TYPES OF INCIDENTS

- ROBBERY
- BREAK AND ENTER
- FRAUD
- SHOPLIFTING
- SUSPICIOUS INDIVIDUAL
- INTOXICATED PERSON
- EVACUATION
- LOCKDOWN/ACTIVE ATTACKER
- SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE
- BOMB THREAT
- CRIME STOPPERS

ROBBERY

When it comes to robberies, some studies have found that a lack of training and inexperienced staff members may contribute to higher victimization rates. As a result, proper training that includes theoretical and scenario-based training for staff is a valuable investment to reduce the potential injury of staff.

Topics covered in the chosen training should include how to respond during a robbery as well as what the roles and responsibilities are of staff, management, and loss prevention officers or private security.

MANAGEMENT AND CORPORATE POLICIES

Put policies and procedures in place to help establish and reinforce safety measures. For instance, it is a generally accepted practice to have at least two staff members on shift at all times to help deter a robbery or other criminal activity. Depending on the size of the business, an individual should be made responsible to regularly check the building to ensure all of the lights, security system, and CCTV cameras are operational.

AFTER THE INCIDENT

As soon as the perpetrator has left the building:

- Lock the door to the business and do not allow anyone in until the police arrive.
- Call 911.
- Write down everything that you remember about the perpetrator.
- If there are witnesses, ask them to stay to make a statement for the police or provide you with their contact information to provide to police.
- Ensure that no one touches or tampers with any potential evidence (i.e., anything the perpetrator touched).
- If applicable, contact your businesses loss prevention staff and/or management.

Following the incident, a debriefing session should be scheduled with the staff involved. The purpose of the debriefing session is to improve prevention and future responses as well as answer questions and support the staff member(s) involved. A debriefing session is not meant to find fault or establish blame. Corporate procedures should be established that specify when these sessions should be held with the staff member(s).

The duration of the debriefing session will vary depending on a variety of factors: the severity of the incident; the impacts felt by the staff member(s) involved; and the time required by management to review existing policies and procedures and assess if there are ways to improve the response and prevent further incidents.

During the session, policies and procedures should be reviewed and input about challenges and possible opportunities for improvement should be welcomed and recorded. It is important to note that a debriefing session should be made available to all staff that were impacted by the incident, which could include witnesses and direct victims.

Following the debriefing session, all staff members should be made aware of the steps taken to address the incident and any applicable policy changes or new/updated measures being implemented (i.e., a CCTV camera or training for staff).

DOCUMENTATION

To aid in this process, a Retail Crime Problem Solving Assessment and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design checklist should be complete (Appendix E and Appendix A).

BREAK AND ENTER

Retail stores can be particularly vulnerable to “smash and grab” thefts whereby perpetrators simply smash an available window to quickly enter the store and grab accessible merchandise.

To safeguard against break and enter:

- Treat windows with a commercial grade film that makes them very difficult to breach. The use of bars should be carefully evaluated and used when the situation calls for it, such as in high crime areas. Bars on windows and doors visually reinforce to lawful customers the store has a crime problem, possibly reducing comfort levels of customers to shop there.
- Post on doors/window that: an alarm company monitors the premises, and no money is kept onsite. Include the local police non-emergency number to call, if a witness sees something non-urgent yet out of place/suspicious.
- Keep some lighting on inside the building to help with video surveillance quality and enable witnessing of activity, and consider placing lights on timers, if possible, to simulate activity.
- Remove anything on the exterior which could be used to gain entry to your premises (bricks, ladders, poles, construction materials).
- Ensure backs of businesses are clear and free of debris and do not allow for stacked items (such as refuse containers, boxes, etc.) to remain that can be climbed upon to gain access to the roof or can be easily set on fire.
- Ensure all doors and windows are properly locked and secured during regular business hours and afterwards.
- Once the business has closed, remove all cash from tills, leave the cash tray open and visibly empty. Also remove all valuables from visible storefront displays.

MANAGEMENT AND CORPORATE POLICIES

Put policies and procedures in place to ensure individuals are responsible for verifying that all windows and doors are locked at closing time, that there are no materials left close by the business that could be used to break-in and that cash registers are emptied and left open after closing the store if they are situated by a window that is visible from the street. After hours, all POS terminals are to be securely stored out of site.

AFTER THE INCIDENT

After confirming that a break-in has occurred: Assign one individual to handle the following process from start to finish:

- File a police report
- Make an insurance claim
- Schedule any repairs and cleanup required
- Complete a retail crime problem solving assessment as well as a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design checklist to identify what happened, an approach to address the issue, and ways to prevent the incident in the future.

Assuming that no staff member is present during a break and enter, a debriefing session should be scheduled with management and loss prevention officers. The purpose of the debriefing session will be to determine if all policies and procedures were followed and then begin the process to establish ways to prevent the occurrence from happening in the future. The session also serves to answer questions and support the staff member(s) involved. A debriefing session is not meant to find fault or establish blame. During the session, policies and procedures should be reviewed and input about challenges and possible opportunities for improvement should be welcomed and recorded.
The outcomes of the debriefing session should be shared with staff members to outline what happened, what was taken and/or damaged, how the individuals entered the building, and any applicable policy/procedural changes to prevent similar incidents in future (i.e., a CCTV camera or training for staff).

DOCUMENTATION

To aid in this process, a Retail Crime Problem Solving Assessment and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design checklists should be completed (Appendix E and Appendix A).