



# RETAIL SAFETY & SECURITY GUIDE

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# ABOUT THE RETAIL SAFETY & SECURITY GUIDE



The Retail Safety & Security Guide is a combined effort of the Toronto Police Service, Workplace Safety and Prevention Services, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police and the Retail Council of Canada that is intended to help retail businesses of all sizes across Ontario prevent and reduce incidents of crime as well as keep customers and staff safe. The information in this Guide is based on consultations with and best practices of retailers, security organizations, and police services and is provided as advice gathered from a collection of experts.

The Guide provides information to help businesses:

- Make their business less vulnerable to crime.
- Identify and select an appropriate response to address retail crime.
- Outline methods to prevent and address the most common and severe forms of retail crime that include:
  - Robbery
  - Break and Enter
  - Fraud
  - Shoplifting
- Review techniques to address abusive customers, suspicious individuals, intoxicated individuals, as well as individuals experiencing a mental health crisis.
- Provide measures to address or prevent violence in the workplace between customers or customers and staff.

Checklists and risk assessment tools are provided in the Appendices section of the Guide to help businesses put in place the approaches discussed.

If you would like further information on resources, please contact WSPS Customer Care at 1-877-494-WSPS (9777) or [customercare@wsps.ca](mailto:customercare@wsps.ca). If you would like to make recommendations for additional topics, please contact [lossprevention@retailcouncil.org](mailto:lossprevention@retailcouncil.org).

# OVERVIEW



## MAKING YOUR BUSINESS LESS VULNERABLE TO CRIME

The overall landscape for any retail environment must first and foremost exhibit physical features that encourage “positive” usage (visitors, employees, customers, etc.) while at the same time discouraging the opportunity for unlawful behaviour to occur.

The following is a list of the most frequently mentioned tips for retailers and staff to help improve safety, reduce retail criminal incidents, and make any commercial or retail business less vulnerable to incidents of crime and disorder:

- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) can be used to design retail spaces that create welcoming environments for customers but that discourage criminal activity and promote safety.
- Illuminate all entrances/exits and extend lighting to cover the entire exterior property line.
- Have a visible street address.
- Ensure there are no obstructed sightlines from the street or within the store.
- Position Closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras to cover cash registers, entrances, and exits and ensure clear visibility of transactions and individuals entering or leaving. Businesses can utilize height strips at doorways and position cameras at 6ft heights to capture facial features of suspects.
- Store CCTV Store footage for at least 60 days, preferably 90 days.
- Clearly define rules for the usage of changing rooms and returns.
- Conduct receipt checks and monitor exits.
- Adjust staffing based on risk analysis.
- Display surveillance signs outside the building.



- Install a security alarm system.
- Use a time-delayed safe and place decals on exterior facing windows to indicate the program is in place at the location.
- Remove all cash from the registers after close and lock it in a safe or make a deposit.
- Leave visible cash registers empty and open at closing to show potential perpetrators that there is nothing in them.
- Ensure a minimum of two staff members are on shift at all times to deter criminal activity.
- Lock all doors and windows after closing or when they are not in use.
- Ensure there are no items surrounding the building that may be used to gain access.
- Assign individuals to do an end of day check to ensure locks on windows and doors are secure.
- Assign regular checks of lights, security systems, and CCTV cameras to a designated individual.
- Treat external windows with a commercial grade film that prevents breakage.
- Place gift cards by cashiers or behind a counter within the store that is accessible only to store employees.
- Place Point of Sale (POS) terminals and Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) within 20 feet of cashiers, visible to CCTV, well-lit, and change passwords regularly.
- Managers or trained staff should inspect POS terminals and ATMs for tampering and verify gift card inventory before each shift.
- Install security stands or place security cables on each POS pinpad.
- Ensure that there are no obstructions placed in front of gift card stands, POS terminals, or ATMs for employees or CCTV cameras.
- Develop training for all staff covering evacuation procedures, including emergency exits and muster points.
- Conduct evacuation drills regularly to familiarize staff with procedures and improve response times. Ensure records are kept.
- Implement policies to ensure all staff receive training in lockdown procedures including proactive measures, response protocols, communication strategies, and post-lockdown actions.
- Provide specialized training for fire wardens, loss prevention, health & safety specialists, and security teams on evacuation and lockdown procedures.



# MANAGEMENT GUIDE



## RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), due diligence is a critical concept that places the responsibility on employers to take every reasonable precaution to protect the health and safety of their workers. This obligation can be demonstrated by the preparation of a health and safety policy and the development of a health and safety program to implement that policy.

Developing a comprehensive crime and violence prevention program in accordance with the OHSA is essential for promoting a safe and secure workplace environment.

This guide provides you with tools to help you meet your obligations under the OHSA.

## STRATEGIC DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The most effective and efficient approach(s) to preventing and addressing retail safety issues are the result of strategic and sustained efforts regarding the collection and analysis of relevant information. To this end, retailers should:

- Clearly define what is classified an incident and establish incident categories.
- Develop a standardized incident reporting tool that collects at minimum the date, time, description of the incident including the perpetrator, and notes about what worked and what did not regarding prevention measures, policies, and/or training.
- Assign a specific individual(s) with recording incidents to ensure consistency in the collection and storing of the information.
- Use an easy to access software program to record incidents that could be a simple spreadsheet program or a tailored and sophisticated software program. However, ensure that proper steps are taken to secure the data collected.
- Finally, establish a regular interval of time to review and analyze all collected information for trends and patterns to inform the development/modification of policies, procedures, training, and resources for preventing and addressing retail safety issues.

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## POLICY AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The key responsibilities outlined in the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) concerning workplace violence and harassment are as follows:

- Ensure workplace violence and harassment policies have been established.
- Conduct a workplace violence risk assessment or re-assessment.
- Ensure that workplace violence and workplace harassment programs are developed and maintained to implement the policies.
- Train workers on the workplace violence and harassment policy and program.
- Subject to some conditions, the employer must provide information to a worker related to the risk of workplace violence from a person with a history of violent behaviour.

Policies and procedures help provide a framework that improves clarity for staff on how to address retail safety issues as well as standardize approaches and behaviour. Regarding retail safety issues, it is important to:

- **Develop and Implement a Violence Prevention Policy:** Establishing a clear and comprehensive violence prevention policy is crucial for setting the tone for safety in the workplace. This policy should outline expectations, procedures for reporting incidents, and measures for preventing violence.
- **Implement Hiring Policies:** Including reference, criminal background, and credit checks as part of the hiring process helps screen potential employees for any red flags that may indicate a risk of violent behavior. This can contribute to a safer work environment.
- **Utilize Safe Scheduling Practices:** Implementing scheduling practices that ensure no workers are left alone during high-risk shifts for retail criminal activity can help mitigate potential risks to employee safety.
- **Assign Specific Individuals for Risk Assessments:** Designating individuals responsible for conducting risk assessments ensures that potential hazards are identified and addressed proactively.



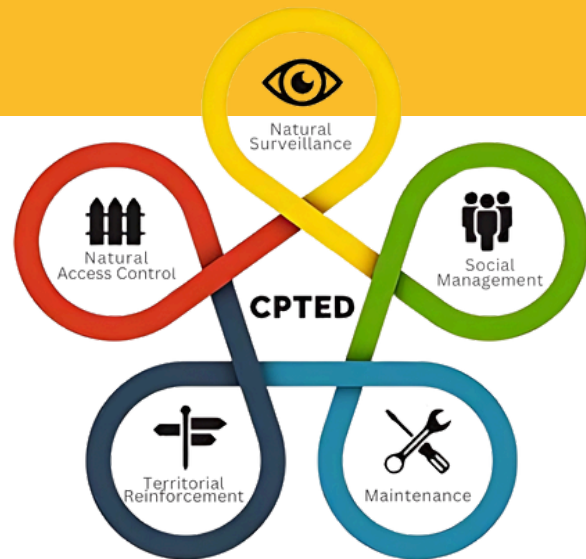
# MANAGEMENT GUIDE

- **Perform Regular Risk Assessments:** Conducting regular risk assessments of workplace violence is crucial for identifying and addressing potential risks and hazards. Employers should reassess the risks as often as necessary to ensure that policies and programs continue to effectively protect workers from workplace violence. The JHSC or Health and Safety Representative (HSR) must be advised of the results of the workplace violence risk assessment and be provided with a written copy of the assessment.
- **Provide Training in De-escalation Techniques:** Training all staff, including specialized staff such as loss prevention officers (LPOs), in de-escalation techniques is essential for effectively managing and diffusing potentially volatile situations.
- **Conduct Debriefing Sessions After Incidents:** Establishing a practice of conducting debriefing sessions with staff after complex or difficult scenarios allows for reflection and continuous learning, enhancing employees' ability to respond to future incidents effectively.
- **Ensure Clear Rules and Procedures:** Having clear rules and procedures regarding changing rooms, return policies, and checking receipts as customers leave the store helps maintain order and security within the retail environment.



# MANAGEMENT GUIDE

## CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED)



Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) can be used, in addition to the implementation of policies and procedures, to reduce or eliminate the potential for workplace violence. These measures involve:

- **Natural Surveillance:** focuses on designing spaces to maximize visibility and observation. By removing obstructions, improving lighting, and strategically placing surveillance cameras, employees and customers can feel safer knowing that their surroundings are easily observable.
- **Natural Access Control:** involves controlling the movement of people within a space to create a perception of risk for potential offenders. Elements such as well-defined entrances and exits, fencing, and landscaping can deter criminal activity by making it more difficult for unauthorized individuals to access the premises.
- **Territorial Reinforcement:** promotes a sense of ownership among employees and customers by clearly defining ownership of space through signage and regular maintenance. This sense of ownership can reduce the likelihood of criminal activity as individuals are more likely to take pride in and protect spaces they perceive as their own.
- Implementing these CPTED principles, along with comprehensive policies and practices for workplace violence and harassment prevention, contributes to a culture of safety and security in retail settings. Ultimately, these measures aim to promote employee well-being and reduce the risk of criminal activity, creating a safer and more productive work environment for all.

(See Appendix A for CPTED checklist for Businesses)

# 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).

# FRAUD

Fraud is defined as one who, by deceit, falsehood, or other fraudulent means, defrauds the public or any person of any property, money or valuable security or any service.

It's important to ensure staff are trained to spot counterfeit bills/cheques, gift card fraud, and credit card/debit fraud. Knowledge and scenario-based training is preferable with photos of real examples being easily referenced by staff during their shifts at each cash register.

To safeguard against fraud:

- Place gift cards by cashiers or behind a counter within the store that is accessible only to store employees.
- Situate POS terminals as well as Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) close to cashiers or other workstations (no more than 20 feet away), in a sightline of a CCTV camera, and in a highly visible part of the store that is well lit.
- Only operate chip enabled POS terminals.
- Install security stands or place security cables on each POS terminal.
- Ensure that there are no obstructions placed in front of gift card stands, POS terminals, or ATMs for employees or CCTV cameras.

## MANAGEMENT AND CORPORATE POLICIES

Prior to the beginning of each shift, managers or a trained staff member should inspect all POS machines as well as ATMs in the store for any signs of tampering. Additionally, gift card inventory should be checked to ensure “fake” gift cards have not been placed on the stand. Put policies in place to reinforce these preventative measures.



## **AFTER THE INCIDENT**

Acknowledging the different types of frauds that may occur, the following are standard steps to take following all incidents:

- Complete a report identifying all relevant information of the transaction using Appendix D and Appendix E. All potential evidence should be covered (i.e., POS machine) or placed in a secure area of the business (i.e., gift card) for police.
- For repeat offenders or incidents, consider submitting the information collected to Crime Stoppers to identify the suspect.
- Support services should be offered to staff members that have been negatively impacted by the situation.
- Staff members should be debriefed on the situation regarding lessons learned and any changes in policies/procedures.

## **DOCUMENTATION**

Complete a report identifying all relevant information of the transaction using Appendix D and Appendix E.

# **SHOPLIFTING**

In order to proactively reduce the threat of theft, employees should be trained to recognize behaviours that are most associated with shoplifting, however, no behaviour is confirmation that shoplifting will occur. Most common behaviours include:

- Selecting multiple goods quickly and without looking at prices.
- Wearing bulky clothing items, especially when it does not match the season (i.e., having a winter coat on during warm weather).
- Customers carrying large bags or backpacks.
- Individuals looking around at the ceiling for cameras, watching staff or hanging around particular parts of the store near high value or high theft items.
- Person(s) frequently visiting the store and not making purchase(s).



Training staff to focus on behaviors rather than individual characteristics is essential for promoting a fair and inclusive workplace environment.

Discrimination based on personal attributes such as race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability is not only unethical but also illegal under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Educating employees to approach situations with a customer service mindset rather than resorting to physical confrontation is not only beneficial for the safety of both employees and customers but also aligns with best practices in conflict resolution. For instance, staff should be trained to offer their assistance to individuals suspected of shoplifting, make an offer for the individual to pay for the items they may have placed in their pockets or backpack.

By adopting a customer service approach focused on identifying higher-risk behavior, staff can effectively deter shoplifting and minimize the likelihood of confrontations or incidents. Providing comprehensive training and ongoing support will empower staff to handle situations confidently and professionally while promoting a positive and safe shopping environment for all.



## **MANAGEMENT AND CORPORATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

- Put policies and procedures in place to clearly outline and implement preventative measures to deter shoplifting. For example, there should be clear policies and procedures for changing rooms, clear return policies (requiring the original receipt), and procedures to check receipts as customers leave the store.
- Ensure staffing levels are highest during high-risk times for shoplifting based on an analysis of incidents at the store.
- Assign two staff members to manage the sale and security of the topmost stolen items.
- Place the topmost stolen items within five to 20 feet of a workstation, in the sightline of a visible CCTV camera in a well-lit area with signs reminding individuals that they are on camera.

Focusing efforts on specific techniques can effectively reduce the incidence of shoplifting, which is often driven by opportunity. Here are some key techniques to consider:

- Display more expensive further into the store, away from any exit/entrance. This will deter shoplifters and make them more conspicuous.
- Lock high value/high risk products away and display empty boxes on the sales floor.
- Ensure shelving throughout the store does not create any blind spots for employees or CCTV cameras.
- Keep storefront windows clear of obstructions to permit informal surveillance of the sidewalk/street/mall from inside the business and out. Two-way observability and transparency can create visual interest, activity, and safety. Avoid placing large posters or having excessive frosting/tinting of storefront windows that block sightlines.
- Post on doors/windows signs that an alarm company monitors the premises, and that no money is kept onsite. Include the local police non-emergency number to call, if not urgent thus avoiding a 9-1-1 call should any witness notice a break-in or damage has occurred.
- Install a CCTV system for your business and its immediate physical surroundings. Images captured are an effective tool used by police that greatly increase both suspect apprehension and the probability of a crime getting solved. Ensure sufficient lighting to maximize image quality. It is equally important to use higher resolution cameras and have a minimum image retention/storage period of at least 30 days, with 90 days being the recommendation.
- Inside the store, camera placement should not be limited to overhead installations. This is because many criminals pull hoods or other clothing items over their heads to try and avoid facial capture of their image. If additional cameras are discreetly installed at counter height and pointed up slightly, the suspect's face is more likely to be recorded, increasing the probability of arrest by police.
- Consider a CCTV surveillance system which can both be monitored remotely by phone/online and record images to review for an investigation.
- Businesses with customer waiting areas should use seating that looks both out of the business and within while waiting. This ongoing, random monitoring makes criminals feel less confident about taking unlawful action.



## AFTER THE INCIDENT

If an individual is confirmed to have taken an item either by observation of a staff member or from the CCTV, the following are possible actions that may be taken:

- Report the incident to the police non-emergency line or through online reporting to ensure that they are able to record the incident and add it to their criminal statistics to improve analysis or aid ongoing investigations.

The frequency of shoplifting, potential danger in apprehending/detaining perpetrators, and investment to build a prosecution case may influence a business in choosing to call the police.

Considering these factors, the following criteria are examples to help Loss Prevention personnel decide on shoplifting instances that can be reported online or called in without a police officer having to respond and attend on site:

- Theft is under \$500.
- Identification of the Suspect is not a factor.
- The Suspect is 12 years of age or older.
- There was no violence or fear of violence encountered during arrest.
- The Suspect is not displaying signs of being intoxicated by alcohol or drugs.
- The theft is not part of an organized theft ring.
- Multiple Suspects are not involved.
- Language is not a barrier.
- There are no other unusual circumstances involved.
- The Suspect does not request Police involvement.

This approach provides an expedited solution for loss prevention officers, removing the need to detain perpetrators on the premises. Furthermore, this type of approach enables police officers to focus on repeat or organized retail criminals.



# SUSPICIOUS INDIVIDUAL



It is crucial to emphasize that suspicion should never be based on factors such as race, ethnicity, colour, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, sex, marital status, disability, or appearance. Discrimination of any form is not only unethical but also illegal under the Ontario Human Rights Code, which ensures equal treatment for all individuals accessing services, goods, and facilities.

Instead, it's essential to train staff to recognize behaviors or actions that may raise legitimate concerns about potential theft or other misconduct, regardless of the individual's demographic characteristics. These behaviors might include but are not limited to:

- Blood shot eyes, excessive sweating, or pacing in a particular area of the store.
- Asking questions that go beyond merchandise and curiosity such as asking about shift changes, personnel, security procedures, etc.
- Paying unusual attention to the activities of employees, looking for security cameras, exits.
- Video recording.
- Putting a large amount of high value items into their shopping cart or basket, without taking time to look at price or the item(s).
- Loitering outside the store or close to the cash registers without purchasing any items from the store.

Training in de-escalation techniques, and unconscious biases will provide staff members with the tools to effectively address suspicious individuals. Specifically, de-escalation training will provide staff with a set of tools to address the situation in a non-confrontational manner. Stereotypes based on different types of unconscious biases such as first impressions, extrapolating one positive/negative interaction as indicative of every interaction or approval/support of people who are similar to us etc. can lead to making judgements which could result in unfounded accusations of minorities or individuals from vulnerable populations.

Additionally, tools such as active listening can also be used to resolve conflict. This communication skill can be used to absorb information and reflect it (through questions and body language) back to the speaker that you heard them.

## **MANAGEMENT AND CORPORATE POLICIES**

Policies and procedures should be in place that ensure all staff receive training in de-escalation techniques with augmented training (i.e., mental health first aid training) for specialized staff such as loss prevention officers. According to those policies and procedures, management should ensure staff receive the training required and are provided the opportunities to have debriefing sessions while on the job and in a comfortable environment.

## **AFTER THE INCIDENT**

Following the identification of a suspicious person, fill in a report to keep a record on file for other employees and hold debriefing sessions with staff after complex/difficult scenarios to help ensure there is an opportunity to continue to learn and improve on the skills acquired from training.

## **DOCUMENTATION**

Complete a report identifying the suspicious person and keep this record on file for other employees to refer to. Completion of a report will help to identify patterns or specific individuals that are perceived to be suspicious by multiple employees. The information from these reports may also provide beneficial information for investigations into more serious matters such as shoplifting or other types of retail crime. Ensure Date/Time and description of a suspicious person or activity is archived and flagged. Suspicious incidents may occur weeks prior to an actual robbery and video retention will be very important.



# INTOXICATED PERSON

An intoxicated person is someone that is under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or any other intoxicant.

Training employees will help to ensure the safety of staff, customers, and the intoxicated person. Specifically, active listening and de-escalation training will provide staff with a set of tools to address the situation in a non-confrontational manner. The ultimate goal of de-escalation is to avoid physical confrontation and achieve a peaceful resolution for the individuals involved.

Recognizing signs of impending escalation of violence is important. These warning signs include:

- Fidgeting
- Tapping on the desk
- Pacing
- Crossed arms
- Dismissive communication
- Rude/offensive language
- Raised voice
- Rapid breathing
- Face reddening
- Cursing
- Tone of voice
- Name calling
- Clenched fist/jaw
- Waving objects
- Threats of violence
- Finger pointing
- Yelling



De-escalation training will provide staff with the tools to address this situation in a safe and non-threatening manner.

## MANAGEMENT AND CORPORATE POLICIES

Policies should be in place that ensure all staff receive training in de-escalation techniques with augmented training (i.e., medical health first aid training) for specialized staff such as loss prevention officers. These policies should also specify debriefing sessions with staff after complex/difficult incidents to help ensure there is an opportunity to continue to learn and improve on the skills acquired from training. According to those policies, management should ensure that staff receive the training required and are provided the opportunities to have debriefing sessions while on the job and in a comfortable environment.



## AFTER THE INCIDENT

Depending on the outcome of the incident, there will be different options available:

- Make a police report if someone was injured or property was damaged. Victim services are available through local police services as well as workers compensation boards for victims as well as witnesses of crimes.
- Request medical support or counselling for instances involving injury.
- Complete a debriefing session with a colleague or manager to review what happened, what worked well, and what could be improved upon next time.

The purpose of the debriefing session is to improve prevention and responses in the future. These sessions are a way to answer questions and support the staff member(s) involved. The purpose of any debriefing session is not to find fault or establish blame. During the session, policies should be reviewed and input about challenges and possible opportunities for improvement should be recorded.

Following the debriefing session with the staff members involved in the incident (i.e., witnesses as well as direct victims), all staff members should be made aware of the steps taken to address the incident and any applicable policy changes or measures being implemented (i.e., a CCTV camera or training for staff).



# EVACUATION

There are many reasons that may cause a location to have to be evacuated. Training in emergency preparedness is critical to ensure that everyone can exit a facility as directly and safely as possible.

## MANAGEMENT AND CORPORATE POLICIES

Policies should be in place that ensure all staff receive training in evacuation process, locations of emergency exits, location of muster point and augmented training for specialized staff such as fire wardens, health & safety specialists and security teams. These policies should also specify evacuation drills and debriefing sessions with staff to help ensure there is an opportunity to continue to learn and improve on the time it takes to safely evacuate a facility. According to those policies, management should ensure that staff receive the training required.

## AFTER THE INCIDENT

Following an evacuation, fill in a report to keep a record on file for time to evacuate, issues arising and corrective actions taken. Management should engage in post-event assessments and activities, including:

- An accounting of all individuals at a designated assembly point to determine who, if anyone, is missing and potentially injured.

## DOCUMENTATION

A full and thorough report should be done once the emergency is over. The report will provide a format for recording the sequence of events during an actual or practice emergency evacuation and action table to identify improvements.



# LOCKDOWN/ACTIVE ATTACKER

Lockdown is a word used in response to a major incident or threat of violence within a building or in relation to that building. RUN, HIDE, DEFEND are the actions taken during a lockdown.

There are different types of incidents that will trigger a lockdown and it is important to be trained in the various types of lockdown procedures, such as, but not limited to: mall takeovers and crowd control situations, active attacker, etc.

An active attacker is a(n) individual(s) actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area; in most cases, active attackers use firearms and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims.

Active attacker situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly. Typically, the immediate deployment of law enforcement is required to stop the threat and mitigate harm to victims. Knowing what to do can save lives.

Lockdown and Active Attacker is commonly used to describe the same situation and it is important to recognize that although a lockdown may be involved when there is an active attacker, there are many other reasons where a lockdown can take place and responding to an Active Attacker situation requires additional training. Businesses should ensure they have training for Active Attacker and involve experts to develop the training.

The evacuation of an area or facility may involve the consultation of emergency response units or outside experts.



## MANAGEMENT AND CORPORATE POLICIES

Policies and procedures should be in place that ensure all staff receive training in lockdown/active attacker procedures and augmented training for specialized staff such as loss prevention, health & safety specialists, and security teams. These procedures should also specify tabletop drills and debriefing sessions be practiced with staff to help ensure there is an opportunity to continue to learn and improve. Employees and customers are likely to follow the lead of managers, loss prevention and security during an emergency. During an emergency, managers, Loss Prevention and Security should be familiar with their Emergency Response Plan, and be prepared to take immediate action, remain calm, lock and barricade doors, evacuate staff and customers via a preplanned evacuation route to a safe area, if safe to do so.

(Management should refer to the employee section when responding to a Lockdown/Active Attacker)

## DURING THE INCIDENT

If you or staff have the opportunity, run away from the attacker. If the attacker stands between you and the exit, move to safety, and hide. Make it difficult for the attacker to see or hear you. If you are in a group, split up. If you find yourself face to face with the attacker, defend yourself by any means necessary.

(Management should refer to the employee section on run/hide/defend, when responding to a Lockdown/Active Attacker)



## **AFTER THE INCIDENT**

After the active shooter has been incapacitated and is no longer a threat, and/or a lock-down has been lifted, management should engage in post-event assessments and activities, including:

- Accounting for all individuals at a designated assembly point to determine whom, if anyone is missing and potentially injured.
- Contact emergency services for anyone who appears to be in distress or injured.
- Identifying and filling any critical personnel or operational gaps left in the organization because of the active attacker.
- Set up a Command Centre. This should be a central communication post. Assign a Crisis Lead.
- Determining a method for notifying families of individuals affected by the active shooter, including notification of any casualties.
- An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) should be made available and members should be encouraged and supported to participate in the program.
- Direct any media inquiries to senior management within the location or corporate office.

## **DOCUMENTATION**

Following a lockdown, complete a report to keep a record on file, review the report with the appropriate people who support and respond to emergencies and address any issues arising and corrective actions taken.





# SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE

A suspicious package can come in almost any form:

- an unidentified package received at a worksite;
- a suspicious object left in a public area; a social media post;
- a text or email message;
- a handwritten note, memo, or letter;
- or even written words on a wall.

It is very important to have all bomb threats investigated by police. Due to the extreme seriousness of a suspicious package, action must be taken swiftly and immediately.

## MANAGEMENT AND CORPORATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policies and procedures should be in place that ensure all staff receive training on how to respond to a suspicious package. Suspicious Package Investigations are required when an actual suspicious item is found. When this occurs management/security will initially investigate the item and if determined to be suspicious in nature notify police. Suspicious Package Investigations may require an evacuation of the entire or a portion of the facility. Safe mustering areas need to be pre identified for employees and evacuation routes. Standardized messaging should be developed to deliver to employees when an investigation is commenced and if an evacuation is required.

According to those policies and procedures, management should ensure staff are trained and are provided the opportunities to have debriefing sessions while on the job and in a comfortable environment. These procedures should also specify tabletop drills and debriefing sessions with staff to help ensure there is an opportunity to continue to learn and practice how to respond to such situations.

## AFTER THE INCIDENT

Following a suspicious package investigation, fill in a report to keep a record on file for other employees and hold debriefing sessions with staff after complex/difficult scenarios to help ensure there is an opportunity to continue to learn and improve on the skills acquired from training.



## **DOCUMENTATION**

Complete a report that includes all the details surrounding the incident and keep this record on file for other employees to refer to. Completion of a report will help to identify patterns or specific indicators that are perceived to be suspicious. The information from these reports may also provide beneficial information for investigations into any additional incidents that may be related.

# **BOMB THREAT**

A bomb threat can come in almost any form: an unidentified package received at a worksite; a suspicious object left in a public area; a social media post; a text or email message; a handwritten note, memo, or letter; or even written words on a wall. It is very important to have all bomb threats investigated by police. Due to the extreme seriousness of a bomb threat, action must be taken swiftly and immediately.

## **MANAGEMENT AND CORPORATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

- Policies and procedures should be in place that ensure all staff receive training on how to respond to a bomb threat.
- Bomb Threat Investigations are required when a threat has been made or communicated.
- Bomb Threat procedures should be consistent for all employees with a clear method to gather as much information from the caller, email, or note etc.
- A standard template to ask appropriate questions and gather as much information should be readily available, in order to pass on to police.
- Search guidelines for employees of the facility should be outlined for all employees to search their workspace and maintenance/security staff to search all common areas.
- A clear evacuation plan needs to be in place in the event that management or security of the facility orders an evacuation.
- Muster points should also be pre identified for employees.

According to those policies and procedures, management should ensure staff are trained and are provided the opportunities to have debriefing sessions while on the job and in a comfortable environment. These procedures should also specify tabletop drills and debriefing sessions with staff to help ensure there is an opportunity to continue to learn and practice how to respond to such situations.

### **After the Incident**

Following a bomb threat investigation, fill in a report to keep a record on file for other employees and hold debriefing sessions with staff after complex/difficult scenarios to help ensure there is an opportunity to continue to learn and improve on the skills acquired from training.

### **DOCUMENTATION**

Complete a report that includes all the details surrounding the incident and keep this record on file for other employees to refer to. Completion of a report will help to identify patterns or specific indicators that are perceived to be suspicious. The information from these reports may also provide beneficial information for investigations into any additional incidents that may be related.



Crime Stoppers works in partnership with the public, police, and media to provide the community with a proactive program for citizens to assist the police anonymously to prevent and solve crimes. Information is received through anonymous and secure tip lines or through a secure web connection staffed by a professional program coordinator.

The Ontario Association of Crime Stoppers, as well as all local Ontario Crime Stoppers programs, use a highly secure online web portal called "**P3 Tips**" to input and save your tip information in a centralized database.

The online submission method also allows you to upload videos, audio files and photos that can greatly enhance the value, accuracy and usefulness of your tip.

At the end of the online submission process, you will be given a unique **TIP ID** number and password that identifies your tip. This ID number can be used for future inquiries to check on the status of your tip or add additional details that may come to mind.

By providing information that Crime Stoppers will share with law enforcement agencies, you are providing an important and valuable public service. We fully understand that disclosure of your identity might put you at risk and we do everything we can to protect your anonymity. However, that anonymity may be open to challenge in the following situations:

- A call to Crime Stoppers made with the intention of furthering criminal activity or interfering with the administration of justice.
- A party who is guilty of a crime cannot use Crime Stoppers to try to divert the blame onto someone else. Crime Stoppers cannot be used to try to "frame" an innocent person.
- There is evidence that disclosure of some or all of a tip is necessary to establish someone's innocence.
- Do not send any sexually explicit images or videos because they will be forwarded directly to law enforcement and the sender's anonymity cannot be assured. These will not be treated as a Crime Stoppers tip and will not be eligible for a reward.

To learn more about the program visit [www.ontariocrimestoppers.ca](http://www.ontariocrimestoppers.ca).



# EMPLOYEE GUIDE

What an employee should do during the following incidents:

- Robbery
- Break and Enter
- Fraud
- Shoplifting
- Suspicious Individual
- Intoxicated Person
- Evacuation
- Lockdown/Active Attacker
- Suspicious Package
- Bomb Threat
- Crime Stoppers



# EMPLOYEE GUIDE

## RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY ACT

Under the Ontario Health and Safety Act (OHSA), employers are mandated to take every reasonable precaution in the circumstances to protect the health and safety of their workers. This places a significant obligation on employers to proactively identify and mitigate workplace hazards and risks including workplace violence.

Upon encountering violence in the workplace workers are responsible under the OHSA to report any contravention of the Act or regulations, or the presence of any hazards they are aware of, to their employer or supervisor. This obligation encompasses incidents of workplace violence, such as those mentioned in the following examples:

- Verbally threatening to harm a worker or their family, friends, associates, or property.
- Making physical contact with a worker or attempting to do so (e.g., hitting, shoving, blocking, etc.).
- Sending threatening notes/emails to a worker.
- Throwing objects or shaking a fist at a worker.

According to the OHSA, workplace violence is defined as:

- The exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker.
- An attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker.
- A statement or behavior that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker.

By reporting such incidents promptly, workers contribute to maintaining a safe and secure work environment, in accordance with the requirements of the OHSA.

Workers have the right to refuse unsafe work as outlined in the OHSA. If a worker believes that performing a task or working in a particular environment poses a danger to their health and safety, they have the right to refuse to work until the situation is remedied.

Workers have the right to refuse unsafe work as outlined in the OHSA. If a worker believes that performing a task or working in a particular environment poses a danger to their health and safety, they have the right to refuse to work until the situation is remedied.

The right to refuse unsafe work also extends to situations involving violence or the risk of violence in the workplace. Workers have the right to refuse work if they believe it poses a danger to their health and safety, including the threat of violence from clients, customers, co-workers, or others.

The Employee Guide outlines the best practices to implement during the following incidents:

- Robbery
- Break and Enter
- Fraud
- Shoplifting
- Suspicious Individual
- Intoxicated Person
- Evacuation
- Lockdown/Active Attacker
- Suspicious Package
- Bomb Threat
- Crime Stoppers





# ROBBERY

## DURING THE INCIDENT

If a robbery is in progress, the best option is to take steps to limit the amount of time that the perpetrator is in the store and to reduce the exposure of staff members to the threat. To achieve this objective, the following courses of action are suggested:

- **Remain Calm:** to the best of your ability. Ensure that you do not make any sudden movements and assure the perpetrator that you will cooperate with them and listen to their instructions.
- **Follow Instructions:** do not argue with the perpetrator. Only provide them with what they are asking you to provide.
- **Put Your Personal Safety First:** do not engage physically with the perpetrator. Do not chase after the perpetrator following the incident.

Take Mental Notes: during the incident, be aware of:

- The number of perpetrators.
- Approximate weight, height, age, hair and eye colour, build.
- Gender.
- Any distinguishing features (i.e., tattoos, scars, piercings, clothing).
- What they touched.
- License plate number of car they arrived/left in.
- Direction the perpetrator(s) left in.





# BREAK AND ENTER

## DURING THE INCIDENT

Based on the Canadian Criminal Code, a distinguishing feature of a break and enter compared to a robbery is that a break and enter may occur after hours, when staff are not present. While both break and enter and robbery involve theft, robbery uses violence or threats against a person or property resulting in a more serious and violent offense (and resultant punishment) than a break and enter. Generally, perpetrators will commit a break and enter offense when they are least likely to be caught (i.e., when there are no people around to witness the crime). However, if you are in the area when a break and enter occurs, the following courses of action are suggested:

- Put Your Personal Safety First: do not engage physically with the perpetrator, and do not chase after the perpetrator. Alternatively, find a safe place (i.e., a room with a lockable door) and stay there until police arrive.
- Once in a safe place, call 911.
- If you see the perpetrator, take physical/mental notes of:
- The number of perpetrators (i.e., if you hear conversations between multiple individuals).
- Approximate weight, height, age, hair and eye colour, build (i.e., skinny, muscular, overweight).
- Gender
- Any distinguishing features (i.e., tattoos, scars, piercings, clothing).
- Where the perpetrators were in the business during the incident.
- License plate number of car they arrived/left in.
- Direction they left in.



If your store location has a security alarm system, and the alarm has triggered a police or private security response when no other staff members are present do not enter the building. Wait until the arrival of police or security. If you witness anyone leaving the building, call 9-1-1 with the information above.

From the perspective of staff safety, it is preferable if a break and enter occurs when no one is in the business and a security alarm is triggered to alert police or a private security service to respond as quickly as possible.

However, if a security alarm is not installed or it was not triggered during the break and enter, then you as a staff member may be the first on scene.

If you are the first to arrive at the business and notice that it has been broken into, do not enter the store, or leave the store if you believe the perpetrator(s) may still be inside. Call the police to report the incident noting that you believe the perpetrator is still in the building. If you do not believe that the perpetrator is still in the store, then call the non-emergency line for the police to report the incident.



# FRAUD

## DURING THE INCIDENT

The best way to address any type of fraud is to take a customer service approach. The reason for this approach is that victims may commit fraud unknowingly. For example, someone may not know that they were provided with counterfeit bills or are purchasing gift cards on behalf of a perpetrator. As a result, it is important to avoid accusations as much as possible and instead focus on being polite and alert. However, if at any time the perpetrator becomes violent or threatens you or other staff members with violence then call 911 immediately.

Below you will find ways to address each type of fraud.

Counterfeit bills/cheques: increasing electronic and card payments as well as increasing security features for Canadian bills have been associated with a reduction in these types of fraud. Regardless, these types of fraud still occur, and the following are suggestions for how to address the incident.

### To spot a counterfeit bill:

- Run the tip of your finger along the “Bank of Canada/Banque du Canada” on the front of the bill, as they should be raised.
- Tilt the bill underneath a light and look for multiple colours reflecting in the see-through portion of the bill.
- The see-through portion of the bill should also have the monetary denomination of the bill alternating between facing the front and back of the bill as well as growing larger from the top of the bill to the bottom.
- Different bills will have different historical figures from Canada’s past on them. Although, every bill will have the individual’s face reflected in the top right portion of the see-through part of the bill.





### **If you suspect someone has provided you with a counterfeit bill:**

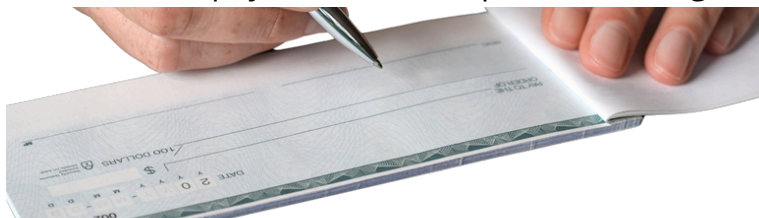
- Politely and kindly, inform the individual that you have reviewed the bill(s) and there are some features that lead you to believe that it may be counterfeit. After explaining why, politely refuse to accept the bill(s) in question.
- Ask the customer to make a payment for their purchase using another method or other bill(s) that should go through the same inspection process as you did with the first bill(s).
- Regardless of you being able to complete the transaction inform the individual that they should go to their local police service department to check the bill(s) that were provided.

### **To spot a fraudulent cheque:**

- Ensure that the cheque is filled in completely, has preprinted information on it regarding the financial institution, and does not show signs of alteration.
- Review the back of the cheque provided to you, as it will disclose the specific security features for that cheque.
- The amount of the cheque should match the price of the item being purchased. There is something called an “overpayment scam” when a perpetrator writes a cheque for an amount higher than the purchase price and then requests a refund.
- For money orders and bank drafts that are suspicious, you may call the issuing bank to verify its authenticity.

### **If you suspect someone has provided you with a counterfeit cheque:**

- It is best to have information on the individual providing the cheque before accepting it (i.e., a client file with contact information including their address). Additionally, you should only provide the item that is being purchased once the cheque has cleared.
- Politely and kindly, inform the individual that you have reviewed the cheque and there are some features that lead you to believe that it may be counterfeit. After explaining why, politely refuse to accept the cheque in question.
- Ask the customer to make a payment for their purchase using another method of payment.





## Gift card fraud

Increasingly, gift card fraud is becoming more prevalent as a target of crime itself (i.e., placing fake gift cards on store shelves) as well as part of other frauds (i.e., CRA telephone scam). The reason for this is that gift cards are easily liquidated by criminals into legitimate forms of cash.

### **To prevent gift card fraud, the following steps are suggested:**

- If a customer is buying a large amount of gift cards, kindly and in a non-confrontational or accusatory way, ask the purpose of purchasing the gift cards. In some cases, fraudsters will be instructing an individual to purchase the gift cards on their behalf. This is known as Victim Assisted gift card fraud.
- Cashiers need to inspect all gift cards purchased to ensure the packing has not been tampered with and that it is a legitimate gift card. Specifically, make sure there are no spelling mistakes, fuzzy graphics, broken seals, or bar codes/PINs that have been tampered with.
- Cashiers should ensure that the gift card being purchased is reflected in the POS machine (i.e., an Amazon gift card is identified as an Amazon gift card). If a fraudulent gift card is being purchased, then the POS system will not recognize the proper gift card. Another check would be to confirm “successful activation” on the receipt.
- Cashiers should not accept payment for gift cards by a customer that is using a credit card or debit card that does not have a chip and PIN option or the chip and PIN functions are not working if they are present on the card.
- All employees should be aware of fraudulent phone calls from individuals claiming to be from a gift card provider or an IT company that asks them to activate gift cards as a test. These companies will not make requests like this, and employees should be made aware that they are indications of an attempted fraud.



## Credit card debit fraud



The implementation of chip technology for debit and credit cards has made positive impacts on reducing the number of debit and credit card related fraud at the point of sale. With that said, the following steps are available to help prevent credit card and debit fraud:

- Purchase a POS terminal that has a chip reader.
- Do not accept payments from individuals using debit or credit cards that do not have a chip and PIN option or the chip and PIN options are not working if they are present on the card.

Incidents of online order and pick-up fraud have increased in recent years. This is a process in which individuals are able to buy a product online and then pick the item up in-store. To address this issue, the following steps should be considered:

- If financially viable, consider purchasing an online fraud management system. Alternatively, or to augment the online fraud management system, manually review online orders involving high-value or a high-volume of items.
- If manually monitoring online sale orders, be cautious when:
  - A high number of orders from the same billing address, payment information, and/or email address is placed in a short period.
  - If the location of pick-up is changed from previous orders with the same billing address, payment information, and/or email address.
  - If the billing address and email have different payment information.
- Record and track phone numbers, email addresses, billing information, and payment information, and IP addresses that are associated with problematic transactions in the past.
- If the online payment system allows, flag customers that use multiple credit cards before having a payment approved and show limited browsing time on the site (i.e., did they just get on and order a high volume of high-risk products or did they search the site, look at reviews, and compare prices of items).
- Have an application available for customers to use to notify when their package is available for pickup and when a customer has arrived to pick-up their purchase.

- Ensure the pickup area is well lit and has CCTV cameras.
- Train employees to lockup purchases in a secure room prior to pick-up and ensure the contents match the purchase order before providing to the customer.
- At the time of pick-up, make sure the information provided matches the billing information. If not, request that the purchase be made in-store at a POS terminal.

### **POS terminal(s):**

Perpetrators may tamper with a business's POS terminal(s) by installing devices that can read credit/debit card information including Personal Identification Numbers (PINs) or cameras to record this information. To prevent this type of fraud, the following steps are suggested:

- Inspect POS terminals at the beginning and end of every shift to verify that they have not been tampered with. Look for things like, missing screws, cracks, and any new holes in addition to verifying the serial number of the machine.
- Look for cameras or unauthorized recording devices in and around the POS terminal.



# SHOPLIFTING

## DURING THE INCIDENT



Due to the potential risk to staff and customers, staff members should not physically engage or confront/accuse alleged shoplifters. With that said, it is important to note that to be caught shoplifting the individual has to take something from the store and bypass an opportunity to pay for the item. As a result, just because someone took something off the shelf and put it into their pocket does not mean that they have shoplifted. Accusing someone of shoplifting runs the risk of a physical confrontation. Therefore, if you believe someone is shoplifting, the following approach is recommended:

- Approach the customer in a friendly manner and ask if they want a flyer or if you could help them find something, they need on sale. If they do not have a basket or shopping cart, offer one to them to use while they shop.
- While you are talking with the individual make note of the following:
  - approximate weight, height, age, hair and eye colour, build,
  - any distinguishing features (i.e., tattoos, scars, piercings, clothing).
- If they decline all of your assistance, inform them where all of the checkout counters are in the store and that the lines are short right now. This can be a simple reminder to the customer to pay for their items on their way out.
- If the CCTV camera system is capable, the individual may also be monitored by video as they shop to verify:
  - what they look like and if they operated alone or in a group
  - how they entered the store (i.e., if by car, record the license plate)
  - what items they took, method they used to leave the store with the items
  - how they exited the store with the item(s).

All of this information will be helpful for investigating and hopefully catching the perpetrator as well as establish how to prevent a similar incident from happening in the future.

If at any time, the perpetrator becomes violent or threatens staff members with violence, call 911 immediately.



# SUSPICIOUS INDIVIDUAL

## DURING THE INCIDENT

If a suspicious person has been identified, the following steps are suggested:

- Always keep your personal safety in mind – this means do not argue/accuse, threaten physically engage with the individual or prevent them from leaving the store.
- Offer customer service assistance to a suspicious person as you would any normal customer. Doing this right up front can prevent an incident from occurring and a situation from escalating.
- Maintain six feet between you and the individual using physical barriers such as counters and display cases to ensure a safe distance.
- If you can, take note of the following pieces of information:
  - the number of individuals,
  - length of time in the business,
  - approximate weight, height, age, hair and eye colour, build,
  - any distinguishing features (i.e., tattoos, scars, piercings, clothing),
  - where the individual(s) were in the business.

If you feel there is a threat of violence then contact your manager, loss prevention officers, private security or colleagues if there are no other options. Upon contacting one or more of individual(s), begin the conversation by describing the scenario and the individual, how long they have been in the store, and what is making you concerned about the individual. Ensure the Date/Time/Description of the suspicious person is flagged and archived on video surveillance. Incidents may occurred weeks prior to a robbery and video retention will be very important.



# INTOXICATED PERSON

## DURING THE INCIDENT

If an individual enters the store and is suspected of being intoxicated, the following steps are suggested:

- Approach the individual with open body language (i.e., in a non-confrontational way) and speak in a calm manner with a low tone of voice. Introduce yourself and let the individual know what position you have at the store.
- Always maintain at least six feet between you and the individual.
- Ask for their name and tell them what you see (i.e., they look upset or that they are yelling).
- Tell the individual that you are there to help them and reassure them that you do not want to argue or debate with them if they are verbally confrontational.
- Use active listening to understand what the individual is going through and how you can help them. Primarily this is accomplished by reflecting on what the individual is saying to you by paraphrasing and asking them if you understand them correctly.
- When speaking with the individual remember to be simple, clear, and focus on building a rapport.
- Be aware of the physical space around you. For example, ask the intoxicated individual to move away from others being mindful as to not block an exit for them and using counters or furniture/ displays to keep as a barrier between you and the individual.
- After speaking with them, the individual may decide on their own to leave the store. If not, ask if there is a family/friend that can come help them, call a community service that offers help to individuals under the influence, or if you ever feel threatened or at-risk of violence then call 911 immediately.



# EVACUATION

## DURING THE INCIDENT

- Follow the directions from the emergency services.
- Make an announcement that the building is being evacuated and direct everyone to the nearest exit.
- If fire wardens are not pre-determined, all managers (and coordinators as needed) will be the fire wardens.
- Head to the external assembly area; advise all staff and contractors of the closest emergency exit and ask them to come with you.
- Check in with your manager or fire warden upon arrival to the assembly area.
- Only if safe to do so, management/fire wardens/security should conduct a sweep of the facility to ensure all contractors, employees and visitors have exited the building.
- Complete a head count of all employees, contractors and notify fire warden/management.
- Provide the location of rooms/areas that are used in the building to provide "Shelter in Place" to the emergency services when they arrive on site.
- HR / Management on site shall communicate any employees who they anticipate could use the shelter in place location during an evacuation, (i.e., modified work restrictions, disability, etc).
- The facility will not re-open until authorities have deemed it appropriate to do so and given the all clear.
- Complete an Evacuation Report and save it for future review.



# LOCKDOWN/ACTIVE ATTACKER



Identify the type of emergency response plans you are facing. There are three emergency response plans:

**1.Shelter in place:** Generally, an environmental threat (i.e., flood) is present outside and it is not possible or advisable to evacuate the store. Provide the location of shelter in place rooms/areas to the police. HR / Management on site shall communicate to any employees who they anticipate could use the shelter in place location during an emergency (i.e., modified work restrictions, disability, etc.).

**2. Hold and secure:** Ensure the door(s) leading to the outside of the building are locked and people may not exit or enter the building. This is a partial lock down for danger due to physical / environmental threat outside the store. In case of a fire, ensure there is the ability to exit the building.

**3. Lockdown:** Lockdown is a word used in response to a major incident or threat of violence within a building or in relation to that building. **RUN/HIDE/DEFEND** are the actions taken during a lockdown.

## DURING THE INCIDENT

**Assess the situation-** Determine the most reasonable way to keep yourself safe. Workers are most likely to follow the lead of management during an active attacker situation. Do not endanger your safety or the safety of others. Actions need to be based on ongoing assessments and actions are not always fixed, they may change if the situation requires new and immediate action. Remember, an environmental concern is quite different from a violent offender in the immediate area.

**React** - Determine the location of the attacker(s) (inside or outside store). Based on your assessment, react to the situation at hand in the safest possible method for you and those around you. There may be danger from the gunfire of the attacker and responding police officers. You must decide which action to take: **RUN/HIDE/DEFEND.**

**Run** - If it is safe to do so and you have an accessible escape path, leave the location you are in, moving away from the area of risk.

- Go away from the sound of the shooting.



- Exit quickly but cautiously and do not waste time trying to gather your belongings.
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow.
- Help others escape, if possible.
- Get to an area of safety outside and prevent others from entering the area of risk.
- Keep your hands open and visible.
- Show police your hands and listen for commands.
- Offer any information you can – description, location of attacker, number of attackers, type(s) of weapons, etc.
- Follow the police officers' instructions.

**HIDE** - First make sure there is no safe way out. If you do not have a safe way out of your location, then find the closest area where you can hide out and barricade yourself and others. If possible, choose a room that you can lock and barricade in place (such as offices and utility rooms).

- Remain quiet, turn off lights and silence cell phones.
- Listen for attacker's progression.
- Look for items you can use to fight for your life, if necessary.
- Calm hysterical people to keep them quiet.
- Hide behind large, solid items.
- Dial 911, if possible and safe to do so, if you cannot speak leave the line open to allow the dispatcher to listen.

**DEFEND** - As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active attacker. Here are some ways to do this:

- Act as aggressively as possible against the attacker.
- Have as many people as willing and rush the shooter en masse and attack relentlessly.
- Don't stop until the attacker is down and incapacitated.
- Secure the incapacitated attacker with whatever you have.
- Commit to your actions.
- Continue to listen to ensure there aren't other attackers.

## **REACTING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT ARRIVAL**

- Remain calm and follow officers' instructions.
- Put down any items in your hands.
- Raise empty hands and spread fingers.
- Keep hands visible at all times.

- Avoid making quick movements toward officers such as attempting to hold on to them for safety.
- Avoid pointing, screaming and/or yelling.
- Do not stop to ask officers for help or direction when evacuating, just proceed in the direction from which officers are entering the premises.
- Provide as much detail as you can to police, like:
  - location of the attacker, number of attackers, physical description,
  - type of weapons held by the attacker, number of potential victims.
- The first police officers on scene will not stop to help injured persons.
- Rescue teams comprised of additional officers and emergency medical personnel will follow the initial officers. These rescue teams will treat and remove any injured persons. They may also call upon able-bodied individuals to assist in removing the wounded from the premises.

Once you have reached a safe location, do not leave until law enforcement authorities have instructed you to do so.

(See Appendix I for Run, Hide, Defend poster below)

<h1><b>RUN</b></h1>  <p>If you have the opportunity, run away from the attacker. Don't let indecision slow you down. If the attacker stands between you and an exit, move quickly to safety and find a place to hide.</p>	<h1><b>HIDE</b></h1>  <p>If you cannot run to safety, make it difficult for the attacker to see, hear or find you. Move quickly but remain calm. If you are in a group, scatter so that you don't make an easy target.</p>	<h1><b>DEFEND</b></h1>  <p>Despite your attempts to run and hide, you may find yourself face to face with the attacker. Defending yourself is your last resort, but it may also afford you the chance to run or hide.</p>
<p><b>IF YOU HAVE THE CHANCE, RUN TO SAFETY.</b></p> 	<p><b>LOCK DOORS AND BARRICADE YOURSELF.</b></p> 	<p><b>BE PREPARED TO DEFEND YOURSELF.</b></p> 
<p><b>LEAVE YOUR BELONGINGS BEHIND.</b></p> 	<p><b>TURN OFF ANY LIGHTS.</b></p> 	<p><b>TEAM UP WITH OTHERS.</b></p> 
<p><b>HELP OTHERS STAY OUT OF HARM'S WAY.</b></p> 	<p><b>TURN OFF PHONE SOUNDS AND VIBRATION. DO NOT TURN OFF YOUR PHONE.</b></p> 	<p><b>IDENTIFY DEFENSIVE SKILLS AND TOOLS.</b></p> 
<p><b>CALL 9-1-1 FROM A SAFE LOCATION.</b></p> 	<p><b>BE PREPARED TO RUN OR FIGHT IF YOU ARE FOUND.</b></p> 	<p><b>REMEMBER: YOUR ACTIONS BEFORE POLICE ARRIVE MAY SAVE YOUR LIFE.</b></p> 

# BOMB THREAT/SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE

## DURING THE INCIDENT

If you are the one receiving the bomb threat, document all the details and note any of the following:

- Pitch of the caller's voice.
- Any accent or distinctive features of their voice.
- Any background noises (traffic, subway, bells, kids, indoor vs outdoors).
- The specifics of the threat including any location/time/reason.
- What is the number on the call display? Write it down.

Do not try to determine if the threat is a hoax or real, treat it as a real emergency. Report the incident to security and/or 9-1-1.

If you discover a suspicious item, do not touch it. Notify security immediately, or 9-1-1 if your business does not have security on site. Do not use any electronic device, cell phone or walkie talkie in close proximity of the item.

If an evacuation is ordered, follow your business evacuation plan/route, and continuously scan your surroundings until safely at the evacuation site. Avoid standing in front of windows or other potentially hazardous areas. Do not block the sidewalks or roadway – keep clear for emergency services.

If an explosive incidents occurs, follow established evacuation procedures and call 9-1-1.



# HELPFUL TIPS

The following techniques can be used when dealing with people in a retail environment:

## ACTIVE LISTENING

Effective communication involves both a speaker and a receiver. In order for the message to be understood, the participants must take into account more than just talking. Active listening is feedback given by the listener to convey their interest in what the speaker has to say. This will provide them with the opportunity to understand, interpret, and evaluate what the speaker is telling them.

Active listening involves being genuine, engaged, and empathetic. This can be conveyed by using the following techniques:

- Make eye contact – be focused but do not stare. Be cognizant that in certain cultures, excessive eye contact can be seen as aggressive or rude.
- Minimize distractions and focus on the speaker. Do not check your phone for e-mails or texts.
- Avoid interrupting the speaker. Focus on the person and do not listen with the goal of responding to (fixing) the problem.
- Welcome pauses. Some people may need additional time to think about what they are saying.
- Ask questions. Clarifying what is said in a friendly and non-judgmental way will let the speaker know that you are listening and interested.
- Paraphrase the information in order to avoid misperceptions by allowing the speaker to correct any misunderstandings.
- Take time to analyze what is being said.
- Look at the body language of the speaker to determine how they feel about what they are talking about e.g. gestures, posture, facial expressions etc.
- Use a relaxed posture with unclenched hands and an attentive facial expression.
- Give the person physical space – approximately 2 to 4 feet for most cultures.
- Get on the person's physical level (e.g. if they are seated, kneel or bend to talk to them rather than standing up).
- Do not make sudden movements as these can seem threatening.

By using active listening effective communication can be achieved and reduce the chance of miscommunication or aggressive responses.



## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict can arise in workplace situations due to lack of communication, lack of control over the situation, personality clashes and/or issues outside of the retail environment. Conflict resolution is a strategy used to alleviate tension between people.

Conflict in the workplace can be resolved in the following ways:

- Allow people to talk and express their frustrations until they calm down.
- Validate their feelings by using empathy statements such as “I understand” or “I see”.
- Be aware of your tone e.g. don’t smile or mock the other person.
- Be neutral (i.e. do not agree or disagree with the other person or provide your opinion).
- Do not react with a similar angry response.
- Help the person to focus on the issue rather than become tangential. Redirect the conversation back to the issue at hand.
- Avoid making conflicts public. If possible, try to have the conversation away from other people.
- Find something to agree about in order to foster collaboration and cooperation.
- Listen to what the person has to say without interrupting. When the person has stopped talking you can summarize their main points and work collaboratively on a solution.

## DE-ESCALATION

Workplace violence can take many forms such as:

- Yelling.
- Intimidating actions.
- Waving objects.
- Rude/offensive language.
- Cursing.
- Raised voice.
- Threats of violence.
- Name calling.
- Finger pointing.
- Aggressive tone of voice.



It's important to recognize the signs of potential escalation in a workplace interaction to prevent violence. Here's a breakdown of the typical sequence of events and some de-escalation strategies:

- **Early warning signs:** These can include non-verbal cues like fidgeting, pacing, or crossed arms, as well as verbal cues like dismissive or rude language. When you notice these signs, remain calm and try to defuse the situation by actively listening and showing empathy. Avoid responding defensively or confrontationally.
- **Hostile behaviour:** Signs of hostility may include a raised voice, rapid breathing, or rude/offensive language. In response, maintain a calm demeanor and speak in a calm, respectful tone. Acknowledge the person's feelings and concerns without agreeing with any aggressive or inappropriate behavior.
- **Threatening behaviours:** If the situation escalates to threatening behavior such as clenched fists, yelling, or intimidating gestures, prioritize safety. Maintain a safe distance and avoid making sudden movements that could further agitate the individual. Try to diffuse tension by remaining calm and expressing a desire to resolve the issue peacefully.
- **Assaultive behaviour:** If the situation escalates to physical violence or assaultive behaviour, prioritize your safety and the safety of others. Remove yourself from the immediate vicinity if possible and seek assistance from security or law enforcement if necessary.

In all stages of escalation, it's crucial to avoid trading insults, taking the situation personally, speaking condescendingly, physically touching the person, or preventing them from leaving. These actions can escalate the situation further and increase the risk of violence.

For additional tips on preventing workplace violence and de-escalating tense situations visit the [wsps.ca](https://www.wsps.ca).



Together, 37 Ontario Crime Stoppers Programs are working to keep Ontario safe.

The Ontario Association of Crime Stoppers works with other Crime Stoppers programs on a national and international level as it represents Ontario at the Canadian Crime Stoppers Association and Crime Stoppers International.

Every time anonymous information is provided to the program, another opportunity is created to solve a crime which provides the community a chance to reclaim its neighbourhood from criminality and violence.

Your community matters and we would like to hear from you. Remember, you remain anonymous and criminals don't. If you would like to file an Anonymous Crime Stoppers Information Report, please call 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS) or visit, [www.ontariocrimestoppers.ca/submit-a-tip](http://www.ontariocrimestoppers.ca/submit-a-tip).

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF  
**CRIME STOPPERS**   
**1-800-222-TIPS (8477)**  
ASSOCIATION ONTARIENNE d'  
**ÉCHEC AU CRIME** 

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



It is important to note that these responses are not to be considered legal advice nor a suitable replacement for professional advice provided by a lawyer.

- *Can a staff member grab an individual?* The Criminal Code of Canada does allow for any individual to make a citizen's arrest. However, this option is not recommended due to the risk to staff members.
- *Can a staff member ask to look in someone's bag?* Businesses are allowed to ask to look into someone's bag and/or set their own policies regarding the practice. However, an individual can decline the request and leave the store as they do not have to allow any person to search their property without a search warrant.
- *What are the legal implications of accusing and/or chasing a perpetrator?* After a suspected individual of a retail crime leaves the store and they are chased by an employee, then it is a separate incident. For example, if a staff member chases a perpetrator after that person robbed the store and is assaulted, then there is one incident of robbery and separate incident of assault. Alternatively, if a staff member is deemed to have used excessive force on the perpetrator after chasing them, then they may be charged with assault. Due to the potential risk and for the safety of employees, it is not recommended that an employee accused and/or chase an individual suspected of a retail crime.
- *How long and under what conditions are staff able to detain someone suspected of committing a retail crime?* Properly trained staff (i.e., loss prevention officers) may detain a perpetrator after an offence has occurred with reason. However, detaining an individual safely requires tools (i.e., handcuffs) as well as physical space (i.e., a secure room). As staff injured are most likely occur once a perpetrator has been detained or held in a secure room waiting for police to arrive - and the wait times for police may take several hours - detaining an individual suspected of committing a retail crime is not a preferred option.
- *Can businesses post a photo of someone confirmed or allegedly to have committed a retail crime?* A business may post photos from their own surveillance system in their business with no perceived liability issues. However, there is little to no research indicating that this is an effective practice or deterring or reducing retail criminal incidents.



# RESOURCES



## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONSULT THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES:

- Runyan, C., M. Bowling, M. Schulman, S. Gallagher. (2005). Potential for violence against teenage retail workers in the United States. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, Vol. 36. No.3. pp. 267.
- Centre for Problem-Oriented Policing. (2007). Robbery of Convenience Stores. Arizona State University Centre for Problem-Oriented Policing. <https://popcenter.asu.edu/content/robbery-convenience-stores-0>.
- Centre for Problem-Oriented Policing. (2002). Burglary of Establishments. Arizona State University Centre for Problem-Oriented Policing. <https://popcenter.asu.edu/content/burglary-retail-establishments-0>.
- Centre for Problem-Oriented Policing. (2012). The Problem of Shoplifting. Arizona State University Centre for Problem-Oriented Policing. <https://popcenter.asu.edu/content/shoplifting-2nd-ed>.
- Canadian Bankers Association. (2020). Avoiding Counterfeit Bills. <https://cba.ca/avoiding-counterfeit-bills>.
- Canadian Bankers Association. (2019). Protecting Yourself from Cheque Fraud. <https://cba.ca/protecting-yourself-from-cheque-fraud?l=en-us>.
- Blackhawk Network: Gift Card Best Practices and Fraud Prevention Techniques [document sent to distribution partners and retailers during the holiday season].
- Canadian Bankers Association <https://cba.ca/?cat=Fraud-Prevention>
- Visa. (2020). Fraud Prevention Best Practices for BOPIS (Buy Online Pickup in Store). <https://usa.visa.com/dam/VCOM/blogs/bopis-best-practices-visa.pdf>
- Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2021). Tips on Talking to Someone in Crisis During Covid-19. <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/media/4315>
- Ministry of Labour Health and Safety Guidelines – Workplace Violence and Harassment: Understanding the Law. [https://files.ontario.ca/wpvh\\_guide\\_english.pdf](https://files.ontario.ca/wpvh_guide_english.pdf)
- <https://www.wsps.ca/resource-hub/guides/wsps-workplace-violence-and-harassment-toolbox>
- Ontario Association of Crime Stoppers <https://ontariocrimestoppers.ca/>
- Point of Sale Fraud Protection <https://www.chase.ca/en/support/protect-your-business/pos-fraud-prevention>
- Guide to Preventing Credit Card Fraud <https://www.moneris.com/en/support/compliance-and-security/protecting-against-fraud>

## WORKPLACE SAFETY & PREVENTION SERVICES

- Workplace Safety and Prevention Services <https://www.wsps.ca/about-us>
- Procedures on workplace violence and harassment <https://www.wsps.ca/resource-hub/checklists/reporting-workplace-violence-and-harassment-procedures>.
- Report workplace violence and harassment <https://www.wsps.ca/resource-hub/checklists/violence-harassment-reporting-form>.
- Reporting suspected impairment <https://www.wsps.ca/resource-hub/checklists/reporting-suspected-impairment>.
- Reporting workplace hazards <https://www.wsps.ca/resource-hub/checklists/hazard-reporting>.
- Small Biz Podcasts <https://www.wsps.ca/search-results#q=small%20biz%20safety&t=All&sort=relevancy>
- Workplace violence and harassment <https://www.wsps.ca/search-results#q=workplace%20violence%20and%20harassment&t=All&sort=relevancy>.

## APPENDICES

Appendix A: Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Business Checklist

Appendix B: Unoccupied Business Checklist

Appendix C: Workplace Hazard and Safety Assessment Tool

Appendix D: Incident Report Template

Appendix E: Retail Crime Problem Solving Tool

Appendix F: Workplace Health and Safety Policy

Appendix G: Hazard Assessment

Appendix H: Employee Violence Risk Assessment

Appendix I: Run, Hide, Defend Poster

Appendices available at [retailcouncil.org](https://www.retailcouncil.org) and [oacp.ca https://www.oacp.ca/en/index.aspx](https://www.oacp.ca/en/index.aspx)

