage vandals. Prickly shrubs, closely planted hedges and hard-to-mark surfaces can be effective in many circumstances.
- Work with police to report vandalism. Remember, vandalism (mischief) is a crime. Call 9-1-1 if the crime is in progress or use the non-emergency number (416)808-2222 if it has already happened.
- Protect the business by installing and using good lighting and locking gates.
- Talk with your B.I.A. on vandalism to discuss its solutions.
- Include young people in all vandalism prevention efforts.

Preserve Crime Scene

- Protect the scene of the crime and stop others from disturbing the area where the crime occurred.
- Do not touch any articles that may have been touched or left by the suspect.

- Hold all witnesses until the police arrive. If they cannot stay, take their information (name, address and phone number).
- Lock the doors and allow no-one in except the police when a robbery occurs.
- Do not trust memory, jot down all information immediately.
- Do not discuss the crime until police interview you.

Identifying the Suspect

- Practice identification with co-workers.
- Use a height strip on the door frame of the entrance. This will help you tell the police the robber's height (available from Crime Prevention officer).
- Try to notice abnormalities, speech problems or scars.
- Notice type of build, or estimate weight.
- Notice type and colour of clothing worn.
- Direction of travel and try to get a description of the vehicle from any witnesses and write down the licence number.
- Number of suspects involved.

Business Improvement Areas

Merchants may join together to address a problem that directly affects their business operations; assist with improving the streetscape and neighbourhood safety. Increased partnerships between business groups, private security, and police can enhance efforts to protect commercial areas. A representative for the B.I.A. can join the 14 Division, Community Police Liaison committee (C.P.L.C.) by submitting your request to the CRU clerk. The C.P.L.C. holds monthly meetings and consists of volunteers from various walks of life. Officers of all ranks from 14 Division also participate. Volunteers donate significant portions of their free time towards Committee functions. For more information on the C.P.L.C. contact CRU Clerk, Reta Reid at 416-808-1437.

Community Associations

Business groups can find effective partners in community and neighbourhood associations. Both groups have a strong stake in thriving residential and commercial areas. They are often well versed in strategies for securing physical improvements such as street lighting or road repairs.

Remember to practice safety. Don’t learn it by accident.

Resources

This guide was published with information from the Toronto Police Service and Los Angeles Police Department.

Crime Prevention Officer (Contact for security assessment of premise or Robbery Prevention kit)
Constable Gord Reid, #1703

14 Division, Crime Prevention

Direct:(416)808-1427 | Main: 808-1400 | Fax:808-1402