

# Shoplifting & Robbery at Work

Jobs most affected by shoplifting and robbery are work sites that deal with money and customers such as retail stores, restaurants, grocery stores, banks, and theaters.

## Shoplifting: Tips for Workers

**Traits of shoplifters:** a) act nervous and avoid eye contact; b) wander around store without buying anything; c) leave store and soon come back; d) stay in areas of store where they are difficult to see; e) look around to watch workers.

**Discourage shoplifters:** a) Greet customers who enter store. b) Ask customers if they need help. c) Make friendly eye contact with customers. d) Keep store's products neat and organized. Messy product displays make it easier to shoplift.

**If you suspect someone is shoplifting:** a) Do not be a hero; your life is worth more than money. b) Do not chase the suspect since this can lead to violence. Employers may fire a worker who chases a shoplifter since this is a dangerous activity. c) Do not accuse suspect of stealing or try to stop the suspect from leaving. d) Stay at least arm's length away from the suspect. e) Give the suspect a chance to pay or put the item back. If you are sure the suspect has the item, you may politely say, "Are you ready to pay?" f) If you feel frightened, calmly walk away to quietly get help from your supervisor or nearby worker. g) Observe suspect's height, weight, hair and skin color, features such as tattoos, clothing, and footwear.

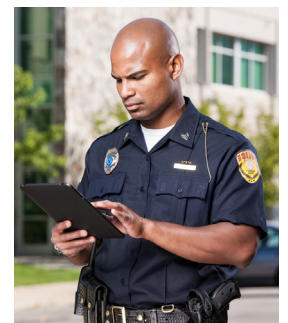


## Robbery: Tips for Workers

**If you find yourself a robbery:** a) Play it safe; do not be a hero. b) Stay calm. c) Avoid eye contact with the robber. d) Obey robber's instructions; give the money; do not resist. Keep it brief and smooth just like a normal transaction because the longer the robbery takes, the more nervous robber will get. e) Do not surprise the robber with sudden movements. Keep your hands in sight and do not make any sudden moves. Let robber know if you have to reach for something that is requested. f) Speak only when spoken to. If you don't understand what robber is telling you, ask for clarification of robber's directions. g) Think that there is a weapon even if you cannot see one. h) Silently, without staring, remember robber's description, especially scars or tattoos. i) Do not lock doors to keep the robber from leaving. A trapped robber may panic and become violent. j) Activating the alarm if it is safe for you to do so.

## After the Robbery: Tips for Workers

a) Do not chase the robber. Companies have insurance that will replace the money or stolen goods. You do not need to worry about it. b) Remember vehicle used and direction of travel. c) Keep workers and customers out of the area and protect any areas that may contain robber's fingerprints. d) Lock the store if possible. e) Do not discuss details of a robbery with anyone until after police have taken statements from witnesses. f) When police arrive, wait for police officer's questions. Listen to each question, and answer as best you can. Instead of the witness telling the story, police prefer to question witnesses separately in order to find out valuable details and correct story of the robbery.



**How to Prevent Robberies:**

**1) Use money drops.** Cash register full of money is an invitation to be robbed. Never have over \$100 in the cash register. To keep register clear of excess money, install a money drop. Money drop is a safe that lets workers place money into it, but not take money out, since the safe can be opened only by a supervisor.

**2) Good lighting.** Robbers like dark places. Well-lit store and parking lot discourages theft. Customer counter and cash register area should be lighted so people walking or driving by can see the counter from the street or parking lot. Robbers do not like to rob cash registers that people outside the store can see.

**3) Security system.** Security systems can: a) Cause alarm to sound when a store is broken into at night. b) Turn on lights and call the police. c) Take round-the-clock videos of the store. Security system needs a panic button placed where the button can easily be reached by workers to silently call police. If there is no security system, police suggest that the store "fake it" by installing video camera near the ceiling to give the illusion of surveillance.

**4) Use the Buddy System.** Always use two or more workers to work together in the store. Robber is less likely to approach worker who has a coworker nearby. If your supervisor will not schedule two workers for each shift, and your store is at risk — think seriously about changing jobs for your safety.

**5) Prepare.** Mark store's doorways with height markings of 5 feet, 5 feet 5 inches, and 6 feet to help measure the robber's height when he or she walks out the door. Keep counters, glass doors, and door's handles very clean to help get a clear set of fingerprints. Robbers prefer dirty stores.

**6) Meetings.** Four times a year, supervisors and workers should meet to discuss robbery prevention and what workers are to do if a robbery occurs. Invite the police to the meeting to offer tips for keeping your work place safe, and the latest shoplifting and robbery crime news in your city.

**QUICK CHECK:**

1. List 5 work sites that are most affected by shoplifting and robbery.
2. List 3 traits of shoplifters.
3. List 3 ways to discourage shoplifters.
4. What makes it easier to shoplift?
5. a) List 3 "do not" rules to follow if you suspect shoplifting. b) Why do some employers fire a worker who chases a shoplifter?
6. a) List 5 things to do if you find yourself in a robbery. b) What should you assume?
7. Why should you keep it brief and smooth?
8. After a robbery: a) Do not what? b) Remember what? c) Keep workers/customers out of where? d) Lock what? e) What do police prefer?
9. a) What is invitation to be robbed? b) What is a money drop? c) Only who can open it?
10. a) List 3 areas that should be well lit to prevent robbery. b) What do robbers not like to rob?
11. List 3 things a security system can do.
12. What do police suggest to do if the store has no security system?
13. What is meant by "buddy system"?
14. If your supervisor will not schedule 2 workers for each shift, about what should you think?
15. List 2 important things to do to prepare the store.
16. What needs to be done 4 times a year?
17. Extra Credit: Invite a police officer to your class to discuss what you can do during a robbery, and to discuss crime news in your community.