



Winston-Salem Police Department
Crime Prevention Unit
725 N. Cherry Street
Winston-Salem, NC 27102
336-773-7835

Holiday Safety Tips For Retail Establishments

Robbery Prevention:

Help keep you and your customers safe this Holiday Season by following these simple safety tips.

Robbers usually rely on surprise, force and quickness to commit their crime. It is important to be aware of what is going-on around you. If you see someone that appears suspicious, please contact the police department by using our non-emergency number 773-7700. Remember to use 911 for all emergencies. Awareness on the part of the employee is paramount when it comes to preventing business crime.

Alert employees notice suspicious activity and report it to management and the police. Alert employees also greet all customers when they enter the business. This action alone by the employee can remove the anonymity that most criminals desire. Keep an eye on where your customers are while they are in your business. Ask the customer if they need assistance, especially if it seems the customer is avoiding other customers or staff.

Suspicious Person:

Reporting of suspicious people is an important first step in preventing crime. Criminals don't just appear, they are there somewhere lurking in the background. Be alert to suspicious customers that seem more interested in watching you than in shopping for themselves. Most robbers "case" their target before committing the crime. A suspicious person can be anyone! Some characteristics of suspicious activity are...loitering in the parking lot or in the business near the cash register. Suspicious activity can include wearing large coats or outer-clothing when the weather would not warrant such attire. Wearing ball caps and sun glasses when it is cloudy outside or at night can be an indication of suspicious activity. If someone makes you feel uncomfortable, then you should listen to your instincts and avoid that person. Again, report suspicious

activity to management and the police.

What to do if you get robbed:

If someone enters your business to rob you...Don't Resist. Let the criminal take whatever he or she wants, and let him or her leave. Resistance is the number one reason why robberies end in violence. Your life is not worth your property!

Your goal during a robbery is to get the robber in and out of your business without anyone getting hurt.

During the robbery make a mental note of what the robber is wearing, saying and doing. Attempt to ascertain the following: What color hair and eyes does the robber have? What type of clothing is the robber wearing, including color? Can you see any tattoos or scars? Is the robber wearing jewelry? Does the robber speak with an accent or speech impairment? What direction did the robber flee? Is the robber on foot or in a vehicle?

The more descriptive information you can provide, the better chance police have in apprehending the robber. Don't jeopardize your safety to obtain any of the above information.

Opening and Closing the Business:

Always use two employees to open and close your business.

When you arrive at work, take a few seconds to look around the parking lot for suspicious people or vehicles. Drive by your business to ensure that it has not been broken into. Park in an open area where you can see in all directions. Try to park near a light pole to maximize safety when entering or leaving your business.

If you notice anyone suspicious hanging around...Don't exit your vehicle. Remain in the car with the engine running, until the person leaves the area. Notify the police by using a cell phone or payphone if the suspicious person does not leave the area in a reasonable time.

If you notice that your business has been broken into....Do not enter the business! Assume the "Bad Guy" is still in the business, and immediately call the police.

Always open your business through the main customer entrance. This provides maximum visibility and safety for you and your employees. If you open your business from a back door or side door, use caution as you approach.

When closing your business, escort

the last customer to the door and lock it behind them. Before leaving the business take a few seconds to look around. If you see any suspicious activity...Do not exit! Wait for the person to leave, or notify the police.

If you take money to or from the business, carry it in a briefcase or pocketbook. Don't use the standard bank deposit bag, this can tip the "Bad Guy" that you have money.

If you carry a pocketbook, make sure to use the shoulder strap, if so equipped, and carry it close to your body. If you use a briefcase, carry it close to your body. Your main goal is to reduce the opportunity for becoming a victim, by carrying your property and walking in an assertive manner.

Again, remember to use the non-emergency number (773-7700) for reporting suspicious activity, and to dial 911 for all crimes in progress and to report robberies.



The Winston-Salem Police Department offers the following Crime Prevention Programs for Businesses through the Crime Prevention Unit:

Shoplifting Prevention

Armed Robbery Prevention

Employee Theft Prevention

Personal Safety

Security Surveys

If you are interested in any of these programs or just need some Crime Prevention information, please call the Winston-Salem Police Department's Crime Prevention Unit at 773-7835.