



Volunteer with Crime Prevention

Contact us.

Crime Prevention Unit

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Emergency **9-1-1**
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Preventative Measures

- Advertise against shoplifting. Post warning signs that indicate a “zero tolerance” policy is in place.
- Avoid counters that obstruct any sight lines in the store. Present merchandise in such a way that customers can easily be seen while shopping, and avoid narrow, cluttered aisles.
- Keep valuable merchandise away from store exits. Valuables should be kept in locked display cabinets or behind counters.
- Arrange unprotected valuables neatly so that any missing item will be noticed quickly.
- If the merchandise you are selling comes in pairs, only display one of the pair.
- Where possible, fasten down small appliances used for display purposes. “Dummy” displays are preferable.
- Discourage loitering. When the store is crowded, encourage employees to circulate and offer help.
- If you suspect a shoplifter, pay a lot of attention to that individual. A customer will be flattered, a thief is likely to leave.

Security Tips

- Eliminate blind spots by placing mirrors in the corners and consider using electronic surveillance systems or cameras to monitor your store.
- Prevent “grab and runs” by keeping merchandise away from the exits.
- Design the store layout so that all people entering or exiting the store must pass by a security check and an employee.
- Monitor fitting rooms and restrooms at all times.
- Don’t allow unpaid merchandise to be taken into the restrooms.
- Limit the number of items taken into the fitting room.
- Monitor the cash register and place it so that it is inaccessible to the customers.

Shoplifting Facts

- Many shoplifters buy and steal merchandise in the same visit.
- Shoplifting is often NOT a premeditated crime. Over 70% of shoplifters do not plan to steal in advance.
- Shoplifters steal an average of 1.6 times per week.
- Shoplifters commonly steal between \$2 and \$200 of merchandise per incident, depending on the type of store and item(s) chosen.

Shoplifting Prevention



Shoplifting Techniques

Who Pays?

Everyone pays for shoplifting. Businesses suffer lower profits, and consumers ultimately pay higher prices.

Theft of a \$2 item from a store that operates on a 10% profit margin requires the sale of \$20 in merchandise to make up for the loss. Grocery stores and others that operate on low margins of 1% must sell \$300 in merchandise just to cover the cost of a \$3 item.

Who are Shoplifters?

Professionals - skilled thieves who have specialized techniques. The professional is the hardest to deter and the most difficult to detect. They usually target expensive items.

General Public - citizens who are bored or need to stretch their budgets.

Youth - make up nearly half of all shoplifters. Many do it just for kicks. Some teenagers shoplift in gangs and compete to see who can steal the most.

Addicts - shoplift to support their habit.

Kleptomaniacs - steal because of psychological compulsion.

Shoplifting Techniques

Padding items - This method involves stuffing extra items into boxes or bags of merchandise that are intended for purchase. If the items are found by the cashier, the shoplifter generally claims that they didn't know the items were there and refuses to pay for them.

Using children - Parents may use their infant's stroller to conceal items. Merchandise can easily be tucked around or under the infant and covered with a blanket or hidden in a diaper bag or the folds of the stroller's canopy.

Parents may also use small children to carry items out of a store, either by handing the merchandise to the child or directing the child to take the item and conceal it. If the child is caught, the parent will scold the child and claim a lack of awareness about what just happened.



Hiding items - Merchandise can be hidden in sleeves, boots, socks, and underwear. Watch for customers who:

- constantly fidget with their cuffs
- pull their hands all the way up in their sleeves
- bend to tie their shoelaces more than once
- repeatedly hitch up their pants or rearrange their dress

Customers with unusually bulky or out of season clothing should be watched. Some shoplifters also use a jacket draped over one shoulder to conceal their actions and hide items in the sleeves.

Wearing it out - This is a common technique used to steal clothing and shoes. Shoplifters will wear the item around the store for several minutes, then simply walk out with it. Usually price tags will be removed or tucked out of sight.

Hiding in plain sight - This is a common technique for large or heavy items. By holding an old receipt in one hand, the shoplifter will walk out of the store as if the item has already been paid for.

Another variation of this method is when shoplifters bring empty bags or full bags and packages into the store and start filling them with merchandise. If they are stopped, they say that these items were purchased from a different store. Another method is to pick an expensive item and simply walk out of the store with it.

Grab and run - This technique involves very little skill and is usually done with an accomplice who waits in a running car. The shoplifter will walk into the store, grab what can be carried, and run out again.

Groups of children or teenagers - Watch groups of children or teenagers carefully because peer pressure can be a strong influence on normally law-abiding youths. Sometimes groups will loiter in front of a store looking for the security measures and observing how attentive the staff are.

