



DON'T DISCOUNT CRIME

Crime reduction advice for retailers





DON'T DISCOUNT CRIME

Preventing crime pays!

Businesses are more at risk of crime than private households. Reducing the risk of crime will help protect your profits and make sure that the people who work with you are safe.

Everyone needs to play a part in tackling crime effectively - the police and other public services, businesses and residents. This information explains how you - a retailer - can reduce the risks of becoming a victim of crime.

Not all of this advice will be right for you, but following some of it might make all the difference.

If you've already been a victim of crime, taking action to prevent further incidents is particularly important.

Whatever you decide:

- **do a few things** - don't rely on one solution
- **involve everyone** who works in your store and use their experience
- **remember partnership pays!** You'll be able to do more by working with others.





WORK SAFE - WORK SMART

SECURE MEASURES AGAINST RETAIL THEFT

- **Avoid working alone** and opening and closing your store alone wherever possible. You are more at risk at these times. Take extra precautions if your store is open long hours, on Sundays, or if staff work shifts. Protect inexperienced or vulnerable members of staff.
- **Get your more-experienced staff** to work with the inexperienced and more-vulnerable staff.
- **Lock up!** Make it clear who is responsible for locking windows, doors, cabinets and safes, and for setting alarms.
- **Handle cash with care.** Do not keep large amounts of money in your till. Leave tills open and empty overnight. Vary your routine when you are going to the bank.
- **Take care who you recruit.** Get character references. Limit the number of staff who have keys to your store.
- **Record all incidents of crime.** This will help you to spot trends or patterns, and will help the police if you have to call them.
- **Review your measures for fraud prevention.** Make sure staff know about point-of-sale checks and bank reward schemes for detecting stolen debit and credit cards.
- **Clean up** any damage and graffiti quickly.
- **Control stock tightly** and limit access to it.



STORE DESIGN AND LAYOUT

- **Make it easy to see and be seen.** Keep shelves low enough for staff to see what shoppers are doing. Use mirrors to reduce blind spots. Make it easy to see into your shop from the street.
- **Provide staff with safe spaces** such as counters. If possible, find a safe place for your staff to go in an emergency.
- **Protect high-value goods.** Display them away from exits and where you can see them. Where appropriate, display dummy goods, remove essential parts or use display cabinets, alarm wires or product tags.
- **Introduce measures to prevent crimes when you are planning major refurbishments or a move.** Ask your police force's architectural liaison officer or crime prevention design adviser for advice.
- **Carefully consider the position of your tills.**
- **Get specialist advice** before installing ATMs.





PHYSICAL SECURITY

Put yourself in the shoes of a criminal and think how you would break into the premises - then act!

- **Strengthen doors and windows.** Use high-quality materials as set out in your insurance policy.
- **Securely lock all possible entrances and exits overnight.**
- **Use a good-quality safe to protect valuables.** Keep it out of view. Your insurers can give you advice on the types of safes that are available.
- **Consider secure cages** in your stockroom.
- **Install a burglar alarm** using an approved installer. The police can give you advice.
- **Consider CCTV.** It works best when combined with other security measures. Get expert advice on equipment and procedures including data protection.
- **Use lighting** to increase the chances of intruders being noticed. However, if your shop is not overlooked at night, increased lighting may make it easier for criminals!
- **Consider anti-graffiti paint or plastic coatings** for windows.
- **Consider devices to prevent people breaking into your premises with vehicles. Think about grilles or shutters.** You will need to talk to your local planning authority and your landlord. Be aware some grilles and shutters can make the street look unattractive and reduce the number of passers-by.
- **Keep boundaries secure.** Restrict access to drainpipes, flat roofs and other buildings. Make sure any dark corners are well lit.





STAFF AWARENESS

Making sure your staff are confident, alert and well-informed is the best way of preventing crime. You can train your staff while they are doing the job.

- **Be alert** for suspicious behaviour.
- **Set up store procedures** for recording crime incidents, when to call the police, how to handle cash, how to use security equipment and arrangements for locking your store.
- **Keep safe.** Don't take personal risks, pick up warning signals and use techniques for preventing aggression.
- **Prevent fraud** by routinely checking credit and debit cards in line with guidance from card issuers. Check bank notes for forgery.

Good customer care can put off thieves and prevent tense situations. It will also help build links with the community so that your store is everyone's concern.

Make time for your staff to share their experiences and keep up to date on crime issues in the neighbourhood.





WORKING TOGETHER

You are not alone! Team up with other people who are working to tackle crime in your local area.

- **Join or form a local Business Watch scheme** or link up with other retailers to share the latest information on crime prevention and risks in your local area.
- **Local partnerships.** Get to know your local community police officer and make sure the groups involved in tackling crime in your area know the problems you face and what they can do to help you. Here are some other options.
 - Ask neighbourhood, street or community wardens to keep an eye on the situation.
 - Ask the local mediation service to work with everyone involved to settle problems.
 - Work with Truancy Watch or other partnership schemes to encourage children to go to school or contact your local education authority.
 - Ask local police or housing officers to take action against antisocial residents.



KEEPING SAFE

Your safety is worth more than your property.

If you find yourself in an aggressive or violent situation, don't take any risks - your personal safety comes first. These approaches may help.

- **Watch out for warning signs** such as hostile body language, nervousness or the smell of drink.
- **Avoid actions that may trigger violence** such as standing too close to people, pointing, touching, turning your back, swearing or making sudden movements.
- **Keep calm** and behave as normally as possible.
- **Keep your distance** from threatening behaviour. Get behind the counter and don't get involved in an argument.
- **Get help.** Have arrangements to call for support and use them.
- **Make a note of all incidents.** Call the police if necessary.
- **Remember** the offender's distinguishing features.

Victim Support offer free advice to people who have been a victim of crime.

You have a right to refuse to let anyone who is acting criminally or who is offensive into your shop.

In a robbery it is important not to take any risks, and wait until the robbers have left before raising the alarm.



FIND OUT MORE:

Local police force crime prevention or reduction officer

Advice on crime prevention.
www.police.uk

Association for Payment Clearing Services

Phone 08705 500005 for a Cardwatch Training Pack.
www.cardwatch.org.uk

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships who tackle crime and disorder locally - contact your local council.

Retail trade associations

These associations will give advice to their members.

British Chambers of Commerce

Phone: 020 7565 2000
www.britishchambers.org.uk

Business Links Contact Centre

Phone: 0845 600 9006
www.businesslink.org

www.crimereduction.gov.uk

Advice on crime reduction.

Crimestoppers

Phone: 0800 555 111
www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Victim Support

Phone: 020 7735 9166
www.victimsupport.org

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