



# RETAIL SAFETY & SECURITY GUIDE

**RCC** RETAIL COUNCIL OF CANADA



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>About the Retail Safety &amp; Security Guide.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Overview.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Making Your Business Less Vulnerable to Crime.....	4
<b>Management Guide .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Strategic Data Collection and Analysis .....	5
Policy Development .....	5
Regular Risk Assessment.....	5
<b>Types of Incidents.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Robbery .....	6
Break and Enter .....	8
Fraud.....	10
Shoplifting.....	12
Intoxicated Person.....	15
Suspicious Individual.....	17
Evacuation .....	19
Lockdown .....	20
Active Shooter .....	21
<b>Employee Guide.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Supportive Services .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Active Listening and De-escalation Training.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Frequently Asked Questions.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Resources .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>40</b>

# ABOUT THE RETAIL SAFETY & SECURITY GUIDE

The Retail Safety & Security Guide is a combined effort of SAFE Work Manitoba and the Retail Council of Canada that is intended to help businesses of all sizes across Manitoba prevent and reduce incidents of retail crime as well as keep customers and staff safe. The information in this Guide is based on consultations with and the best practices of retailers, security organizations, and police departments in Manitoba and across the country. The Guide provides information to help businesses:

- Make their business less vulnerable to crime.
- Identify and select an appropriate response to address a retail crime.
- Outline approaches to preventing and addressing the most common and severe forms of retail crime that include:
  - Robbery
  - Break and Enter
  - Fraud
  - Shoplifting.
- Outline approaches for addressing abusive customers, suspicious individuals, intoxicated individuals, as well as individuals experiencing a mental health crisis.
- Outline approaches for addressing or preventing 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 have any suggestions for other topics to cover, please send your recommendations to [lossprevention@retailcouncil.org](mailto:lossprevention@retailcouncil.org).**



# OVERVIEW

## Making Your Business Less Vulnerable to Crime

The overall landscape for any commercial land use or collection of commercial uses 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:

- Use LED lighting inside and outside the business by all entrances/exits as well as continuous lighting from inside the business to the end of the business’ exterior property line.
- Have a visible street address.
- Ensure there are no obstructed sightlines from the street or within the store.
- Position CCTV cameras to view all cash registers and entrances/exits at a minimum with data being stored for 30 days before being deleted. Recommendation is 90 days of recording.
- Display signs indicating the business is monitored on the outside of the building.
- Install a security alarm system.
- Use a time-delayed safe.
- Remove all cash from the registers after close and lock it in a safe or make a deposit. Additionally, cash registers that are visible from the street should be left empty and open at close to show potential perpetrators that there is nothing in them.
- 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.
- 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.
- Situate point of sale (POS) machines 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.
- Install security stands or place security cables on each POS machine.
- Ensure that there are no obstructions placed in front of gift card stands, POS machines, or ATMs for employees or CCTV cameras.



# MANAGEMENT GUIDE

## 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.

## Policy Development

Policies 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 put in place a violence prevention policy.
- Create hiring policies that include reference, criminal background, and credit checks for all new hires.
- Use scheduling practices that ensure no workers are left alone during high-risk shifts for retail criminal activity.
- Assign specific individuals and provide instructions on how to complete risk assessments.
- Put policies 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 (LPOs). These policies should also specify debriefing sessions with staff after complex/difficult scenarios to help ensure there is an opportunity to continue to learn and improve on the skills gained 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.
- Have clear rules regarding policies and procedure for changing rooms, return policies, and checking receipts as customers leave the store.

## Regular Risk Assessment

One individual or a team should conduct an annual risk assessment of the business to identify opportunities for improvement.

# TYPES OF INCIDENTS



## 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 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:

1. Lock the door to the business and do not allow anyone in until the police arrive
2. Call 911
3. Write down everything that you remember about the perpetrator
4. 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
5. Ensure that no one touches or tampers with any potential evidence (i.e., anything the perpetrator touched)
6. If applicable, contact your businesses loss prevention staff and/or management.

Following the incident, a debriefing session should be scheduled with the staff involved. Corporate policies 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 assess if there are ways to improve the response and prevent further incidents.

To aid in this process, a retail crime problem solving assessment and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design checklist should be complete (**Appendix A and Appendix E**). 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.

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. During the session, policies should be reviewed and input about challenges and possible opportunities for improvement should be welcomed and recorded. 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).



# 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/windows: 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 not 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 secure 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 a policy and procedures in place to ensure an individual is 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 the Incident

After confirming that a break-in has occurred:

Assign one individual to handle the following process from start to finish:

1. File a police report
2. Make an insurance claim
3. Schedule any repairs and cleanup required
4. 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.

To aid in this process, a retail crime problem solving assessment and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design checklists should be completed (*Appendix A and Appendix E*).

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.

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. During the session, policies should be reviewed and input about challenges and possible opportunities for improvement should be welcomed and recorded. 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).



# 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 point of sale (POS) machines 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 machines.
- Install security stands or place security cables on each POS machine.
- Ensure that there are no obstructions placed in front of gift card stands, POS machines, 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.



# SHOPLIFTING

Train staff on behaviours that are most commonly associated with shoplifting and emphasize that no behaviour is confirmation that shoplifting will occur and the goal is to react early to such behaviours by providing customer service to prevent a theft from occurring. 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).

Ultimately, it is important to train staff to focus on behaviours as opposed to an individual's profile (i.e., age, ethnicity, clothing, etc.). Staff should also be trained using a customer service approach as opposed to a physical confrontation. 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, as well as offered a basket or flyer. Overall, a customer service approach focused on identifying higher risk behaviour will help to deter shoplifting and reduce risk to staff.



## Management and Corporate Policies

- Put policies 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.

Shoplifting is a crime of opportunity and effective practices to reduce shoplifting are most likely to be realized when efforts are focused on the following techniques:

- Place items that are more expensive further into the store, away from any exit/entrance. This will deter shoplifters and make them more conspicuous.
- Keep products that are high value/high risk in a locked inventory room with display boxes kept empty on the sales floor.
- Ensure shelving throughout the store does not create any blind spots for employees or CCTV cameras.
- Keep storefront windows as open and uncovered as possible. This is to permit informal surveillance of the sidewalk and street from inside the business and to allow internal viewing of business interiors from the sidewalk and street. Two-way observability and transparency can create visual interest, activity, and safety. In this regard, avoid placing large posters or having excessive frosting/tinting of storefront windows that block sightlines. If posters are required, they should not cover more than 20 per cent of available window surfaces.
- Post on doors/windows: an alarm company monitors the premises and no money is kept onsite. Include the local police non-emergency number to call, if not urgent and thus requiring a 911 call, should any witness notice a break-in or damage has occurred.
- Have and maintain 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. It is important the area to be captured has sufficient lighting, otherwise images produced may be unreliable and not show enough detail to identify suspects, evidence, etc. 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 orient public seating to permit a combination of customers that can see both out of the business and within the business 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 to ensure that they are able to record the incident and add it to their criminal statistics to improve analysis or aid ongoing investigations.
- Report the incident to Crime Stoppers after all of the available information is gathered to transition the case from a private security investigation to a criminal investigation. For repeat offenders, this may be a preferred option as it provides a way to get the police involved and helps staff members feel as though they are being proactive in addressing the issue.

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 differentiate shoplifting instances that can be addressed by loss prevention officers (by issuing a Notice to Appear to perpetrators) without the assistance of police:

- 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.



# 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.

## 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).





# SUSPICIOUS INDIVIDUAL

There is no accepted definition of a suspicious individual. However, suspicious individuals should not be defined as such due to their race/ethnicity, age, sex, or appearance (i.e., clothing, hair style, etc.). Alternatively, individuals may be considered to be suspicious based on multiple behavioural indicators such as, but 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.
- 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 active listening, 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, while unconscious bias training will help to mitigate any potential issues involving ungrounded accusations of minorities or individuals from vulnerable populations.

## Management and Corporate Policies

Policies 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. These policies should also specify 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. According to those policies, 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.

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.



# 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.



# LOCKDOWN

Lockdown procedures are commonly initiated when it is unsafe to leave a location due to a critical incident occurring outside the facility. 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.

## Management and Corporate Policies

Policies should be in place that ensure all staff receive training in lockdown procedures and augmented training for specialized staff such as loss prevention, health & safety specialists and security teams. These policies should also specify table top drills and debriefing sessions with staff to help ensure there is an opportunity to continue to learn and improve. According to those policies, management should ensure that staff receive the training required.

## After the Incident

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

Management should engage in post-event assessments and activities, including:

- Accounting for of all individuals at a designated assembly point to determine who, if anyone, is missing and potentially injured.
- Contact emergency services for anyone who appears to be in distress or injured.
- Encourage those involved in the incident to use the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or seek out health care assistance.





# ACTIVE SHOOTER

An active shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area; in most cases, active shooters use firearms and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims.

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

Because active shooter situations are often over within 10 to 15 minutes, before law enforcement arrives on the scene, individuals must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with an active shooter situation.

## Management and Corporate Policies

Policies should be in place that ensure all staff receive training in active shooter procedures and augmented training for specialized staff such as Loss Prevention and Security teams. 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 Crisis 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.

These policies should also specify tabletop drills and debriefing sessions with staff to help ensure there is an opportunity to continue to learn and improve. According to those policies, management should ensure that staff receive the training required.

## After the Incident

Notify the appropriate individuals as soon as possible.

Set up a Command Centre. This should be a central communication post. Assign a Crisis Lead.

Direct any media inquiries to senior management within the location or corporate office.

Make arrangements for EAP to be available.

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

- Accounting for all individuals at a designated assembly point to determine who, if anyone, is missing and potentially injured.
- Determining a method for notifying families of individuals affected by the active shooter, including notification of any casualties.
- Encourage those involved in the incident to use the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or seek out health care assistance.
- Identifying and filling any critical personnel or operational gaps left in the organization as a result of the active shooter.



# EMPLOYEE GUIDE

The Employee Guide sections that follow elaborate on what an employee should do during each of the following incidents:

- Robbery
- Break and Enter
- Fraud
- Shoplifting
- Intoxicated Person
- Suspicious Individual
- Evacuation
- Lockdown
- Active Shooter



# 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 to reduce the exposure of staff members to the threat. To achieve this objective, the following courses of action are suggested:

1. **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.
2. **Follow Instructions:** do not argue with the perpetrator and only provide them what they are asking you to provide.
3. **Put Your Personal Safety First:** do not engage the perpetrator physically or chase after the perpetrator following the incident.
4. **Take Mental Notes:** during the incident, be aware of:
  - the number of perpetrators
  - approximate weight, height, age, hair and eye colour, build (i.e., skinny, muscular, overweight)
  - 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 & 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 without someone being present. To this point, 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:

1. **Put Your Personal Safety First:** do not engage the perpetrator physically or chase after the perpetrator. Alternatively, find a safe place (i.e., a room with a lockable door) and stay there until police arrive.
2. Once in a safe place, **call 911**.
3. 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).
  - 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.

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 fraud may be committed by victims 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.

1. **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 in font size 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.

2. **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.

3. **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 machine 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 of time.
    - 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 machine.
4. **POS machines:** perpetrators may tamper with a business's POS machine(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 machines 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 machine.





# 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 (i.e., skinny, muscular, overweight)
  - any distinguishing features (i.e., tattoos, scars, piercings, clothing).
- If they decline all of your assistance, inform them where all of the check-out 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 it was by car then you can record the licence plate)
  - what items they took and the 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.



# 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) 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.
- Maintain at least six feet between you and the individual at all times.
- 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 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.



# SUSPICIOUS INDIVIDUAL

## During the Incident

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

- Keep your personal safety in mind at all times – 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 are able to, 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 (i.e., skinny, muscular, overweight)
  - 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 these 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.



# EVACUATION

## During the Incident

1. Follow the directions from the emergency services - not all alarms will affect your location.
2. Make an announcement that the building is being evacuated and direct everyone to the nearest exit.
3. If fire wardens are not pre-determined, all managers (and coordinators as needed) will be the fire wardens.
4. Head to the external assembly area; advise all staff and contractors of the closest emergency exit and ask them to come with you.
5. Check in with your manager or fire warden upon arrival to the assembly area.
6. 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.
7. Complete a head count of all employees, contractors and notify fire warden/management.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. The facility will not re-open until authorities have deemed it appropriate to do so and given the all clear.
11. Complete an Evacuation Report and save it for future review.





# LOCKDOWN

## During the Incident

Identify the type of lockdown you are facing:

- I. **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.
  - a. HR / Management on site shall communicate any employees who they anticipate could use the shelter in place location during an emergency (i.e., modified work restrictions, disability, etc.).
- II. **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.
- III. **Full lock-down:** Seek protective cover. Close and lock doors if possible, barricade behind lockable areas. Turn off lights and close blinds and shades. Keep quiet and act as if no one is in the room. Wait for public safety or police to assist you out of the building. Ignore fire alarms unless instructed to leave the building by police or fire department.

Follow directions from the emergency services.





# ACTIVE SHOOTER

## 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 shooter situation. **Do not endanger your safety or the safety of others.**

**REACT** – Determine the location of the shooter (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**

- 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 shooter, number of gunmen, 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 shooter'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 items.
- Dial 911, if possible, if you cannot speak leave the line open to allow the dispatcher to listen.

## **FIGHT**

As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter by:

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

## **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:
  - Location of the shooter, number of shooters, physical description, Type of weapons held by the shooter, 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.

# SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Witnesses and victims of criminal incidents as well as challenging customer experiences should always feel comfortable asking for support. Supportive services that are available to an individual will ultimately depend on the incident and the employer, which may include, but not be limited to the following:

- Manitoba Justice Victim Services  
<https://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/vs>
- The Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba  
<https://www.wcb.mb.ca/>
- Employee and Family Assistance Program  
<https://www.gov.mb.ca/csc/aboutcsc/efap/>
- Crisis Response Centre  
<https://sharedhealthmb.ca/services/mental-health/crisis-response-centre/>
- Klinik Crisis Line  
<https://klinik.mb.ca/crisis-support/>
- Canadian Mental Health Association  
<https://cmha.ca/>

## Active Listening and De-escalation Training

Due to safety concerns for staff and customers, retailers have generally adopted a hands-off approach for addressing retail safety and security issues such as shoplifting. Alternatively, training staff in de-escalation techniques as well as active listening has been supported as a safe and effective training option. Ideally, training would be both knowledge and scenario-based for all new employees as well as refresher training or additional training for experienced employees.

### Some de-escalation training providers in Manitoba include:

- Commissionaires  
<https://commissionaires.ca/en/manitoba/course/stay-safe-non-violent-strategies-managing-crisis-situations>
- Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations  
<https://mansomanitoba.silkstart.com/events/de-escalation-workshop>

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following are responses to the most frequently asked questions regarding retail crime based on consultation with retailers in Manitoba. 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 staff members grab individuals?

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 staff members 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 to the safety of employees, it is not recommended that an employee accuse 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 injuries are most likely to 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 picture of someone confirmed or allegedly 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 for 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>.
- SAFE Work Manitoba. (2020). Safety and Health Guide for New Retail Workers.  
<https://www.safemanitoba.com/Resources/Pages/tips-new-retail.aspx>.
- Work SAFE BC. (2012). Preventing, Violence, Robbery and Theft: A Guide for Retail Owners, Managers, and Workers.  
<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/books-guides/preventing-violence-robbery-and-theft?lang=en>.
- 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. (2020). Protecting Against Credit Card and Debit Fraud.  
<https://cba.ca/debit-card-fraud?l=en-us>.
- 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>



# APPENDICES

**Appendix A: Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design 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: SAFE Work Manitoba Sample Violence Prevention Policy**

**Appendix G: Modified SAFE Work Manitoba Sample Violence Assessment Tool**

Appendices available at [retailcouncil.org](http://retailcouncil.org) and [safemanitoba.com](http://safemanitoba.com).





# RETAIL SAFETY & SECURITY GUIDE

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