

Security

Security is everyone's business. Don't knowingly throw away your livelihood - be aware, be committed, and be motivated.

The purpose of security procedures is to provide systems to:

- Deter would-be thieves and minimise losses.
- Detect security breaches.
- Apprehend offenders.

Security strategies

It may never be possible to completely eliminate business losses from theft. However, it can be effectively minimised by establishing sound security procedures, following those procedures consistently, and monitoring their effectiveness regularly.

Types of theft and strategies to reduce those are:

Vendor theft

Vendor theft can accounts for about 50% of retail theft.

Strategies to discourage vendor theft can include:

- Checking items delivered against invoices.
- Ensuring you have 'staff only' areas clearly marked and with restricted access.
- Documenting all purchases correctly.
- Comparing vendors' packing slips against purchase order forms.
- Keeping a receiving log for all deliveries and, where possible, assigning vendors specific delivery times.
- Documenting returns or exchanges to vendors on an appropriate adjustment form.

Customer theft

Customer theft can be minimised by ensuring everyone in your business is alert, follows procedures and is committed to practicing customer service. Strategies to reduce customer theft may include:

- Acknowledging every customer who enters your business.
- Approaching customers to offer assistance.
- Paying particular attention to:
 - shoppers who loiter.
 - shoppers who move very quickly.
 - shoppers who look at you rather than your stock.
- Checking returns in case merchandise has been swapped.
- Checking price tickets have not been tampered with.



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- Limiting articles to be taken into fitting rooms.
- Using equipment such as security mirrors or cameras to assist in deterrence and detection.
- Checking customers' bags, prams and other items upon leaving the store.
- Preventing customers entering stock rooms or point of sale areas.
- Recording refunds and checking customer identity.

Employee theft

Employee theft can be eliminated by ensuring all staff receive adequate training in correct security procedures and policies.

Strategies to reduce employee theft can include:

- Assigning each cashier different code for using the register.
- Recording all sales in the register.
- Correctly recording all register voids.
- Recording all 'no sales' on a log which also records by the reason.
- Supporting all refunds through the register by a returns voucher or credit note.
- Giving each customer a register receipt.
- Not allowing staff to have personal possessions at point of sale.
- Requesting staff enter and exit the store only when necessary.
- Establishing procedures for the removal of rubbish during operating hours.
- Providing lockers or safe places for staff to leave personal belongings.
- Not permitting staff to process their own purchases.

It should be stressed that tight security procedures for staff are as much in the interests of the staff themselves, as they are for the business. Such procedures ensure honest staff are protected from wrongful accusation if and when losses do occur.

Armed robbery

Armed robbery is an extremely serious crime and can be highly stressful for yourself, your employees and your customers. Armed robbery may be prevented by the development of easy to follow procedures. Although it is probable that such procedures will never have to be actioned, you should be prepared. In the event of an armed robbery, your priority must be to minimise risk to yourself and others.

According to the Queensland Police Service, recommended procedures can include:

- Remaining calm (the average robbery only takes 30 seconds).
- Complying with the offender's instructions and explaining what you are doing - advise the offender of any movements you have to make which could appear sudden or unexpected.
- Giving only what is asked for.
- Avoiding unnecessary eye contact.
- Not invading the space of the offender and keeping your hands in view.
- Activating any alarms ONLY IF IT IS SAFE TO DO SO.



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- Contacting the Police on 000 even if the alarm is activated - provide police with details/description of the offender as well as your name, business address and the nearest cross street.
- Observing which way the robber leaves and remaining in the store and locking doors after the offender's departure.
- Making mental notes about the offender - clothing, scars, tattoos, unusual features, odours, accents, speech, nicknames and weapons used. Utilise height markers.
- Refraining from touching anything and not discussing the robbery until after police have arrived.

Keys to physical security of your business

1. Ensure all doors and windows not in use during normal trading hours are kept locked with dead bolt locks.
2. Install an effective alarm system which is connected to a monitoring station.
3. Place your safe in a well lit, out of the way area.
4. Use security signage and cash minimisation procedures.
5. Understand your security equipment.
6. Maintain good lighting and unobstructed views both inside and outside your store.

Further information

The following resources on the subject of armed hold up and Business Security can be obtained free of charge from the Queensland Police Service:

- Business Security (brochure)
- Suspect Person/Suspect Vehicle (brochure)
- Height Marker Stickers (set of 4 with instructions)
- Suspect Identification and Do's and Don't's of Security Video Systems (A4 Flyer)

In addition, the District Community Policing Coordinator/District Community Liaison Officer located in each Police District HQ can provide information on a range of education packages on the topic.

The QPS website www.police.qld.gov.au has additional information on personal and property security.

The following fact sheets provide further information on these issues:

- Insurance
- Risk management