



SECURITY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN RETAIL STORES

LOSS CONTROL BULLETIN

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Workplace violence has become a real concern for retail businesses. They are a prime target for criminals because of the potential for cash on hand, late hours, easy access, and often times restricted visibility into the stores.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), robbery-related homicides and assaults are the leading cause of death in retail business. And convenience store workers have a seven-times higher rate of work-related homicide than workers in other industries.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) conducted a study on 460 convenience store robberies in three metropolitan areas of Virginia.

Risk factors that led to higher probability of being robbed were:

- Poor cash handling policies
- Poor visibility of clerk or register area from outside of store
- Lack of employee training in robbery prevention
- Lack of security systems

Risk factors that led to higher probability of employees being injured were:

- Actively resisting robbery
- Lack of customers present
- Lack of employee training
- Robbers being unarmed (employees not being as threatened to cooperate)

Security and violence prevention is not all about robbery. This can include shoplifting, violent acts not involving a robbery (including domestic violence acts, physical assaults, etc.), and credit or debit card information security (which could involve potential for identity theft).

ROBBERY PREVENTION PRECAUTIONS

- Limit window signs to low or high locations to allow visibility into and out of the store. Keep shelving and displays low for the same reason.
- The cash register should be visible from the outside.
- Employees should not be permitted to carry a weapon.
- Keep rear or side exits locked (such as delivery doors) in accordance with NFPA 101, Life Safety Code. Locked doors should not affect safe evacuation of the store in an emergency. Double cylinder deadbolt locks should not be used. Doors with panic hardware and an alarm can be used as an alternative option.
- Maintain adequate lighting inside and outside the store.
- Install interior and exterior surveillance systems. Cameras should be focused on entrances, cash register area, aisleways, obstructed view areas, and parking lots. Place signs indicating that a video surveillance system is installed at the facility. This can help deter potential robbers and will also help in identifying perpetrators.
- Use door detectors so that employees are notified when someone enters the store, especially in the later hours of the day when there are fewer customers.

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- Install an alarm system, including a panic button behind the cash register, in the office, and storage (delivery) area. Hand-held alarms are also an option that employees can keep on their person while working so an alarm signal can be sent ASAP.
- There should be a minimum of two employees on duty after dark.
- Install bullet-resistant enclosures with pass-through windows to isolate employees from customers.
- Make sure all doors are locked after hours while employees are still in the store.
- Encourage local police department to become familiar with the layout of your facility. See if they will provide regular patrols through the parking lot, especially after dark.
- Post signs indicating that employees have limited access to cash.
- Place curved mirrors in areas where there is limited visibility, such as hallways and concealed areas.
- Place height markers along doorways to help witnesses provide accurate descriptions of perpetrators.
- Conduct regular facility inspections focusing on robbery precautions, checking that lighting is adequate, surveillance system is functioning properly, unobstructed views into store maintained, etc.
- Conduct regular training with employees in how to properly react to a robbery:
 - Try to remain as calm as possible
 - Do exactly what the robber tells you. Do not argue or attempt to fight or disarm if they have a weapon. Don't try to stop or follow them after they leave the store.
 - Let the robber know if there are additional employees in the store so they aren't surprised.
 - Respond quickly. The less time it takes for them to get out of the store, the less likely there will be an act of violence.
- Make observations about what the robber looks like. Try to write these down as soon as possible afterwards when the memory is fresh.
- If a weapon is displayed, assume that they are prepared to use it. Don't make any sudden movements and try to keep your hands visible.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION PRECAUTIONS

Many of the above listed precautions will help limit the potential for acts of violence against employees. Also:

- Encourage employees to report if they are involved in domestic violence situations. This will allow the business to respond to the security needs of the employee involved and their coworkers. Many times, coworkers are injured or killed in domestic violence situations that spill over to the workplace. Local law enforcement may need to be contacted to provide additional security assistance.
- Violent acts between customers should be reported immediately to local law enforcement. Employees should not attempt to interfere because they could be drawn into the violent situation and injured.
- Employees should not argue with customers. Attempts should be made to resolve the conflict so that it does not result in a violent act. Employees should be provided instruction on conflict resolution.
- Locate garbage dumpsters and external storage in areas that ensure employee safety. Keep those areas well lit. There should be no hiding places for perpetrators near these areas. Try to limit employee access to those areas to daytime hours.
- Keep landscaping to a minimum. Use smaller bushes or shrubs to limit potential hiding places for perpetrators.
- Require employees to report to management any acts or threatened acts of violence, assault, unwanted sexual advances, or other concerns committed by coworkers or customers.

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ATM SAFETY

- Provide video surveillance in the area of the ATM.
- Locate the ATM in a high visibility area where there is high customer traffic.
- Secure the ATM to the floor or wall so that it cannot be easily removed.
- Regularly inspect the ATM to see if there is any indication it has been altered by thieves.
- Consider installing an audio alarm that activates if the ATM is moved or an attempt is made to break into it.
- Consider installing technology that utilizes GPS to track the whereabouts of the stolen ATM.
- When restocking the ATM with cash, it is preferable for this to be done after hours when no customers are in the store. If it must be done during business hours, alter the times that the ATM will be restocked. Ask for local police to stand by while the machine is being restocked.



PREVENTION IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS. TRUST IN TOMORROW.® CONTACT YOUR AGENT TODAY TO LEARN ABOUT OUR LOSS PREVENTION PROGRAMS.

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RETAIL STORE SAFETY INSPECTION CHECKLIST

This form is only a guide of general areas and items to be inspected. Check for other unsafe acts and conditions and report them so they can be corrected.

FIRST AID AND EMERGENCY

- First aid station provided
- First aid supplies adequate
- Certified first aid personnel available
- Emergency numbers posted

RECORD KEEPING AND POSTERS

- State/federal injury records maintained (i.e. OSHA 300, 300a)
- Copies of supervisor's accident/injury reports
- Safety activities documented
- Emergency plan established and emergency routes posted

FIRE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION

- Sprinkler valves locked in open position
- No smoking signs posted and enforced
- Employee smoking areas designated
- Fire extinguishers mounted and accessible
- Extinguisher locations identified by signs
- Stock kept at a minimum of 18 inches from sprinkler heads and heater units
- Extinguishers adequate in type and number
- Extinguishers inspected and tagged
- Fire extinguisher records of service, maintenance, and recharging
- Fusible links in sprinkler heads and fire doors free of paint
- Flammable liquids stored in approved safety containers
- Incinerator or compactor area free of combustibles and hazardous materials
- Extension cord use held to a minimum and only as a temporary measure
- Electrical panels accessible and labeled
- Proper size fuses (if fuse-type)
- Electrical panels and junction boxes with no knockouts missing, breakers not taped open (or otherwise obstructed)
- All electrical wiring installed in accordance with codes
- Mechanical rooms free of combustibles
- Waste cans of a non-combustible material and provided covers
- Sprinkler valves locked or alarmed to prevent tampering, access to sprinkler valves clear
- Non-combustible enclosure and a self closing door for boiler or furnace room
- Heat appliances clear of combustibles (hot water heaters, furnaces, etc.)
- Aisleways maintained and unblocked by storage of stock or other materials
- General housekeeping

Comments and unsatisfactory conditions
(see reverse side)

EMPLOYEE SAFETY

- Electrical equipment and tools grounded
- Illuminated stairs in work area
- Hand and power tools inspected
- Non-exit doors marked
- Material handling equipment provided and in good condition
- Ladders in good condition and marked "employee use only"
- Proper lifting techniques observed
- Metal conveyors properly stored
- Trucks-trailers chocked during unloading

PARKING LOTS, SIDEWALKS, RAMPS

- Sufficient lighting
- Surfaces free of holes, trash, snow
- Obstructions well marked, changes in elevation marked
- Parking areas, travel lanes marked
- No parking emergency areas identified
- Cart stalls regularly emptied

GENERAL CONDITIONS - STORE

- In-out decals on automatic doors
- Automatic doors operate properly (rate of closing, travel area)
- Door mats in good condition
- Employees trained in how to handle an accident involving the public
- Cash registers, children's rides, vending machines, and water coolers adequately grounded
- Emergency lighting in good operational condition with records of monthly check (if battery units)
- All free standing displays at least 48 inches high
- Wall and overhanging displays secured
- Vending machines, paint mixers, key machines, etc, secured against tipping over
- Defective carts removed from service
- Emergency cleanup procedure used (wet floor signs available and used)
- Exits clearly marked by illuminated signs which are visible throughout the store
- General sweeping program effective in keeping aisles clear of debris and slipping hazards
- Displays, counters, and floors free of loose mats, carpets, projecting metal strips, sharp edges
- Shopping carts in good condition and inspected for loose or bent wheels, sharp edges
- Shelf stocking regulated to eliminate tripping hazards (boxes)
- Shelf displays arranged to prevent stock from being knocked off

WAREHOUSE OPERATIONS

- Aisles clear and well marked
- Storage conditions consistent with good warehousing practices (neat and orderly storage)

