

Business Security

Safe City Factsheet Series Issue 6: Business Security

By international standards Sydney is a safe city and you can play an important role in maintaining the safety of yourself and your business.



Five Fast Facts

1. Approximately 49% of businesses become the victim of some form of crime. Burglary is the most commonly experienced crime, followed by shoplifting.*
2. Liquor outlets experience the highest percentage of crimes against small business, followed by general stores and pharmacies.*
3. Repeat victimisation is common in the case of small business enterprises.**
4. The cost of crime to small businesses is \$3.2 billion a year, or approximately \$8000 per business.**
5. Police Crime Prevention Officers in your area can provide a free security assessment of your premises.

* Australian Institute of Criminology 2002

** Australian Institute of Criminology 2000

Tips for business security

1. **Install security devices**
Install security devices such as deadlocks and intruder alarms, movement detection devices and CCTV. Consider electronic door sensors to alert you to the entry and exit of individuals to the premises.
2. **Minimise cash kept on the premises**
Keep a maximum of \$200 in the register at any time and empty the cash drawer regularly. Payment methods such as EFTPOS can help minimise money kept on the premises.
3. **Install a safe**
A safe allows for secure storage of cash. Installation should comply with Australian Standards. If you have a safe, use a time delay lock (install signage indicating time delay locks) or a drop-chute facility to reduce access to it. Safes should remain locked when not being used.
4. **Implement strategies for secure cash handling**
Cash should be counted in private and cash handling procedures should not be discussed within earshot of the public. Cash drawers should be locked.
5. **Implement procedures for safe banking**
Banking should be conducted frequently, but times and routes should be altered to avoid patterns of behaviour. Consider devising a safe banking strategy. At least two staff members should conduct banking activities. Cash should be carried in an unmarked bag.
6. **Utilise lighting as a deterrent**
Lighting increases visibility and should be used, particularly over entry and exit points. All areas should be brightly lit during trading. Ensure that you can still see outside activity.
7. **Maximise visibility**
Ensure that the shop front has a clear line of sight to the street, and that the service area can clearly be seen from outside. Avoid plastering shop windows with too many posters and advertising materials.
8. **Restrict access to key areas**
The cash drawer should be inaccessible to customers. Reduce the number of entry/exit points. Staff rooms, stock rooms and the area behind the counter should be off limits to the public.
9. **Keep a record of keys and valuable items**
The names of staff possessing valuable items should be recorded along with the types of items. A key register should be used to record the names of individuals with access to keys and the areas to which they have access.
10. **What you can or cannot do in relation to bag checking**
Customers are entitled to refuse a bag check. Ensure there is adequate signage for bag checks at the entry/exit points of the premises. Use courtesy at all times. Do not touch the bag or the customer.

Access Control

- ✓ **Ensure solid construction**
Ensure solid construction of elements such as external doors and frames, windows and frames, floors, walls, ceilings and the roof. All of these should adhere to the Building Code of Australia.
- ✓ **Modify glass within the building**
Prevent unauthorised access by using laminated glass, shatter-resistant film, and by installing metal, open-style security grills.
- ✓ **Consider whether you have adequate lighting**
Security lighting in and around a business should minimise glare and evenly distribute light. Sensor lighting is a less expensive option as it only activates as a response to movement. Some internal lighting should be maintained at night to enable monitoring of the building interior.
- ✓ **Restrict Access**
Minimise the number of entry/exit points to the premises. Restrict public access to clearly signposted staff rooms, stock rooms and behind the counter.



Robbery Prevention

- ✓ **Make use of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)**
The installation of CCTV cameras on the interior and exterior of a business, with particular focus on key areas such as the entry/exit and counter area, can increase security and aid in identifying offenders. Police Crime Prevention Officers in your area can provide advice on the positioning of CCTV on your premises.
- ✓ **Carefully plan your cash register area**
Position your cash register so that it is affixed to the counter and beyond reach of customers, i.e. under the counter or behind a partition. The area should be well lit and be able to be seen clearly from the exterior of the premises.

- ✓ **Install mirrors**
Consider the use of mirrors to increase visibility and deter robbers.
- ✓ **Roster more staff for late night shifts**
Roster at least two adult staff to cover late night shifts.
- ✓ **Investigate the legitimacy of new staff members**
In order to verify the identity of potential new staff, request original documents and check the authenticity of the information.
- ✓ **Robbery prevention training for staff**
Consider sending staff to robbery prevention courses or to the City of Sydney's annual BizSafe workshops.
- ✓ **What to do in the event of a robbery**
If your premises are robbed, immediately call the Police, close premises and do not disturb the crime scene.

Retailer Powers

- ✓ **Use common sense**
Use common sense! Do not get hurt, or hurt others trying to arrest someone. Remember, it is only property being stolen.
- ✓ **Power to arrest shoplifters**
All members of the public have a basic power of arrest under Section 100, Law Enforcement (powers & responsibilities) Act 2002. Retailers can make an arrest if the person is in the act of committing an offence under any Act or statutory instrument, or the person has just committed any such offence.
- ✓ **No power to search**
Retailers do not have the power to search, and must, as soon as practicable, contact the Police so that the matter can be dealt with according to the law.
- ✓ **Cooperate with Police requests**
Make a statement for Police and be prepared for court.

Help and Assistance

- ✓ **Call the Police**
Always call 000 for Police assistance in case of an emergency.
- ✓ **Report crime and/or suspicious activity**
All business crime should be reported directly to your local police station.

The above information is provided as general advice only by City of Sydney, the NSW Attorney General's Department and the NSW Police.

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