

# IMPROVING YOUR SECURITY MINDSET



*Expert Security Tips  
for Your Business*

Operating a business has many challenges, but protecting the bottom line is an ongoing challenge, faced with the threats of theft, burglaries, and robberies.

I wrote this guide to help retailers protect their assets, my colleagues and myself often hear statements such as; Oh we are in a safe neighborhood, there is no crime here, I've got an alarm system or I've got cameras. These may all be valid statements but to us, they are false senses of being protected and secured. Security is about being vigilant, and constantly looking at improving and adding layers of defense.

## **“CRIME IS UNPREDICTABLE”**

*Safe neighborhood, or no crime here?*

Thieves have or steal vehicles, they are always on the move looking for easy opportunities, makes sense for them to target areas that are not expecting criminal activities.

*You have an alarm system?*

Yes, alarm systems are a vital layer of security, and in some cases may deter a thief. But these units are designed to alert you or the responders that a break in has occurred. They do not provide any physical deterrent. There is an increased demand for these alarm systems to be wireless now for extra protection against cut lines. Stickers on the windows and doors will help deter some thieves as well. Often break-ins take less than two minutes, so responders always catch them in the act.



*You have cameras? Video surveillance?*

Great! These systems are another layer of security, if there are enough high quality cameras installed they may help you or the police identify the suspects and monitor where they came in, what they took and when they left. Often the thieves are aware of these systems and will disguise themselves, making it difficult to identify them. Again having cameras installed in visible locations will help to the point that thieves may know they are being recorded, but they do not stop or deter an attempted B&E.



This guide is intended to help business owners with some easy and cost effective solutions to help make their business more secure. Security and prevention is often overlooked or deemed as expensive for new start-up businesses. The cost of not protecting your business could cause major financial losses that can close down a business.

I trust that the information in this guide will be helpful to you and your employees, learn about the importance of lighting, the landscaping space planning and more. I wish you the best of success.

Becoming or staying vigilant of the potential threats is critical.

Security starts with assessing the building itself from the outside in. Remember to do this during the day as well as at night. How much activity is around the building after hours or on weekends?

*How easy is it for responders to find your business?*

As I am often looking for store addresses I find that locating the store name or street number is often very difficult. If I cannot find your store easily, how can the emergency responders? Make sure your store number is clearly visible on your storefront, as well as at the rear of the building.



## **OUTSIDE LIGHTING**

Thieves do not like lights.

Make sure your store is well lit with outside lights, lighting both front and back of the business. The parking lot should be well lit as well, protecting yourself and employees when opening or closing up at night.

## **LANDSCAPING**

Not all business have landscaping around them, but hedges make great hiding spots so keep them trimmed to max 42 inches high or have them removed altogether. Trees and braches should be kept trimmed well back from the roof tops at least 7 feet to prevent rooftop access. And those nice and easy to maintain rock gardens? Get rid of them, they are the tool box to breaking your windows.

Items such as garbage cans or dumpsters should be kept away from doors and windows, as they make good hiding spots as well as untrustworthy employees may use them as temporary stowage of items to be picked up after hours.

## GLASS

Glass is the weakest point.

Retailers rely on glass windows to allow for products or posters to be displayed to entice customers.

Unfortunately glass is also the absolute weakest point when it comes to security, easily broken allowing for quick smash and grab style robbery. These types of break-in can be done in a matter of minutes grabbing valuable merchandise leaving you with losses and repairs.

Police and security patrols prefer that your windows are not obstructed by posters or displays so that they can see into the business while patrolling, looking for criminal activity.

For the time it may take, remove valuable as well as items of temptation from display when your business is closed.

Adding a layer of physical visual security will help deter the opportunistic criminal, maintaining an inviting storefront or business consider:

- Fold away scissor style security gates.
- Top track mounted folding closures
- Roll down security grilles or shutters (open link or slat styles)

## THE DOORS

Doors remain a common point of entry, maybe it is a psychological thing with thieves, that they figure doors are the entry and exit means? Front doors are aluminum with glass panels, the alarm contact located on the top edge of the door. The glass on the doors maybe single pane or split pane, the split pane doors and single pane with horizontal bars help make it a bit more difficult for the thieves to get back out with merchandise, crawling through the lower pane or under the handle. More prepared thieves will use pry bars to easily rip the door lock mechanism through the door frame. The newer bi-parting sliding doors make the customer experience better and more inviting, but these types of doors have no strength to them as far as locking up is concerned.

Back doors known as man doors are generally metal doors with no glass, making quick easy break in a bit more difficult. But as per front doors the alarm sensor is on the top corner of the door, and what happens now is thieves will use pry bars to peel the corner of the door (undetected by alarm) and then gain entry.

Your customers enter through the doors and aesthetics are to be considered when physically securing the doors.

A few physical security products that will help layer and add protection without obstructing the windows or being noticeable by customers:

- Fold away scissor style security gates
- Roll down security shutters
- Top track aluminum folding closures
- Full length astragal to prevent pry bar access

Back doors are difficult to secure as they are often considered a emergency door, check with local building and fire laws. Do keep the back door area well lit with no hiding spots.

## WALLS

Adjoining businesses such as those found in strip plazas should check how the walls are constructed, all brick or steel studs with drywall. You may have all the layers of protection, alarm system, video surveillance, physical security but what does the business next door have? Often hair or nail salons along with restaurants may not have any security. Thieves check these things out and will penetrate these businesses to gain entry through the walls into your business virtually undetected.

A few things that help protect merchandise:

- A secured metal cage.
- Layer of wire mesh installed between the drywall to slow them down
- Alarm sensors that respond to vibration or sound.
- Help secure the neighboring business

## THE ROOF

Believe it or not but the roof is another point of unlawful entry. Have regular roof top inspections done, looking for any sort of tampering with skylights, heating or air conditioning units.

If your business has ceiling tiles, periodically check above them to look for possible entry from adjoining business, make sure the walls between the businesses go up to the ceiling not just to top of ceiling tiles.

Standalone buildings may experience actual cutting through the roof, using gas or cordless saws.

Having valuable and desirable merchandise secure in a steel cage will help slow them down once inside, Good wireless alarm systems with sound and vibration sensors will help notify responders quicker. If there are ceiling tiles have a few motion sensors mounted above the tiles as well.

## **WAREHOUSE OR STOCK ROOM**

Often small businesses look at this space as a place to put over stock and get it out of the retail space. Proper inventory control techniques should be applied and adhered to. Shrinkage is caused by more than an opportunistic thief. Wrong counts, delivery people, customers picking up or untrustworthy employees can affect your bottom line.

Some common sense security tips:

- Physically secure the shipping doors and any windows.
- Control who has access to the warehouse or stock room, say no to delivery people, or customers.
- If you cannot control people entering the warehouse or storage room, use a tarpaulin to keep valuables out of sight.
- Use secured cabinets or cages to store valuable or desirable merchandise
- Key control to access doors
- Video surveillance, mounted to be seen, and employees made aware that they are installed.
- Check regularly that the cameras are pointing to the right areas without obstructions, and are recording properly, test alarm system to ensure working properly.
- Maintain proper inventory counts, and double check especially during holiday seasons.



## THE OFFICE

This is generally where everything is kept, the safe, the main computers, the camera recording device files valuable merchandise etc. office doors are simple doors with little strength or security and easily kicked in, walls can be climbed over and entry gained through the ceiling tiles.

- Restrict key control and who has access, secure cabinets with locks and secure camera recording device as well as the computers.
- Install motion sensors above the ceiling tiles
- Reinforce the door frame
- Install additional dead bolts
- Keep office door closed and locked at all times (do not label door as office)

# IMPORTANT NUMBERS

POLICE	_____
FIRE	_____
ALARM COMPANY	_____
CCTV PROVIDER	_____
24 HOUR LOCKSMITH	_____
24 HOUR GLASS REPAIR	_____
INSURANCE COMPANY	_____
SECURITY GUARD SERVICE	_____
MANAGER	_____
ASSISTANT MANAGER	_____
XPANDA SECURITY PRODUCTS	<b>1-800-835-0214</b>





## *Expert Security Tips for Your Business*

- Review all your security on a regular basis, during the day and at night
- Educate your employees on policies and procedures to safety and security
- Do not leave cash in the building, keep cash drawer open at night
- Advertise minimal cash on hand during operating hours
- Place security stickers or labels on doors front and back
- Do not leave price guns unattended
- Keep cabinets locked, and key controlled
- Install height strips beside doors to gauge height of robber leaving the building
- Do not engage or fight back with robber
- Keep valuable items close to where you or staff are most
- Use a chime on the doors to indicate customer entering.
- Greet everyone that enters the business with a “hello” great for business, not great for thieves.
- Keep watch for customers with large bags or oversized coats
- Ask wandering customers if they need help.
- Change routines, what time employees show up for work, when going to the bank, and what time employees leave.
- Become great neighbors, discuss security with them as well.
- Know your local police officers and dept.

- Leave a few lights on for police to see inside the store at night
- Maintain key control of all doors
- Change passcodes and passwords regularly
- Check on the business at different times and days look for security risks
- Keep windows clear of obstructions
- If you are the first person to respond to your business being broken into, do not approach, stop and park a safe distance to monitor situation until police arrive.
- Remain vigilant when opening and closing your business.
- Get professional training for everyone on how to deal with a robbery... safety first!





1-800-835-0214

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