

ROBBERY PREVENTION FOR SMALL BUSINESSES



Convenience stores and late night food retailers are unique commercial properties that are largely cash-based businesses, are often open late or 24 hours a day, and are usually operated by a lone clerk. They are conveniently located for quick in and out shopping, which is, unfortunately, a business style that makes it an attractive target for robbers and thieves.

“Studies have found that the most effective robbery prevention measures are: Cash Control, Elimination of Escape Routes and Visibility.”

ROBBERY PREVENTION

First Impressions are important. Maintain a neat and well-stocked business both inside and out! Bright lighting should be maintained both in and outside of your premise.



Keep cash float levels at a minimum. A large amount of cash in the till makes you a target! Extra money should be placed in a drop or timed safe. Advertise that you have a minimum amount of cash in the till.

Use a camera surveillance system.

The system should be strategically placed and be capable of capturing high quality images. Advertise the system. Check it regularly and keep it in good working order.



Keep sight lines to the interior of your business clear. Remove signs/displays from windows.

Remove hiding spots. Remove any displays or stock that provide a hiding spot for the robber, both in the store and around the exterior of the building. Low level displays and shelving allow the store clerk to monitor customers at all times. Have all side or service doors locked at all times.

Greet or assist each customer as they come into the store. If a person appears to be loitering in the store, ask them if they need any assistance.

Keep active and alert. Avoid routines and patterns of work that may tip the robber off to the best time to strike.



Keep your cash handling systems secure.

Do not count cash or open the safe in public view. Make regular bank deposits, but do it at irregular times. Where possible, make bank deposits during banking hours and use an unmarked package to transport the money.

Promote increased activity around your store.

Where possible, encourage taxis to use your lot, especially during the evening hours of operation. Also where possible, have deliveries made during evening hours.



Understand your alarm. If your business is equipped with an alarm, make sure it is properly serviced and that all employees are aware of how and when to use it. Calling 911 after a robbery has occurred ensures the fastest police response.

Install a height marker at your entrance/exit doorway.

This will allow the employees and witnesses the ability to more accurately gauge the height of the suspect(s).

SECURITY AUDITS

Hamilton Police Service Crime Prevention Branch provides **FREE** Business/Commercial Security Audits.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies are effective when applied to building or store interiors. Studies have shown that the application of CPTED techniques may reportedly decrease security problems by up to 50% and increase sales by as much as 33%. Hamilton Police Service Crime Prevention Officers can conduct a thorough assessment of your business environment.

**For further information on this service please contact the
Crime Prevention Office at 905-546-4900**

DURING A ROBBERY



DO NOT PANIC.

Try and handle the situation calmly.

DO NOT ARGUE.

Follow the robber's instructions to the best of your ability. But do not volunteer to do anything they don't ask.

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO PHYSICALLY SUBDUDE THE ROBBER.

You don't know what type of concealed weapon the robber might have. They may be armed and may harm you or others if you do not co-operate, especially if under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

OBSERVE THE ROBBER CAREFULLY.

Note their build, facial features and clothing. Watch the height marker as they leave the store.

PRESERVE EVIDENCE.

Keep any note that the robber passes to you. Refrain from handling it. Remember any place the robber touches so the police can check for fingerprints later. If possible, watch for the escape route of the robber and if a vehicle is involved.

REMEMBER THAT THE SAFETY OF YOU AND YOUR CUSTOMERS SHOULD BE YOUR MAIN CONCERN.



AFTER THE ROBBERY

CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY. Call the police BEFORE you call anyone else, such as the store manager/owner. The few minutes following a robbery are crucial in assisting police in the apprehension of these criminals. Tell the dispatchers the name and exact location of your business, the description of the robber(s), the direction of travel and whether or not you observed any weapons. Do not hang up unless the police dispatcher has told you to do so.

Quickly lock all doors. This prevents the robber from getting back into the store and preserves evidence for the police.

Ask any witnesses to wait for police to arrive. If they indicate they must leave, try and get their contact information to pass onto the police. Do not discuss the robbery with any of the witnesses, only with the police. Be factual.

Write down your observations. Do this as soon as possible. Use a suspect identity chart if you have one.

Robbery can be a traumatic experience. The Hamilton Police Service has a Victim's Assistance Program to assist victims of crime.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS SUBJECT OR OTHER CRIME PREVENTION TOPICS PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.HAMILTONPOLICE.ON.CA OR PLEASE CONTACT:

HAMILTON POLICE SERVICE – CRIME PREVENTION

155 King William Street, Hamilton, Ontario Phone: 905-546-4900 Fax: 905-546-4720