

City of Portland

Crime Prevention Business Strategies

Crime — burglary, robbery, and vandalism — can be particularly devastating to businesses in terms of money, customers, and employee safety. Crime prevention strategies can help lay the foundation for business owners to protect their assets as well as their employees. Crimes against a business can range from employee thefts to robberies, and are often crimes of opportunity. Knowing how to protect your business from every level of crime while creating employee and customer safety can be achieved through training, communication, and implementation of crime prevention methods. One of the foremost steps in prevention is being able to identify suspicious behavior which could indicate a crime or the potential for a future crime.

Identifying suspicious activity

Suspicious activity is any behavior that causes alarm. Behavior is what makes someone's activities suspicious, not their appearance, race, ethnicity, religion or national origin, and/or housing status. These details will be important to relay to the police to describe the person(s) involved in suspicious activity, but shouldn't be used as the basis of determining whether something is suspicious. We encourage people to have a healthy vigilance over their environment by being aware of what is going on around them and responding to those cues that indicate a problem or the potential for one.

Training employees to identify suspicious behavior is essential for crime prevention. Some indicators of suspicious activity can include:

- Slow moving vehicle without lights.
- Person looking at multiple items without making a purchase.
- Person avoiding eye contact and communication with employees.
- Person with large backpacks or baggy clothing to hide small items in.
- Loitering in front or inside of the establishment.
- Person looking inside of the store windows and doors after hours.
- Person rummaging through trash for papers, receipts or mail.
- Person photographing the property or inside of the store.
- Person trying to pay with credit card number and no physical card.
- Calls from IT or upper management (e.g. verifying loaded gift card serial numbers, asking for private and/or business information).

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Traducción o interpretación

Traducere sau Interpretare

Chuyển Ngữ hoặc Phiên Dịch

Письмовий або усний переклад

الترجمة التحريرية أو الشفهية

翻译或传译

翻訳または通訳

ການແປພາສາ ຫຼື ການອະທິບາຍ

Письменный или устный перевод

Turjumida ama Fasiraadda



Implementation of Crime Prevention methods

Owners should look at their businesses in areas such as physical layout, number of employees, hiring practices, and overall security. In order to implement prevention, business owners need to provide proper training for all employees, install security and safety protocol/measures, establish and enforce clear policies, and create relationships with partners — law enforcement, civic groups, surrounding businesses, and customers.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is the proper design, maintenance, and use of the built environment to enhance quality of life and reduce the incidence and fear of crime. CPTED can be utilized as core resource for application of prevention practices (e.g. security cameras, layout design, community engagement).

CPTED Principles

Natural Surveillance

Design and maintenance that allows and encourages people engaged in their normal activities to observe the space around them.

Access Control

Identifying and decreasing accessibility which would prompt people to engage in unwanted or criminal behavior.

Territoriality

Defining territorial property lines and distinguishing private space. Creating a space that communicates to people the expectation of the space and how to use it.

CPTED Categories

Natural/Passive

Things that are designed in (e.g. benches and shrubbery) and do not require any active effort on the part of the responsible user.

Organized/Active

Planned activities and routines that create community engagement (e.g. block parties, flea markets, community garage sales).

Mechanical

Installing or using equipment to achieve the principle (e.g. security cameras, alarms, lighting).

Find CPTED worksheets (e.g. convenience store and commercial store) go online to the Crime Prevention handouts page at portlandoregon.gov/civic/cpAdvice or contact your Crime Prevention Team to request a CPTED assessment.

Creating relationships — Business Watch

Business Watch is a program designed to organize and connect businesses in united crime prevention efforts. When neighboring businesses are able to take the responsibility to build and maintain livable and cohesive relationships, those neighborhoods are less vulnerable to crime. Business Watch is often formed when owners or employees notice chronic problems and/or increase in crime and suspicious activities in their area. However, it is beneficial to organize one as a proactive measure.

The primary purposes of Business Watch are:

- To reduce crime and the fear of crime

- To ensure a prompt and effective response to crime and livability problems

- To promote positive communication and relationships within a business community

As in any neighborhood, residential or commercial, it is important for “neighbors” to establish communication networks and improve observation and crime reporting skills. Learn more about starting a Business Watch online at portlandoregon.gov/civic/75708.

Managing funds and transactions

Good money handling policies ensure that money received is equal to the merchandise/services going out. It also minimizes the possibility of theft, reduces the amount that can be taken during a robbery and maintains good records. Maintaining funds is more than just directly handling cash. Money handling can include debit and credit transactions, checks, gift cards and the systems used to process and store them.

Payment management

Establish a means of comparing the amount of funds in a till with the amount of merchandise/services going out. Keeping a proper inventory to compare goods sold will allow you to identify if you are growing short on products that are not being sold. An example of theft that can occur is employee theft. This can be done by selling a product that is paid for in cash; refunding the product on the POS; not returning the product to the shelf; and pocketing the cash. Keeping track of inventory sales, refunds and inventory returns can help you to identify these types of inconsistencies which would indicate theft.

Inventory to cash funds comparisons

Controlling the amount of money in the store and cash registers limits the potential loss in a robbery or theft. Some safety and prevention practices to keep in mind when managing cash funds include:

- Give each employee their own cash register and start them with exactly the same amount of money.
- Place all bills in the drawer the same way (e.g. heads up and pointing left). This makes it harder to place a bill in the wrong slot, confuse one denomination with another, and allows security cameras to monitor the bills.
- Set up a protocol for cashiers to do secured money drops/deposits.
- Prepare each cash drop in the same way with the same denominations grouped together.
- Place security cameras so that you can see inside of the register while it is open.
- Train employees to count back change on the counter and visible to the security cameras.
- Keep record of terminal transactions and review for suspicious activities (e.g. numerous returns, manual card entry, no sale drawer opens).
- Place Point of Sale (POS) systems in a secured area with defined barriers between the till and the customers.
- Never open a cash register and leave it unattended or have your back turned.

Identifying fraud and counterfeit

Fraudulent checks and stolen credit cards can be difficult to identify. The best thing to do is have standard procedures that employees are required to follow to help them reduce the possibility of becoming a victim.

- Supply employees with counterfeit tools (e.g. bill scanner or counterfeit detector pens).
- Train and enforce employee ID verification for all credit and check methods of payment.
- Be aware of small purchases by check or credit card that are under the amount for manager approval.
- Check to see if the signature on the card compares favorably with the signature on the sales slip.
- Set up a protocols for dropping check and credit card receipts.
- Verify check and card transactions each day and identify suspicious activity (e.g. multiple checks in one day from the same person or payment with manual card entry).

Reporting Toolkit

Is it an immediate or life-threatening emergency?

YES

Dial 911 - Be prepared to provide information (i.e. location, suspect details, involved persons). Do not hang up until instructed to do so.

NO

Are you calling to report a crime or suspicious activity?

YES

Does the incident involve any of the following:

- Known suspect(s)
- Stolen vehicles
- Domestic violence
- Vehicular accidents
- Firearms
- Hit and runs
- RX Medication
- Require police presence

NO

NO

YES

Report online:
portlandoregon.gov/police/cor/

Call Portland Non-Emergency
at (503) 823-3333.

Are you reporting livability issues and violations (e.g. campsites, potholes, illegal/abandoned vehicles)?

YES

NO

Go to pdxreporter.org and file a report (you will need a portlandoregon.gov account to login).

Do you need help and/or training for your business, neighborhood or residence, but don't know where to start?

YES

To get more training and connect with your Crime Prevention Team go online to:
portlandoregon.gov/civic/cp

Your Crime Prevention Team's mission is to organize and support community partnerships to prevent crime and the fear of crime. You can also find online resources and training tools on the Office of Community & Civic Life, Crime Prevention Program website portlandoregon.gov/civic/cpadvice.



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