



An Australian Government Initiative

crime
prevention
kit for

**SMALL
BUSINESS**

IS YOUR BUSINESS SECURE?

NATIONAL COMMUNITY
CRIME PREVENTION
PROGRAMME



A Message from the Minister

Small business is a vital part of Australia's economic and social fabric. It makes a major contribution to the economy and to employment across the manufacturing and services sectors – from construction and property services to retailing, accommodation and hospitality.

Yet small business is also highly vulnerable to crime. The Small Business Crime Survey commissioned by the Australian Government in 1999 found that 49 per cent of the small businesses which responded had been victims of crime. Some 6 per cent of them had been victims of an armed robbery.

Crime can have a devastating effect on small business. Apart from the direct losses involved, it often has a severe psychological impact on owners and staff. Higher insurance premiums, the cost of security systems, counselling and lost staff time can all cut into a business's margins. Crime against small business attacks Australia's economic health.

The Australian Government, through the National Community Crime Prevention Programme, is committed to helping small business to reduce the risks and impact of crime. The information brochures in this kit tell you what we have done and what we are doing. They give you practical information about what you can do to reduce the risk of your business and your staff becoming victims of crime.

This kit has been developed from recent studies and projects by crime experts. It complements the substantial amount of information which is already available to help you protect your business. I would encourage you to use the kit and to share it with employees and other small business owners. It will help us towards a safer Australia.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Chris Ellison'.

Senator the Hon Chris Ellison
Minister for Justice and Customs
Senator for Western Australia



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Government Initiatives and Achievements

Small businesses can be the target for many different kinds of crime, from fraud and vandalism to theft and burglary.

The Australian Government recognises that small businesses need support in their efforts to assess the risks they may face, and to decide what steps they must take to prevent or minimise crime.

Working with business groups, crime-research experts, police agencies and local communities, the Government is continuing to develop resources to help small businesses trade safely.

These initiatives will give us a greater understanding of the risks and consequences of crime against small business, and offer effective strategies to deal with threats. Often simple precautions can minimise risks.

INITIATIVES

Since 1999 the Australian Government has provided almost \$1 million through the National Crime Prevention Program research and assistance projects to give small businesses the knowledge and resources they need to counter crime.

- In 1999 the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) and the Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia (COSBOA) carried out the Small Business Crime Survey to examine the impact of crime against small business.
- Since 2000 the AIC has undertaken a number of projects around Australia to improve our understanding of how crime affects small business, and how small business operators can be helped to improve the safety and security of their business. These are:
 - a joint project with Fairfield City Council to understand crime against small businesses in Cabramatta and Fairfield, NSW
 - a project to evaluate how police beat shopfronts in shopping centres in Queensland have helped to reduce crime against business in these centres
 - a project to assess robberies against post offices and small businesses acting as agents for Australia Post
 - an evaluation of theft rates and risk factors at building sites across Australia
 - an evaluation of a Business Watch program in the Northern Territory
 - a project to assess the incidence of online credit-card fraud and to identify gaps in knowledge of this kind of crime.

ACHIEVEMENTS

This work has produced a number of resources for small businesses wanting to know how they might be affected by crime, and what they can do about it. These resources are:

- *Crimes Against Small Business in Australia: A Preliminary Analysis*
- *Patterns of Victimisation Among Small Retail Businesses*
- *Robbery against Service Stations and Pharmacies: Recent Trends*
- *Financial and Psychological Costs of Crime for Small Retail Businesses*
- *Reporting of Crime Against Small Retail Businesses*



- *Implementing Business Watch: Problems and Solutions*
- Two reports on Violence in the Work Place.

These resources are available at www.aic.gov.au.

More information about what the Australian Government is doing to prevent crime against small business can be found under the Private Sector link on the National Crime Prevention website: www.crimeprevention.gov.au.

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Crime and Small Business

According to the Small Business Crime Survey which was conducted across Australia in 1999, burglary and shoplifting are the crimes most commonly experienced by small retail businesses.

The survey, commissioned by the Australian Government, was carried out by the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) and the Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia (COSBOA) to assess the impact of crime against small business.

The survey results are based on responses from 3,834 businesses around Australia in six retail sectors – cafes and restaurants, general stores and milk bars, liquor outlets, service stations, newsagents and pharmacies.

It found that the risks of crime are higher for small business than for Australian households. In the survey year, crime was estimated to cost \$170 million across the six retail sectors surveyed.

Crime can have consequences beyond the physical and financial costs. The survey found there are psychological consequences, like a generalised fear of crime, nightmares, and sleeping disorders among the victims. Other nearby businesses and the local community can be affected, particularly when businesses are forced to close or relocate.

The survey also found:

- Forty-nine per cent of respondents experienced at least one incident of crime in the 12-month period.
- Burglary is the most common crime, with 27 per cent of responding businesses burgled at least once in the 12 months.
- Shoplifting is the second most common crime, affecting 21 per cent of survey respondents.
- Liquor outlets are most frequently targeted by burglars, vandals, cheque and credit card fraudsters, shoplifters and assailants.
- Service stations are at relatively high risk of employee theft and fraud.
- Repeat victimisation is common, with a small proportion of victims experiencing a large proportion of all crimes (1.7 per cent of all survey respondents accounted for 24 per cent of burglaries; 1.6 per cent accounted for 70 per cent of all shoplifting, and 6.7 per cent for 70 per cent of all vandalism).
- Liquor outlets and service stations are particularly prone to repeat burglaries, vandalism, and cheque/credit card fraud.
- General stores, liquor outlets and pharmacies are particularly prone to repeat shoplifting.
- The most costly specific crimes are vehicle theft, employee fraud, employee theft, burglary, and armed robbery.
- Burglary accounted for 35 per cent of all crime costs, shoplifting for 20 per cent and employee theft/fraud for 18 per cent.

The survey confirmed that tightened security and increased reporting of crimes to police would help small businesses to reduce the risks of crime.



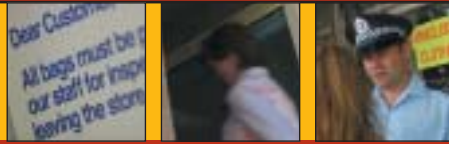
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Rights of Retailers and Staff

Business owners have the right to set conditions for people entering their premises, the right to exclude some people and, in some instances, the right to detain someone they believe has committed an offence. But you need to be clear in your requirements, and be careful not to put yourself at legal or physical risk.

What you can do may vary between each State and Territory. It is a good idea to check the requirements in your jurisdiction before you act. Train your staff in security and safety policies. Consult your local police community or business liaison officer.

SEARCHING CUSTOMERS AND THEIR BAGS

Businesses have the right to set conditions of entry to their premises. You can ask customers to present their bags and other containers on request for staff to check.

If you are going to do this:

- Display conditions of entry prominently so that they can be seen by all people as they enter.
- When checking customers' bags, be polite and courteous.
- Staff *should not* touch the customer or their property. Customers should always be asked to open any bag or package themselves.

If a customer refuses to have their bag checked, you can do the following:

- Point out and explain the conditions of entry to the premises.
- Ask again to check the bag.
- If the customer still refuses, ask them to speak to the manager.
- If the customer continues to refuse, you can ask them to leave.
- If you suspect that they are hiding stolen goods, call the police.
- All bag checks *must be voluntary*. Do not physically touch the customer or their bag at any time.
- You cannot detain someone for refusing a bag check. That would amount to an arrest and you must have *reasonable grounds* for arrest.

YOUR RIGHTS TO DETAIN A CUSTOMER

Business owners and employees *do* have the right to detain someone they *believe on reasonable grounds* to have committed, or to be committing, a criminal offence. This right is called Citizen's Arrest.

However, before you do so, it is important to know the likely consequences.

- If you do not have *reasonable grounds* to detain someone, you may be committing a criminal offence or may be subject to civil penalties.
- Different States and Territories have different legislation. Check the requirements in your jurisdiction with a lawyer before you take action or tell staff about their rights. You can also contact your local police community or business liaison officer.

Having *reasonable grounds* to detain someone means more than a reasonable suspicion.

- You must have *direct evidence* that an offence has been committed. This includes seeing someone hide an item on their person and then attempt to leave the premises without paying.
- You must tell the person that you are detaining them, and why.
- Avoid physical contact with the individual if possible.



- You must only use force where you have to defend yourself or someone else from an attack. Such force must be *reasonable* in all circumstances.
- Do not search or question the detained person or any witnesses.
- Arrange for the person and any property they have to be handed to a police officer as soon as possible.

Avoid having to detain a suspect at all, if possible.

- Always consider your safety and that of staff and customers before you decide to act.
- If you can identify the person – if they are a regular customer or you and your staff know where they live – contact the police. This will ensure your safety and that of staff and customers.
- If in doubt about what to do, do nothing. Note the description of the suspect and write it down for the police.

EXCLUDING PEOPLE FROM YOUR BUSINESS

You do not have a general right to exclude anyone from your business premises, but you may be able to exclude individuals:

- who have been convicted of thefts from the business, or offences such as criminal damage, or of threatening or offensive behaviour in or around the business premises
- whose past unruly, threatening or offensive behaviour in or around the business premises has been documented by staff or customers.

Ask a lawyer about the legislation in your State or Territory which covers your right to exclude people from your business premises. This may vary from one State or Territory to another.

If you wish to exclude someone, your local police community or business liaison officer should be your first point of contact. They can advise you about the specific steps you will need to take.

- To make an exclusion legally enforceable, you must present the person with an appropriately worded letter.
- The letter should be delivered in person, and preferably in a public place, such as at a police station, a court or near the business premises.
- You should have a police officer or other public official witness the process.
- You should provide a copy of the letter to your local police station for its records.

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Frauds and Scams

Cheque and credit card fraud, and other tricks of the fraudster's trade, are a major issue for small business, especially for retailers.

The 1999 Small Business Crime Survey found that 10 per cent of businesses surveyed experienced cheque or credit card fraud within the 12-month survey period, with 47 per cent of that number reporting three or more instances.

CHEQUE AND CREDIT CARD FRAUD

Fraudsters often use stolen cheque books and credit cards to defraud retailers, sometimes supporting their stolen "identity" with documents they have also stolen from the original card-holder. They use stolen credit cards with even more ease over the internet, where all that is required is a card number and an expiry date.

While it is difficult to erase original signatures or to replace the signature strip on plastic cards, many fraudsters are proficient at forging signatures, and rely on retail staff not checking carefully to ensure that signatures match. Other fraudsters use counterfeit cards, having downloaded stolen information onto the electronic strip. Others obtain valid cards using another person's stolen identity, or a false identity.

Retailers relying on bank authorisations are also at risk. Authorisations only indicate that a card has not been reported stolen and that funds are available to cover the cost of a purchase. They do not mean that the purchase is not fraudulent, or that the genuine card owner has approved the purchase.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT CARD FRAUD

Well-trained staff are the best defence. They can:

- Watch while the customer signs for the goods, checking that the signatures match
- Check the signature strip for signs of tampering
- Check the expiry date on the card
- Authorise the payment, where possible, by telephoning the bank or using electronic authorisation
- Check card details with the relevant financial institution against their authorised list of lost/stolen cards
- Check supporting documentation (such as a driver's licence) to verify the card owner's details.

REFUND FRAUD

Another common scam against retailers is refund fraud. This involves fraudsters presenting stolen goods to claim a refund, sometimes without even removing the goods from the shop. The cash refund is quicker and more lucrative for them than selling the goods. They use forged receipts or receipts from previous transactions as proof-of-purchase, or claim to have lost the receipt.

They may also buy goods, use them and then return them for a refund – effectively getting use of the goods for nothing. Items that can be duplicated or copied, such as music tapes, CDs, computer programs and games, are particularly vulnerable.



What you can do to prevent refund fraud

- Start by asking for proof of purchase.
- Insist that original packaging is returned with the goods.
- Offer an 'exchange' of goods rather than a refund.
- Advertise the store refund policy prominently so that it is clear to everyone.
- Require identification for exchange or refund.

SUPPLIER FRAUD

Retailers need to be alert for suppliers who deliberately send short deliveries, sub-standard goods, or incorrect invoices. Businesses with more than one location can be more susceptible to scams like this because inconsistencies are harder to detect.

What you can do to prevent supplier fraud

- Ensure that there are appropriate and adequate procedures to check all deliveries and assess all invoices.
- Check that delivered goods are not faulty.
- Be careful about making payments before goods or services are supplied.

SCAMS THAT LOOK REAL

Many scams catch business people off-guard because they look so realistic. Scammers go to a lot of trouble to achieve this.

How to not get caught

Look behind the façade. A proposition isn't necessarily real or trustworthy because it:

- Has attractively presented supporting documents
- Has a business-like website
- Uses trading names that sound like reputable companies
- Tells a persuasive story in the appropriate jargon.

References

Taylor, N. & Mayhew, P. (2002). Patterns of victimisation among small retail businesses. Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice No. 221, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra, Australia.

"Preventing customer fraud – a guide for retailers." Home Office, UK. Accessed at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crimprev/cppcf.htm

"Protecting yourself from scams and swindlers", Australian Securities and Investments Commission. Accessed at <http://www.asic.gov.au/asic/asic.nsf>

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Shopstealing

Shopstealing is the most common crime affecting small retail businesses in Australia. Thefts from premises affected 21 per cent of the businesses assessed in the 1999 Small Business Crime Survey.

Shopstealing takes many forms – from customers switching or removing price tags, or returning stolen goods for fraudulent refunds, to thefts by thrill-seekers, addicts or professional groups.

There is no typical shopstealer. They may be customers you know; they may be well-dressed, appear pregnant or be pushing a stroller. They may be young or old. Employees can be responsible, sometimes allowing friends to steal or selling them goods at a low price, or intentionally damaging items so that they can be bought at a reduced price.

The consequences of shopstealing in any form are expensive. They include:

- Lost stock
- Lost profits
- Time lost in frequent checking of inventories
- Added expense of security upgrades
- The cost of absorbing losses or passing them to customers.

HOW YOU CAN REDUCE THE RISK OF SHOPSTEALING

From customers

- Implement a 'no receipt, no refund' policy.
- Ensure staff have a clear view across the shop at all times.
- Redesign the layout and fittings to make theft harder.
- Fit convex mirrors in corners where shopstealers could hide to 'stash' goods.
- Closely supervise fitting rooms; keep strict control over goods taken in.
- Display a sign saying that bag inspections may be carried out. Ensure that it is clearly visible to customers entering the premises.
- Check shoppers' bags if necessary, but note that staff must not touch customers or their possessions.
- All bag checks must be voluntary.
- Ensure all customers leave the shop past a well-lit staff area.
- Always conduct credit card checks before issuing goods.
- Fit electronic sensors that emit a sound when someone enters or leaves the premises.
- Fit electronic bar codes, shop ID stickers or ink tags on goods.
- Ensure price tags cannot be removed or switched.
- Examine price tags and items at point-of-sale for alteration or damage.
- Identify the types of goods most commonly stolen and note where they are located in the store.
- Keep a close watch on highly desirable goods.
- Place expensive goods in locked display cabinets or behind counters, secure them with chain alarm systems, or display only empty cases – with videos and perfumes, for example.
- Record the serial numbers of stock and equipment, where applicable.



- Install closed-circuit television or cameras.
- Watch closely customers with large bags, strollers or coats.
- Count your inventory regularly, or at least when each Business Activity Statement is due.
- Check the references of trade and maintenance workers.
- Ensure that an independent audit is conducted at least once a year.
- Escort visitors, suppliers and delivery personnel while on the premises.
- Use a 'mystery' shopper to move through customers and report on unusual activities.
- Offer a reward for information on shopstealing.
- Prosecute ALL shopstealing cases.

From staff

- Ensure that store policy states that shopstealing and preferential pricing for friends is unacceptable, and that offenders will be prosecuted.
- Teach staff what to do if shopstealers are caught.
- Foster open communication between staff and managers to encourage discussion of problems and issues.
- Select staff carefully and check their references.
- Tell staff clearly that dishonesty will lead to prosecution and/or dismissal. Encourage staff to report dishonesty by colleagues.
- Maintain control over keys and alarm systems.
- Implement strict controls over receiving docks and stock rooms.
- Introduce a system to control staff shopping and refunds, charge accounts and discounts.

CUSTOMERS' RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

Customers' rights and obligations may vary between States and Territories. It is important that small businesses respect customers' legal rights. Check the requirements in your State or Territory with a lawyer. You can also get information from police websites, from your local police community or business liaison officer, and from the Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia.

More information about searching customers and their possessions is set out in the information sheet *Rights of Retailers and Staff* in this kit.

This information sheet has been prepared as a guide and is not intended to replace professional guidance. It is best to seek advice from an experienced security professional for specific sites and problems.

If you would like to assess your business risk more fully, please refer to the Preventing Retail Crime page which is available at www.aic.gov.au/publications/crimprev

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Residential Building Sites

Residential building sites are soft targets for thieves and vandals, and small-scale builders pay a high price – in stolen and vandalised property, higher insurance premiums, disputes over liability, building delays and sometimes broken contracts.

More than a third of builders responding to an Australian Institute of Criminology survey in 2003 had been victims of theft in the previous year. One quarter had had material vandalised and one in six had suffered both theft and vandalism.

Most of those affected reported up to five incidents in 2002, with 31 per cent having property valued at between \$1001 and \$5000 stolen.

The survey found that theft and vandalism were most likely to occur in the period approaching lock-up. Builders who thought they knew who was responsible for thefts blamed employees from other firms (30 per cent), while 16 per cent blamed local youths.

RISK FACTORS

Residential building sites are high-risk targets because tools, equipment, fittings and removable materials are left on site when building is in progress, and because the sites are frequently unattended. Among other factors:

- Many homes are built in new developments, with few residents or potential witnesses around after hours.
- Stolen goods can be readily re-sold or used in building other houses.
- Fittings such as hot water systems, baths, sliding doors, vanity basins and taps, toilets and light fittings can be stolen easily before installation.
- Garden shrubs, pavers, and even newly-laid lawns can be dug up and stolen at final lock-up stage.
- Builders who accept cash-in-hand payments may attract robbers, and the potential for violence.
- Inadequate or damaged fencing lets children enter a site (also potentially exposing builders to liability for injury).

HOW YOU CAN REDUCE THE RISK OF BUILDING SITE THEFT

- Make security arrangements for nights, weekends and wet-day layoffs.
- Fit deadlocks on doors and windows.
- Record serial numbers of tools and equipment wherever possible.
- Restrict deliveries to daylight hours.
- Install fittings as soon as possible after delivery.
- Check your suppliers and their delivery staff carefully. (They are often the first to know when goods have been delivered.)
- Double-check the employees of sub-contractors.
- Ensure gates are locked when work ceases.
- Ensure fencing is secure to prevent children gaining access after hours.



- Consider a guard dog on site at night.
- Avoid cash-in-hand payments.
- Take care with bulk loads of bricks and timber to discourage pilfering and transportation to other sites.

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Robberies and Armed Hold-ups

Armed robbery is a serious crime. Even when victims are not physically hurt, they can suffer acute emotional and psychological distress.

An armed hold-up or robbery may involve a member of your staff being threatened or hurt. The 1999 Small Business Crime Survey found that 6 per cent of respondents in the sectors covered had been victims of armed robbery and 3 per cent victims of unarmed robbery.

However, by taking simple precautions, small businesses can reduce the risk of violence or robbery. The same strategies that can help to prevent violence in the workplace can also reduce the risk of violence and help to ensure the safety of staff during a hold-up. They can also minimise losses and breakages, improve productivity and lower insurance premiums.

This sheet gives you practical advice on assessing your risks and taking measures to protect your business.

IS YOUR BUSINESS AT RISK?

Studies have shown that businesses at risk are those that:

- Hold large amounts of money on the premises
- Have few workers on site
- Trade late at night
- Have staff dealing with customers face-to-face

To assess your business risk more fully, refer to the checklist enclosed with this kit, or to the self-assessment sheet available on the Australian Institute of Criminology website, www.aic.gov.au/publications/crimprev

HOW YOU CAN PREVENT ROBBERIES AND ARMED HOLD-UPS

You can prevent robberies and armed hold-ups through better workplace design, by increasing a robber's likelihood of capture, by reducing the potential rewards for crime, and by taking precautions when handling cash.

Workplace design

Design your workplace to make it harder for robbers. For example:

- Put security bars or shutters on windows. Make sure they do not obstruct visibility outside.
- Install deadlocks on doors and fit alarm systems.
- Reduce opportunities for physical contact with staff – for example, by installing security screens.
- Install coded locks to restrict public access to staff areas.
- Fit electronic sensors that emit a sound when customers enter or leave.

Increase the risk of being caught

You can discourage robbers by increasing the likelihood that they will be caught. For example:

- Make sure in-store lighting is good.
- Ensure that people outside can see into the premises.
- Ensure that your exterior lighting lets staff see outside.

Robberies and Armed Hold-ups

- Don't obstruct your windows – with advertising material, for instance.
- Reduce nearby places where robbers can hide. This might mean reducing shrubbery, trees and clutter.
- Have shelves that are low enough for you to see clearly across your premises.
- Install on-site security cameras.
- Make sure parking areas and approaches to the premises are well lit at night.
- Install closed-circuit television recorders or two-way convex mirrors.
- Prominently display signs saying that your premises are monitored.
- Consider choosing premises that are located in a busy, high-visibility area.

Reduce the rewards of crime

Minimising the availability of cash and valuables on the premises may discourage a potential robber.

- Keep as little money as possible on the premises.
- Use bank security drop facilities.
- Encourage staff to keep larger notes out of customer view – in a 'drop' or time-release safe, for example.
- Bank more frequently, but at irregular times and using different routes.
- Display signs which warn that little cash is kept on site.
- Reduce cash transactions by accepting cheques, credit cards and electronic payments.

Handling cash

You can take extra precautions when handling cash.

- Count cash out of sight.
- Always lock the rear doors of your premises.
- Restrict deliveries to daylight hours whenever possible.
- Restrict customer access at night to one door.
- Introduce extra protection for those who work alone, particularly at night – for example, by issuing mobile phones and personal alarms (if practical or possible), or by checking with them regularly.
- Develop safe procedures for the first worker to arrive in the morning and the last to leave at night.
- Recognise that leaving the premises with cash in hand is a high-risk activity.
- Always have cash carried to the bank by an adult staff member.
- Don't carry cash in a marked bank bag.
- Lock all car doors while driving to the bank. Do not make stops en-route.
- Carry a personal alarm and mobile phone when carrying money.
- Tell other staff members when you expect to return from the bank.
- Pre-book taxis when carrying cash and record the number of the assigned taxi.



WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE HELD UP

If you are involved in an armed robbery, try to stay calm and remember these points:

- Do not resist – this will help you to avoid injury.
- Cooperate with the robbers and give them what they want.
- Listen carefully to them and be courteous and patient.
- Speak to them as calmly as possible.
- Do not do anything that could increase tensions.
- Do not make sudden moves.
- Do not risk harm to yourself or others.
- Do not physically struggle with a robber.
- NEVER try to grab a weapon.
- Warn the robbers about possible surprises, such as another employee who is expected to return.
- Activate alarms only when it is safe to do so – usually after robbers leave.
- Do not pursue robbers when they leave.
- After a robbery, close and lock the premises. Do not re-open it until the police arrive.
- Do not touch anything that the robbers handled.
- Write down everything you can remember about the incident while waiting for police. Any small detail about the identity of the offender may help the police apprehend them. Watch out for:

Physical appearance:

- height
- age
- build
- colouring
- hair
- tattoos, scars, prominent or unusual features
- clothing
- jewellery

Behaviour:

- speech, accents, language used
- nicknames
- action/interactions with other offenders

Other aspects:

- weapons used
- method of escape
- vehicles used for escape
- direction of travel when escaping

Robberies and Armed Hold-ups

DEALING WITH THE CONSEQUENCES

Sensitive support is important in helping to reduce the distress of people who have suffered violence during an armed hold-up. These simple things can help a victim's recovery:

- Ensure the victim receives care and support from co-workers and management.
- Never let the victim feel they are being "blamed" for the incident.
- Talk to the victim about the incident immediately afterwards. This can avoid some long-term ill-effects.
- Give the person information about and access to specialist professional care.
- Offer them time off to recover.
- Cover any expenses that arise from the incident – for example, by replacing damaged personal effects.
- Provide legal assistance if necessary.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Under Australian Occupational Health and Safety legislation, business owners have a legal duty to provide a safe place to work. These crime-prevention procedures may help you to protect your staff – and to meet your legal obligations:

- Develop site-specific procedures to reduce the risk of robbery.
- Instruct staff on handling cash correctly.
- Ensure that staff report suspicious characters or abnormal activities on or around the premises to the manager or owner.
- Train staff in correct locking-up and opening-up procedures.
- Place an emergency number sticker on the telephone.
- Establish close links with your local police station.
- Arrange for police crime-prevention officers to assess security at your premises.
- Conduct regular violence audits or risk assessments.

Several sample policies, checklists and documents are provided at the Australian Institute of Criminology website, www.aic.gov.au/publications/rpp/33/. They can help you to develop crime-prevention strategies for your business.

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Preventing Employee Theft

Theft by employees is a major issue for small businesses. It can be hard to detect and difficult to prove. But good business practices can help to prevent it.

The Small Business Crime Survey found that 8 per cent of businesses had been victims of employee theft within the preceding 12 months. It was the third most expensive crime in the survey, accounting for 18 per cent of all crime costs. Service stations, liquor outlets and general stores were the most affected.

It can be difficult to detect and prove employee theft unless the offender is caught red-handed. In the absence of direct evidence or observation, often the only means of detecting this form of theft is by examining stock inventories for losses.

HOW YOU CAN REDUCE THE RISK OF EMPLOYEE THEFT

- Create a good working environment. Treat employees fairly and develop good working relationships.
- Foster open communication between staff and managers to encourage discussion of problems and issues.
- Check references thoroughly before you appoint someone.
- Tell employees clearly about your business's policy on employee theft and the consequences for offenders – such as instant dismissal, and/or calling the police.
- Create and maintain regular inventories of stock losses.
- Identify goods which disappear most frequently and concentrate on them – by moving them to more visible areas, for example, or checking your stock of them more frequently.
- Rotate staff through different sections regularly.
- Your own professionalism and integrity will set an example for employees.

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photos by Geoff Comfort Photography

Violence at the Workplace

Violence at the workplace is a concern for small businesses. It can threaten the health and safety of individual staff or customers, their collective well-being, and the success and efficiency of the business.

Violence can occur when staff confront people caught stealing, or when troublemakers manufacture conflict to ward off boredom, show off, or divert attention while someone else is stealing. Violence and intimidation, such as bullying, can also occur between staff.

Customers can become violent during disputes over goods and services, in incidents involving complaints or requests for refunds, when they are angry about long waits in queues, or when staff attempt to deal with people who are mentally ill or under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Much violence of this kind can be prevented or managed through careful risk-management and good internal communication. Employers have a responsibility to maintain a safe working environment for all staff and customers.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT IT:

A comprehensive strategy to reduce or prevent violence in the workplace can work on three levels:

Structural changes

This involves applying Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, including:

- Introducing such security measures as duress alarms, safety screens and access controls. These make potential targets less accessible.
- Improving visibility and surveillance, and so increasing the likelihood of detection and capture.
- Redesigning and relocating office equipment and facilities.

Administrative controls

The business should adopt a zero-tolerance policy for workplace violence. It might also:

- Introduce such risk-control strategies as regular violence vulnerability audits and emergency response teams.
- Collect accurate data on the incidence and results of violent events.
- Establish lists of high-risk clients and customers.
- Make clients and customers fully aware of the business's policies and practices on aggressive or violent behaviour.

Communicate strategies to staff

Good communication strategies and training are needed to ensure that risk-reduction measures are understood and taken up. These might include:

- Effectively disseminating policies and practices throughout the organisation.
- Regularly updating and refreshing these approaches.
- Training and 'skilling up' staff to focus on preventative rather than reactive measures.
- Having effective post-incident support in place – a critical factor for maintaining staff commitment.

Practical measures

Simple practical steps can minimise the risk of violence:

- Train your staff in good customer service – including skills in dealing with difficult customers.
- Encourage staff to share their experiences of difficult customers.
- Never open or close the business premises alone.



- Avoid behaviour which might trigger violent reactions – for example, don't shout or retaliate when someone is abusive, don't intrude into someone's personal space, apologise when people have to wait.
- Ensure that staff know how to raise the alarm.
- Make sure that staff know to put safety first and not to resist violent offenders.
- Ensure that any music played on the premises is soft and soothing.
- Develop an emergency and crisis response plan, which can include the following, where applicable:
 - o on every phone is a sticker that states " in the event of an emergency, contact reception or security on (INSERT NUMBER)";
 - o an emergency alarm button is installed at reception, near the cash register(s) and in all customer service rooms;
 - o electronic as well as manual alarm systems are in place;
 - o devices are installed that allow the point of sale operator to remotely close entrance door (denies suspicious person access);
 - o an emergency and crisis response plan is in place, and is regularly reviewed by the OH&S and security committee;
 - o the emergency and crisis team members have been trained in early threat recognition, and have liaised with relevant outside authorities including the police;
 - o all personnel are aware of, and have been trained in, emergency and crisis responses;
 - o there is a floor and unit emergency warden system in place that is checked regularly;
 - o escape routes have been planned and are practiced; and
 - o the emergency and crisis response plan includes: post-incident control of the immediate working environment; control of offenders who may have collapsed or been apprehended; provision of information to law enforcement agencies; guidelines for provision of media statements; post-incident investigation and analysis; and confidential debriefing of staff.

Frequent evaluation and review are needed to ensure that risk-management practices are up-to-date and effective.

WHAT TO DO IF VIOLENCE OCCURS

If someone is behaving in a threatening way:

- Back away.
- Tell staff to get behind the counter or otherwise keep their distance.
- Ask staff to raise the alarm.
- Ensure that staff put their own safety first. Encourage them to remain calm and non-confrontational.
- Ask staff to remember as much information as possible about the offender so that information can be given to the police.

References

Preventing violence against staff – a guide for retailers. UK: Home Office, accessed at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crimeprev/cppvs.htm

Mayhew, C. (2003), 'Occupational violence and prevention strategies', *Master OHS and Environment Guide*, CCH Australia, North Ryde: pp 547-569.

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(Developed from USOPM 1998, p22; CAL/OSHA 1998, pp.6,9,11; WorkCover South Australia 1998a, pp.14-16, 1998b, p.2, and 1998c; DWH&S 1997, pp. 5-10; Heskett 1996, p.112; Kinney 1996, p.309; Long Island Coalition 1996, p.60; Wynne et al.1996, pp. 30-32; CAL/OSHA 1995, p. 10; WCBBC 1995, p. 19; WorkCover New South Wales 1994; Cardy 1992, pp. 38, 107, 113-115.)



Quick Reference Checklist and important contacts

IS YOUR BUSINESS AT RISK?

1	Is cash stored on site?	Yes/No
2	Is your business on an arterial road?	Yes/No
3	Is a range of goods or materials on display?	Yes/No
4	Do customers select goods and pay at point-of-sale?	Yes/No
5	Has your business suffered from fraudulent transactions in the past four years?	Yes/No
6	Are staff relations good? Is morale high?	Yes/No

PROTECTING YOUR PREMISES

1	At night, do you restrict customer entry to one door only?	Yes/No
2	Do you keep other entrances locked at all times?	Yes/No
3	Are electronic sensors fitted at the entrances?	Yes/No
4	Do staff have a clear view across the premises at all times?	Yes/No
5	Are security mirrors fitted to make hidden areas visible?	Yes/No
6	Are closed-circuit cameras installed?	Yes/No
7	Do you have a list of high-risk clients and customers?	Yes/No
8	Do you have a working relationship with the local police?	Yes/No

PROTECTING TRANSACTIONS AND GOODS

1	Do prominent signs tell customers that bag inspections may be carried out?	Yes/No
2	Do prominent signs tell customers that goods will not be exchanged without a receipt?	Yes/No
3	Do prominent signs say that thieves will be prosecuted?	Yes/No
4	Do staff know their rights in dealing with a possible theft?	Yes/No
5	Are staff told to keep a special watch on goods which are most likely to attract thieves?	Yes/No
6	Are expensive items secured in locked display cabinets?	Yes/No
7	Are electronic bar codes, shop ID stickers or ink tags fixed to goods?	Yes/No
8	Can price tags be removed or switched?	Yes/No
9	Are staff told to watch customers with bags, loose-fitting clothing, etc?	Yes/No
10	Is the use of fitting rooms closely controlled?	Yes/No
11	Are staff asked to examine price tags and items at point-of-sale for alteration or damage?	Yes/No
12	Are staff instructed to check that a customer's signature matches that on the card?	Yes/No
13	Are staff told to check cards for signs of tampering and check the expiry date?	Yes/No

Quick Reference Checklist and important contacts

14	Do you authorise payments, where possible, by telephoning the bank or using electronic authorisation?	Yes/No
15	Do you ask for supporting ID (such as a driver's licence) to verify the card owner's details?	Yes/No
16	Do you use safe procedures – banking at different times, using different routes – when depositing takings?	Yes/No

PROTECTING YOUR STOCK

1	Do you conduct a regular stocktake?	Yes/No
2	Do you conduct an independent audit each year?	Yes/No
3	Are delivery personnel, suppliers and other visitors escorted while on the premises?	Yes/No
4	Do you check that the quantity and type of goods delivered corresponds with your order?	Yes/No

PROTECTING YOUR STAFF

1	Does the layout minimise the chance of physical contact between customers and staff?	Yes/No
2	Do you tell your staff not to resist armed robbers, but to be calm and cooperative?	Yes/No
3	Do staff know not to physically struggle with a robber, or grapple for a weapon?	Yes/No
4	Do staff know not to pursue a robber, but to close the premises, touch nothing and call the police?	Yes/No



IMPORTANT CONTACTS

- **Australian Institute of Criminology**

The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC), an Australian Government statutory authority, is the national focus for the study of crime and criminal justice in Australia and for the dissemination of criminal justice information. The Institute draws on information supplied to it by a wide variety of sources and its policy advice is objective and independent.

Phone: (02) 6260 9200
Website: www.aic.gov.au

- **Australian Competition and Consumer Commission**

The ACCC promotes competition and fair trade in the market place to benefit consumers, business and the community. It also regulates national infrastructure services. Its primary responsibility is to ensure that individuals and businesses comply with the Commonwealth competition, fair trading and consumer protection laws.

Phone: 1300 302 502
Website: www.accc.gov.au

- **The Australian Government Attorney-General's Department**

The Attorney-General's Department produces a range of information kits and resources to assist communities and individuals to take action to protect themselves against crime. These publications are available online from the crime prevention website. They can also be ordered through the Department's distribution agency.

Phone: 1800 708 777
Website: www.crimeprevention.gov.au

- **Business Entry Point**

The Business Entry Point (BEP) is an initiative funded by the Australian Government and coordinated by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, with the support of state and territory governments. It is an online government resource for the Australian business community.

The BEP provides business with a wide range of services and information about start-up, taxation, licensing and legislation, as well as significant transactions such as taxation compliance and licence applications.

Phone: 132 846
Website: www.business.gov.au

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, TRY THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES

Australian Government Agencies

- Consumers Online – the Australian Government's one-stop shop for consumers' information in Australia
www.consumersonline.gov.au
- Competition and Consumer Policy Division – Department of the Treasury
www.treasury.gov.au
- Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs
www.consumer.gov.au

State and Territory Government Agencies

POLICE

- New South Wales Police
www.police.nsw.gov.au
Phone: 1800 622 571
- Victoria Police
www.police.vic.gov.au
Phone (03) 9247 6666
- Queensland Police
www.police.qld.gov.au
Phone: (07) 3364 6464
- Western Australia Police
www.police.wa.gov.au
Phone: 131444
- South Australia Police
www.sapolice.sa.gov.au
Phone: 131 444
- Tasmania Police
www.police.tas.gov.au
Phone: (03) 6230 2111
- Australian Federal Police (ACT Policing)
www.afp.gov.au
Phone: (02) 6256 7777
- Northern Territory Police
www.nt.gov.au/pfes
Phone: (08) 8922 3344

Quick Reference Checklist and important contacts

DEPARTMENTAL CONTACTS

- NSW Crime Prevention Division
www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/cpd.nsf/pages/index
Phone: (02) 9228 8307
- Crime Prevention Victoria
www.justice.vic.gov.au
Phone: (03) 9651 6933
- Crime Prevention Queensland
www.premiers.qld.gov.au/securitycrime
Phone: (07) 3224 2843
- Office of crime prevention
www.crimeprevention.wa.gov.au
Phone: (08) 9222 9733
- SA Crime Prevention Unit
www.cpu.sa.gov.au
Phone: (08) 8207 1659
- NT Office of Crime Prevention
www.crimeprevention.nt.gov.au
Phone: (08) 8999 6274
- NSW Office of Fair Trading
www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au
Phone: (02) 9388 4943
- Victoria Consumer and Business Affairs
www.consumervic.gov.au
Phone: 1300 558 181
- Queensland Office of Fair Trading
www.consumer.qld.gov.au
Phone: 1300 658 030

- SA Office of Consumer and Business Affairs
www.ocba.sa.gov.au
- Tasmanian Office of Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading
www.justice.tas.gov.au/ca
Phone: 1300 654 499
- WA Small Business Development Corporation
www.sbdc.com.au
Phone: 1800 199 125
- Business ACT
www.business.act.gov.au
Phone: 1800 244 650

Private Organisations

- Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia Ltd
www.cosboa.org
- Australian Consumers Association
www.aca.com.au
Phone: (02) 9577 3399

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Security Audit Checklist¹ example

On _____ (insert date), a security audit was carried out.

The security audit was conducted by: _____

Employer representative: _____

Employee representative: _____

OH&S committee representative: _____

Security staff representative: _____

(a) Does the security control plan include:

mission statement	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but needs improvement
policy statement	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but needs improvement
violence incident report form	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but needs improvement
emergency and crisis plan	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but needs improvement
off-site delivery to customer	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but needs improvement
floor plans displayed with emergency exits, equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but needs improvement

(b) Methods of control:

reception and access control	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but needs improvement
cash control procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but needs improvement
cash transportation procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but needs improvement
reporting procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but needs improvement
training program	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but needs improvement
computer, records security	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but needs improvement
stock control procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but needs improvement
after hours security	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but needs improvement
off-site delivery	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but needs improvement

(c) Reviews undertaken by OH&S and security committee:

past incidents by type	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but needs improvement
past incidents by area	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but needs improvement
past incidents by gender	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but needs improvement
past incidents by task	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but needs improvement
anonymous survey of staff	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, but needs improvement

(d) Risk assessment:

Is money exchanged?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable
Is business open at night?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable
Is business in high-crime area?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable
Is business isolated?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable
robberies in last 3 years?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable
violence in last 3 years?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable



(e) Engineering controls:

access to outside phone line	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable
emergency Nos. on phone	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable
easily seen from street	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable
bright lighting outside	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable
all indoor lights working	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable
windows have clear view	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable
cash register in clear view	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable
time-access or drop safe	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable
security cameras and mirrors	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable
height markers on exit doors	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable
bullet-resistant enclosures	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable
sprinklers and smoke alarms	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> needs improvement
fire fighting equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> needs improvement
Australian Standards that apply such as lighting	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> needs improvement

(f) Administrative controls:

emergency procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> need improvement
employees trained	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> need improvement
emergency response training	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> need improvement
conflict resolution training	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable
cash control procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> need improvement
late night cash procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable
cash limit on-site	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable
signs: 'no cash/drugs on-site'	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable
no working alone	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable
open and close procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> need improvement
controls over contractors	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable

(g) Policy and strategy evaluation:

tracking of incidents	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> need improvement
anonymous survey of staff	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> need improvement
risk controls evaluated	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> need improvement
data provided to staff	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> need improvement
open and close procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> need improvement
data included in staff reviews	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> need improvement
in-depth violence audits	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> need improvement

Plan last audited on..... (date)

Plan last updated on: (date)

(OSHA 1998, pp11-12, USOPM 1998, P. 22, Long Island Coalition 1996, pp. 60-64)

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¹ Resource: Appendix 13 of AIC Research and Public Policy Series No 33: Violence in the workplace: preventing armed robbery: a practical handbook, 2000