

# CAPITOLA POLICE DEPARTMENT



## COMMERCIAL SECURITY UNIT

RETAIL STORE SECURITY &  
SHOPLIFTING PREVENTION



## COMMERCIAL SECURITY UNIT

Crimes against business are usually crimes of opportunity. If you make it easy for someone to steal from you, chances are, someone will. So don't make it easy. Make it risky and unrewarding. Here's how.



### DON'T INVITE A THEFT

Law enforcement agencies would much rather work with you to prevent crimes than to spend time apprehending criminals. Following are some ways you can make your business more secure:

- Contact your local police department for a security survey of your business.
- Join Operation Identification. It's for businesses as well as residences. Every business has valuable equipment - typewriters, adding machines, etc. - that are used in its operations. Mark them all with your identification number or driver's license number and post the Operation Identification warning sticker in your window.
- Use good locks, safes and alarm systems. If you're not sure, seek the advice of experts in these fields.
- Establish a buddy system signal with a neighboring business in case suspicious persons enter.
- Consider joining or forming a "Business Watch" to help prevent crime.



- Small businesses are targets in over half the commercial burglaries committed. Most of these occur because someone left an "open door". Not literally, although it does happen. We simply mean that signs of carelessness attract burglars. Like dark alleys and outdated locks. Check your building against this list.



### Lock-Up

- Install high quality deadbolt locks on all outside doors.

- Make sure padlocks are solidly mounted and never left open . . . even on an open door.
- Check door and window frames for looseness or rotting. Repair them.
- Practice good key control. Sign out all keys. When employees leave your company, collect their key and change locks and combinations.
- Never label keys with your identification.
- If any doors are out swinging, use non-removable headpins. Install panel doors lined with metal to resist drilling.
- Reinforce rear and side doors with cross bars, and install grating or bars on rear and side windows.
- Properly secure roof openings, air ducts, skylights, hatchways, doorway transoms, sidewalk and basement openings.
- When you leave, inspect all closets, bathrooms, and other hiding places. Check windows and doors.
- Install anti-siphoning devices or locking gas caps for vehicles.



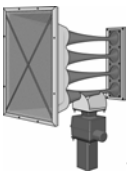
### **Light Up**

- Light up all entrances, including alleys, with vandal-proof fixtures.
- Leave some lights burning inside and over your safe - in full view of the street.



### **Clean Up**

- Keep all weeds, shrubbery and debris away from windows and doors. Keep fences in good repair. Don't provide concealment or climbing platforms for the burglar.
- Avoid high displays near windows that could keep passersby from seeing in.
- Lock up ladders and all tools that could simplify a break-in.



### **Sound Off**

- Install an alarm system and check it regularly.
- Post a notice in clear view that shows you have an alarm.



## 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-lighted, highly visible location.
- Leave empty cash drawers open after hours to prevent damage.
- Keep an accurate inventory of all valuables.



## Be Clever

- Install burglar-resistant glass.
- If you discover a break-in, call the police at once - the burglar might still be inside. Don't disturb evidence.



## Robbery

- The major difference between burglary and robbery is a frightening one . . . you're there.
- Nearly all robbers carry weapons, and they're likely to use them, if provoked
- Don't take any chances
- What else can you do? Take these precautions:



## Be "Sociable"

- Try not to work alone. If you must, leave a radio or TV playing in a back room.
- Be visible. Arrange your counter so customers face the street, in full view of passersby.
- Try not to turn your back on a customer - install phones where you can keep an eye on things.

- Record the dates and serial numbers of a few bills and keep them separate as bait money for tracing by the police.



### **Thanks for the Memory**

- Most robberies are over in less than one minute. Take note of everything you can. The robber's size, weight, build, dress, speech, abnormalities, method and direction of getaway.
- Don't compare notes with other witnesses. It's easy to become confused.

## **COMMON SHOPLIFTING TECHNIQUES**



### **Hiding the Merchandise**

- A large open bag is a common shoplifter tool. It is placed at the thief's feet, and objects are casually dropped into it.
- Be on the lookout for the "bad bag"—a paper bag that is dirty and wrinkled.
- Keep an eye out for shopping bags that are not from local stores.
- Preventing this is why many stores staple bags shut.
- Some stores require customers to leave their bags at the front door when they enter.
- Women sometime use purses to hide stolen items
- There is little you can do to stop women from carrying purses and handbags. The best prevention on these cases is to watch the customers very carefully.
- The baby carriage or stroller is a great tool for shoplifters. There are always blankets, toys, and other things in strollers (including the baby) that merchandise can be hidden under.
- Some thieves have even built false bottoms in baby carriages.
- A newspaper can be used to hide small objects
- Umbrellas with handles are handy for shoplifters trying to steal small items.
- A common tactic is to keep a closed (but not snapped) umbrella hanging on one's elbow or leaning against a counter, and then drop items into it.



### **Favorite Shoplifting Clothing**

- Crotch-walking is a technique used by women wearing full skirts and dresses. They simply place the merchandise between their thighs and walk away. People that are good at this have been known to steal hams, typewriters, and other large objects.
- Baggy clothes in general are good places to hide stolen items. Some people have extra pockets or hooks sewn into coats and jackets.
- Beware of the customer with a large coat who keeps his hand in a coat pocket. Some shoplifters have cut slits in the pocket lining, so they can reach for items without being seen. They may make a big deal out of inspecting an item while the other hand slips out and grabs something.



### **A More Brazen Approach**

- Some shoplifters just grab stuff and walk out with it. They rely on the gullibility and slow response time of sales clerks.
- Some shoplifters grab garments from racks close to the door and run off. This can be prevented very easily by alternating the directions of the hangers. This makes the hangers “lock up” when someone tries to remove many at once.
- The really brazen thieves simply walk out with large items that are not ordinarily put in bags. Prevent this by making it unusual for legitimate customers to carry out their large purchases. A policy that all large items must be picked up at a location physically separate from the sales floor or that employees take all large items out to customer’s cars. Or you could put big bright colored stickers or tape on purchased large items. This at least makes it easy for employees to tell if the merchandise is being stolen.
- Others will just put the cloths on and walk out.
- It’s tricky to catch one of these people, because if they technically haven’t stolen it until they exit the store without paying.



### Tricks To Distract You

- Most shoplifters cannot succeed unless they get some privacy. This is why one of the best ways to stop shoplifting is to greet customers as soon as they walk in, then, be attentive to them the rest of the time.
- **Skilled shoplifters can distract sales associates using the following tricks:**
- They enter the store in groups, and then separate, so there is no way the employees can watch all of them.
- A pair of shoppers comes in, and while one distracts you the other steals.
- A single shopper sends the only employee in the store into the back room to find something and leaves before the employee comes back.
- Keep the fitting room doors locked when no one's using them. This way you'll know who is in there.
- A common technique, especially if your fitting rooms aren't well monitored, is for the thief to steal garments by putting them on under her own clothes.



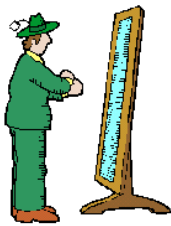
### Big Stores

- Put an attendant in the fitting rooms. This person can assist with customer selections, and monitor the clothes they take in and out of the fitting rooms
- Count how many items someone is taking into the fitting room, and make sure they come out with the same number.
- If you have a busy store, give customers going into the fitting room a pre-numbered tag corresponding to the number of garments they have. This keeps the attendant from having to remember details about each person.
- Limit the number of garments that can be taken into the fitting room at one time
- Be sure to check the fitting rooms frequently for garments left behind. Pay special attention to price tags and hangers left around -- these may be evidence that shoplifting has occurred.



## SHOPLIFTING

- Shoplifting accounts for losses ranging from 2% to as much as 15% of sales, nationally, in unprotected shops.
- Nearly all shoplifters look as "harmless" as anyone. The amateurs are sneaky; the pros are unbelievably sophisticated.
- How do you discourage them? Use these deterrents:



## Look Sharp

- Use convex mirrors . . . TV scanners . . . uniformed security personnel.
- Make sure sales clerks are attentive and not easily distracted. Train personnel to be able to spot shoplifters.
- Greet each person who enters. Let them know you're aware of their presence.
- Keep a close watch on fitting rooms and other isolated areas.



## Don't Flash the Cash

- Vary your deposit procedure daily.
- Deposits by armored car are best. Where you must rely on individuals, carry money inside coat and trouser pockets, never in handbags, moneybags, bank bags, paper sacks or briefcases.
- After a robbery, don't make the mistake of inviting another attack by revealing operating methods or large losses in the newspaper.



# THE UNDERCOVER GAME



## Make Arrangements

- Arrange counters and displays so merchandise is in full view of employees.
- Keep easily removable merchandise protected, locked in counter cases whenever possible.
- Keep expensive items away from entrances.
- Tie appliance cords together . . . chain bicycles . . . alternate the direction of hangers on the rack . . . bolt racks down . . . lock small valuables in cabinets and show cases.



## Be Tough

- Stick to a policy of prosecuting shoplifters and advertise it.



## Employee Theft

- It is estimated that 30% of all business failures, nationally, result from employee dishonesty. Don't just assume it's the new employees alone who might steal from you. Longtime employees know your business inside and out, and are in a good position to be tempted.

Creating the right working atmosphere can stop employee theft. Try this:



## Look Back

- Thoroughly check the references of every future employee. And make employees aware of - and proud of - the fact they're bonded.



### **Look Alive**

- Inspire honesty. Don't overlook losses or practice favoritism. Once it starts, stealing is highly contagious.
- Maintain clear lines of authority and responsibility.
- Eliminate temptations. Conduct spot checks of all employees' work, and see that they expect it.
- Measure output and evaluate employee performance regularly.
- Remove keys in company vehicles.



### **Look Ahead**

- Remember that fairly paid employees aren't likely to be tempted to steal to "make up the difference". Reward good work.
- If we can be of any assistance please contact us at:

**CAPITOLA POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**COMMERCIAL SECURITY UNIT**  
LOCATED AT THE CAPITOLA MALL  
(831) 462-6138