

Crime Proofing your Business

DIN0080-1108

Canada is one of the safest countries in the world in which to live, work and play. You can help make it safer, however. Familiarize yourself and your employees with the following recommendations. These suggestions will help you reduce the risk of injury should a robbery occur. You will also provide your customers with a more secure shopping experience and discourage would-be robbers. Crime prevention and good marketing of your product go hand in hand with providing the best possible service to your customers.

Preventive Methods

- ▶ Remove any displays and stock that provide a hiding place.
- ▶ Greet or assist customers as they come into the store. A robber does not want to be identified.
- ▶ Ask people who are loitering if they need any assistance. A robber does not like attention.
- ▶ Avoid routines in patterns of work that may tip a robber off to the best time to strike.
- ▶ Watch for suspicious loiterers outside, in cars or on foot.
- ▶ Have all side or service doors locked at all times.
- ▶ Keep sight lines in and out of the store clear by removing signs and displays from window areas.
- ▶ Maintain adequate lighting inside and out.
- ▶ Be suspicious of persons asking about your security or cash-handling system.
- ▶ Install window stickers, height markers and cash handling stickers to advertise your involvement in a crime proofing program.
- ▶ If your business is equipped with an alarm or camera system, make certain it is properly serviced and that all employees are familiar with its use.
- ▶ Keep float levels at a minimum. Do not create an attractive target by having a large amount of cash in the till.
- ▶ Record the serial numbers and denominations of a small number of bills. Place some in each register as well as bank deposit bags. These bills should be passed to the robber during a robbery.
- ▶ Do not count cash or open the safe in public.
- ▶ Make regular bank deposits but at irregular times. Do not set a pattern.
- ▶ Make bank deposits, where possible, during banking hours and use an unmarked package to transport the money.
- ▶ Encourage police vehicles, as well as taxis, to use your business lot, especially during evening and night hours of operation.
- ▶ Have deliveries made, where possible, during evening or night hours of operation to promote increased activity around the store.

Remember to report crimes or suspicious activities to the police.

- ▶ Keep the police emergency number on or by the phone at all times.
- ▶ Set up a “Buddy Call” system where there are a number of businesses located close together.
- ▶ Note the description and contact the police immediately if you become suspicious about a person or a vehicle.

During a robbery

- ▶ Handle the situation calmly. Do not panic.
- ▶ Follow the robber’s directions to the best of your ability without endangering your own life or that of your customers.
- ▶ Do not argue or withhold cash from the robber.
- ▶ Advise the robber if there are any other employees or customers in the store to avoid startling him/her and triggering an attack.
- ▶ Remember to hand the robber the money with your recorded serial numbers.
- ▶ Keep any note that the robber passes to you and handle it by the edges only.
- ▶ Observe carefully so that you can describe and identify the robber to the police.
- ▶ Remember any place the robber touches so the police can check for fingerprints.
- ▶ Do not attempt to overpower the robber. He/she may be armed.
- ▶ Watch the height marker as the robber leaves.
- ▶ Remember that your safety and that of your customers is your main concern.

After a robbery

- ▶ Activate any alarm when you feel it is safe to do so.
- ▶ Call the police immediately. Tell them the name and exact location of your business, the description of the robbers, direction of travel, and whether or not they are armed.
- ▶ Do not hang up until the police officer does. He/she may wish to get more information.
- ▶ Lock all doors to prevent the robber from getting back into the store and to preserve evidence for the police.
- ▶ Ask any witnesses to wait for the police to arrive.
- ▶ Check the robber’s escape route and/or vehicle being used, but do not endanger yourself.
- ▶ Do not discuss the robbery with witnesses or other employees, only with the police.
- ▶ Write down your observations as soon as possible as you may need them in court.
- ▶ Notify company officials.
- ▶ Be factual. Do not exaggerate. Do not estimate the value of property or the amount of cash stolen.

Remember to report crimes or suspicious activities to the police. They need your cooperation to assist you in crime proofing your business and your community. For more details on crime proofing measures and local community programs, contact your local police department.

CFIB produced this handout with the assistance of the Ontario Ministry of the Solicitor General.

Legal Notice: This publication and its contents are for the members of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (“CFIB”) only, and are not intended for any other recipient. The contents of this publication are for informational purposes and the CFIB does not warrant the accuracy, currency or suitability of any of the information provided herein. Before acting on the basis of any information contained in this publication, please seek the advice of your professional advisors.