



Crime Prevention and Security

Helpful Tips for Building a Program in Your Organization

When your business is exposed to the public, as are those in the restaurant and convenience store industries, it's important to know the things that can help reduce the likelihood or severity of a robbery. Doing so can go far to protect you, your employees and your bottom line.

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Security

- Consider having a security alarm system and/or security cameras on-site.
- Do not open locked doors for anyone you don't know.
- If your facility has communication devices for employees, consider having a code word or phrase so all employees know that a robbery is in progress.
- Install bright lights in recreational areas, parking lots and garages, and keep them in good working order.
- Conduct regular inspections of the property to ensure door locks and security systems are working.
- Have the closing crew leave and go to their cars together.
- Install bullet-resistant shielding to protect employees and cash areas.
- Add mirrors to eliminate blind spots in the store and around the doors.
- Install a panic button that automatically calls for help.
- Have cashier areas visible from outside the store.
- Have cashiers or other employees greet each customer who enters the store. Lack of attentiveness allows a robber to case the store and take a cashier or employee by surprise.
- Work with the local police department to organize a Neighborhood Watch program to give employees and guests more security.

Cash Handling

- Do not keep more cash on hand than is needed to do business.
- Install drop safes and have signs in obvious places that say drop safes are used.
- If an employee makes a daily trip to the bank, don't make the trip at the same time each day.
- Don't use a bag labeled "Bank" to carry the money.
- Don't discuss cash-control procedures with friends or customers.
- Conduct cash audits daily or at the end of each shift.
- If armored cars are used, try to have them vary their schedule of pickups and deliveries. If your store has a drive thru window and the armored car will fit, have them use this window.

If Robberies Occur

Even if you're following all the rules, it's possible your business could still be the victim of a robbery. If that happens, your No. 1 goal is to prevent violence during the robbery. Most robberies take less than two minutes. Here are some key things to keep in mind to help keep you and your employees safe.

- Remain calm.
- Don't be the hero.
- Do as you're told during the robbery, but don't be overly helpful.
- If possible, get a description of the robber, but only if this doesn't endanger you or others nearby. Try to get an idea of how tall they are and other characteristics such as the clothes worn, race, hair color, eye color and approximate age.

- Cooperate with the robber and try to get them out of the store as soon as possible. Robbers seldom hurt people who cooperate with them.
- Handle the entire procedure as if you were making a sale. Keep it short and smooth.
- If you're not sure exactly what the robber is asking you to do, ask.
- Don't allow or create surprises for the robber. If you're going to have to reach into a drawer or some other movement to comply with his instructions, tell him ahead of time.
- If another employee is in the back room or is expected in the store soon, tell him so he won't be surprised. Surprises can cause a nervous robber to become violent or do something he didn't intend to do.

How to Get Started

If you need assistance, United Heartland is here to help. United Heartland Loss Control can direct you to additional crime prevention resources. Contact your United Heartland Loss Control representative to discuss your current needs or explore the United Heartland Toolbox at UnitedHeartland.com/united-heartland-toolbox/ to find more loss control resources.

