

# GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE

## *Guide to Business Security*

### **Crime is preventable.**

Crime can be managed like any other aspect of business and controlled through business strategies.

It is not just luck that one business suffers crime and another enjoys a safe environment. It is not just luck that some businesses collapse due to the impact of crime.

Whereas no one guide can be totally applicable to every individual business and organisation, it is intended that this guide will give you ideas to interpret and apply in your own personal business environment.

*This booklet generally outlines measures that could be taken to reasonably reduce the opportunity of crime. The recommendations are based on current best practice.*

*Any crime risk assessment should be based on crime trends and patterns, which dictate reasonable, practical and cost-effective measures, that can be incorporated to reduce the risk of crime. There can never be any guarantee that crime will be effectively reduced.*

*It is strongly recommended that other statutory organisations are consulted, eg Health & Safety, Local Authority Planning requirements, Fire prevention, etc.*

*The guidance on law contained is not meant to be an accurate statement of the law, but to offer guidance only. You would not be able to rely on it to provide a defence to any criminal charge or civil claim.*

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# *Risk Management*

Over recent years many businesses have been concerned only with Loss Prevention and not Crime Prevention; as long as insurance covered the loss then only basic preventive measures were taken. To their cost, these organisations discovered that it was impossible to mitigate all the losses from crime with insurance.

Managers have to determine and assess the risk of crime to their organisation and then consider, if necessary, strategies to either prevent the potential loss or reduce it to a controllable, manageable level.

The actual “loss” that has to be managed, from a manager’s perspective, is anything that may erode the profit or core functions of the organisation.

## **What are your risks?**

There are many security infringements that could have sufficient impact on an organisation to upset a potential financial gain.

Although a major disaster such as a fire is often perceived as the only catastrophe that would seriously threaten the business, even minor “insignificant” issues in isolation or cumulatively, can have far reaching implications.

Risks have to be continually assessed. A change of location, change of employee, or even the purchase of new computer equipment can be just a few of the considerations that could effect your risk assessment.

The actuality of crime is not the only consideration. The fear of crime can effect both public and employees, creating a hostile environment.

All employees have to identify the risks that a business may suffer - anything from financial loss to core functions of that individual organisation, in the present or future. After all, it is everyone’s responsibility to ensure the success of your business.

## **How often do they happen?**

Many organisations are unaware if they suffer from crime because employees are not encouraged to identify security infringements (actual and potential) and management systems do not always exist to measure the effect of crime.

A security register / diary should always be maintained. If details of incidents are recorded, including every associated cost, then these can always be

analysed at a later date to discover trends and identify the most effective preventive action.

Although commercial burglaries may be rife in a particular area, most businesses only become aware of a high crime risk when it happens to them. Regrettably, it is only then when most organisations consider crime prevention.

The likelihood of a second or subsequent attack on the same premises within a short time is very high.

The criminals' motivation for the attack will probably remain (eg new computers will be quickly installed) and the offenders know there is a low risk of getting caught because they have already succeeded once. In addition, many organisations do not respond quickly to an attack - often the security will only be improved long after the stock has been replaced.

## How serious is the event?

Even relatively minor crime incidents can have a major impact on a business.

An example could be a computer stolen in a burglary. In most cases, it is not the actual computer that is of concern (the Primary Costs), nor the repair costs to the building or the lack of work achieved whilst a replacement is sought (the Secondary Costs). It is the suspicion that others now have possession of confidential business information and also the fear that clients may discover that confidential information has been removed. It would be exceedingly difficult to mitigate any losses against these "Repercussion Costs" by insurance, as the effects cannot be quantified.

Repercussion Costs are often the most damaging to a business. Financial loss and employee satisfaction are all destroyed through crime.

If the chance of a particular crime occurring is very low, and the cost of security measures is very high, then it would be more cost effective to mitigate the loss by insurance rather than meet the high preventive costs. That having been said, the subsequent high premiums, secondary losses and associated inconveniences still have to be considered, as improved security costs may not then be as significant.

Managers therefore need constantly to assess, monitor and evaluate their results (both achieved and proposed).

## Finding solutions

Detailed throughout this booklet are numerous ideas for managers to interpret for their own situation.

It should be stressed, however, that no one individual measure will prevent crime. Each security measure is part of a system to have an impact by either deterring, preventing or minimising the loss.

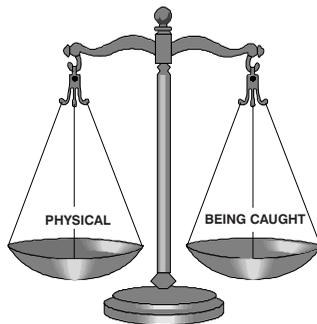
This is achieved by creating a balanced prevention strategy in which the thief is delayed trying to overcome physical devices whilst in immediate danger of being caught.

This can be illustrated in the example where one business is protected only by barred windows, locked doors and computers secured to the floor. A burglar could enter the building and spend several hours negotiating the security devices undisturbed.

In other business premises the computers are protected by CCTV cameras, extensive alarm systems and the natural surveillance afforded by passing traffic. A burglar may simply force his way into the building in a “smash & grab” style, and escape before any person could react to the incident.

The solution is to incorporate physical security devices that delay a burglar from committing a “smash & grab” offence, but also to install security devices which notify everybody that the building is under attack.

This balance prevention strategy means that they will either give up or be caught (most thieves will not remain longer than 3 minutes after the alarm has activated).



# Why Me?

One of the most effective strategies in trying to prevent burglary is to ask yourself the question “Why would a burglar want to break into *my* premises?”.

Listed below are a few simple tips to deter a burglar from choosing your business, in addition to the many others throughout the booklet.

## Signs

Some businesses unnecessarily advertise to a thief by placing nameboards and signs outside the premises. Examples include warehouses erecting external signs like “...Computer Chips Ltd” or “... Sportswear Ltd”. If there are no benefits to advertising to the public what is inside your property, then don’t advertise to a burglar!

## Questionnaires

Criminal intelligence now indicates that professional criminals may be targeting businesses from trade information publications. Always be aware of disclosing confidential information, especially about computer systems, hardware, software, and details of senior IT personnel. This information would clearly benefit a prospective thief.

## Working Late?

Burglars don’t want to be disturbed by workers in the premises. You could trick thieves into thinking you are working late, or that you have staff cover 24 hours a day, by leaving selected lights on around the premises. These may be controlled by switching devices made primarily for domestic use.

## Flat Above?

Many small offices and shops could benefit from making people think that there is an occupied flat incorporated in or above the property.

This tends to be particularly relevant to small shops where they can easily make an upstairs storeroom look like a flat by fitting curtains and timer lights. Even a false door bell push outside labelled “Flat 1” can be a deterrent.

## Nothing to Steal

If a thief did not want to steal anything from your property, then the level of security would not need to be as extensive.

You can reduce a thief’s desire to steal property by permanently marking it in an obvious position (see the identifiable property section).

Do not underestimate the importance of keeping valuables out of sight. A computer and printer near a window is nothing more than an advertisement to a thief.

Similarly, cash tills in closed retail premises should be kept open to show that all the money has been removed.

Many schools are now learning the benefit of using only audio and video equipment which is not attractive to the majority of thieves eg silver fronted video recorders and wood grain effect televisions. Alternatively any item can be rendered “undesirable” by, for example, simply painting it orange or green. Some schools always tip a tin of bright paint over a computer’s case for this reason (with the internal components temporarily removed until the paint is dry!).

Although this last tip may not be appropriate to many business, it illustrates the point that as new equipment is purchased the crime risk constantly changes.

## **Rubbish**

Rubbish can provide a ready source of ammunition for arson attacks.

Even if the fire is not malicious, careless litter and rubbish can easily cause accidental fires.

Your rubbish can also provide a thief with valuable information - not just information which is subject to Data Protection or even confidential client information, but the waste boxes will inform a burglar that you have new computers and printers.

Carefully consider where all rubbish is stored. If a locked “out-house” type store cannot be arranged, consider a lockable bin or skip.

Alternatively lock and chain waste bins, especially wheeled skips, to a strategically placed post away from the building. If the bins were set on fire, the damage would be minimal.

## **Graffiti**

Neglect is infectious. All graffiti should be removed as soon as possible, thus eventually deterring vandals.

A variety of surface treatments are available which will make any graffiti easier to remove. It is often cost effective to prepare the more vulnerable areas of walls and fences from any future damage.

# *Outside: First Line of Defence*

Making thieves feel exposed when they approach your property can help. People passing by your unoccupied property should be suspicious of an intruder before he attempts actually to enter the building.

Similarly, restricting vehicles from being driven right up to the closed building will greatly assist in minimising your loss. What criminal would want to make several journeys, carrying the stock all the way to a car parked some considerable distance away?

Restricting vehicles from approaching the closed premises also assists in preventing ram-raid type offences.

Although not everyone can control the immediate environment surrounding their business premises, it is still worthwhile considering these points. Staff from other neighbouring properties may also wish to assist in a crime prevention project that would benefit you all, eg a shop's location may not make it possible to restrict vehicles from approaching at night, but staff from several shops could organise security bollards to benefit them all and ensure pedestrians are safer.

## **Bollards**

To restrict vehicles approaching your property consider bollards.

If they have to be removable, consider all the different types on the market. There is little point in installing one that would break if a vehicle drove into it.

Raised concrete flower beds make an aesthetic alternative to bollards, as do ditches and even ponds in the right situation.

## **Fences**

Thorny low hedges and low fencing (or transparent high fences) will increase security, as will outside lighting.

Most burglars break into buildings from the back. Good rear fences or hedges, coupled with a lockable side gate will help. The side gates are best positioned level with the front of the building so that they can be seen.

When choosing the type of fence you should consider the view neighbours or the public have of the front and rear of your property. A high fence may be difficult to climb over but can stop people casually observing your business. A low fence is easy to climb over but enables everybody to see a burglar.

Higher security fencing does not have to look oppressive. A galvanised palisade fence can be painted in colours suitable to the local environment. A weld-mesh fence is similar to a chain-link type, but far more secure. Whilst being too small to obtain a foothold, the many small holes make the fence appear transparent. It is difficult and time consuming for potential intruders to cut the sections.

## Barbed Wire

Barbed wire may be used to defend your property, but the law puts certain restrictions on its use.

Section 164 Highways Act 1980, says that where on land adjoining a highway there is a fence made with barbed wire in or on it and the wire is a nuisance to the highway, a notice may be issued by the Local Authority for the nuisance to be removed.

Being a nuisance means that it is likely to cause injury to people or animals using the highway.

In practice, most Local Authority Highways Departments usually consider that barbed wire lower than eight feet from the ground could be a nuisance to highway users.

The term “Barbed Wire” means anything with spikes or jagged projections, so would also include razor wire and the wooden carpet gripper strips which have nails sticking up through the wood.

If the barbed wire is not adjoining the highway and an injury results, you could still be faced with a claim for damages under the Occupier Liability Acts. Occupiers of premises have a duty of care, to people entering or using their premises. This duty even extends to trespassers, although it is not as extensive as it is to people lawfully using or visiting the premises. So a burglar, who could not be aware that barbed wire was on top of a fence and injured himself on it, could have a claim against you despite the fact that he was a trespasser.

If you wish to have some sort of barbed wire protecting your property, it may be a good idea to check with your insurance company that they would cover you in the event of a person claiming for an injury caused.

An important consideration is also people innocently hurting themselves on your barbed wire, eg a police officer checking an alarm activation or a young child trying to retrieve a football. This sort of injury could result in unwelcome media attention and thereby harming an established company's reputation.

## Electric Fencing

Electric fencing is not as unrealistic as may be first thought. There are now companies offering this product as a cost effective, viable option. Naturally, the electric fence has to be installed to defined specifications.

A specialist installation company could assist with further enquiries.

## Lighting

There are several types of external lighting systems.

### **- Floodlights**

This type of system uses a sensor which, when it has detected a person in its range, automatically switches on a light. The light is usually a high powered floodlight, but may be any type of lighting unit.

The Quartz Halogen type floodlight coupled to a Passive Infra-Red (PIR) sensor is now very popular, with the prices falling considerably over the last few years.

This type of unit may help to reduce the fear of crime. Visitors or employees using the car park when it is dark feel safer when their surroundings are well illuminated.

The better systems have the sensor in a separate unit from the light. This enables you to have more than one PIR sensor or light, linked together in one system. In any case, remember to fit them in locations where it would be difficult to damage them.

### **- Low Wattage Lights**

Some people prefer external lighting that comes on automatically at dusk and stays on all night until dawn.

The photocell darkness detector unit can operate any number or style of lights, from ornate coach lights to practical bulkhead lamps.

If low wattage economy bulbs are used these can cost less than 1p per night in electricity.

Siting of these lights is important to ensure that dark shadowed areas are not created. Unlit areas can provide a hiding place for a thief or instil a fear that someone could be hiding there.

# *Physical Security*

## **Check Insurance**

Most insurance companies now insist on a specified level of physical security, detailed in your policy. Check the small print and if in doubt, write to your broker before it is too late. Some insurance companies will even offer a discount to secure premises or security surveys to ensure you obtain appropriate advice.

## **Doors - External**

Locks are only as good as the quality of the wood in the door and frame, or as the fittings of the frame. Before fitting any additional locks it may be better to have a builder or joiner further secure the door frame to the brickwork.

Check your door to see if it has weak wooden panels. Some traditional rear doors which are glazed at the top but have a plywood panel at the bottom can be vulnerable. You can strengthen it by screwing on a piece of 1/2" exterior grade plywood. Cover the screw heads with filler or use security screws (designed not to be unscrewed). If the panel were painted the colour of your door, it wouldn't be that noticeable but is much harder to force.

For a stronger fixture, the new panel can be made out of metal or bolted straight through the door itself using round headed bolts.

Do not forget the hinged edge of all doors. Hinge bolts are metal "lugs" which cannot be retracted, fitted to the hinge edge of the door. When the door is in the closed position, these hinge bolts help to prevent the door being taken out of the frame. This is especially useful if the hinges are exposed (as is the case on most outward opening doors).

## **Mortise Locks**

If you have wooden external doors to your property, you are advised to fit a mortise dead lock that needs a key to open it from either side of the door. If you choose one that conforms to British Standards (BS3621) or has at least 5 levers, this should be acceptable.

To disperse the force on a door when someone tries to kick it down, many people fit two mortise locks, widely spaced.

Check the door is thick enough to accept the locks and keep its strength, although it may be better to approach a qualified locksmith for advice.

## Bolts

Mortise bolts tend to be more secure than the ornate little draw bolts, which are suitable only for cupboards, and not as unsightly as a big draw bolt.

With a mortise bolt one key fits all. When it is rotated in the keyhole it makes a bolt shoot out of the door itself into the door frame.

They are most effective when two are placed on a door, one near to the top and one near to the bottom.

The key can be used only on the inside of the door, so put them only on doors by which you do not leave.

## Door Drop- Bars

Security devices can be specially made.

A metal girder can be dropped into a horizontal bracket on either side of the door - on the inside, of course. Although it is not normally necessary, this bar can be secured in position with padlocks. It could even be hinged so that anyone could move the heavy bar out of the way.

## Fire Doors

Contrary to popular belief, it is usually permissible to fit additional locks to external fire doors. However, when the property is occupied a fire door must be capable of being opened in one quick and easy action. Your life may depend on it!

It is usually acceptable to fit extra locks on fire doors as long as you have an established system to ensure the extra locks are taken off when the first person enters the building and not replaced until the last person leaves. A good example could be padlocks fitted to all the fire doors in a factory. The removed padlocks are retained on a peg-board in the boss's office so that even a quick glance would show which door had not been made safe.

To ensure that an additionally secured door is always safe, it is possible to secure the door with an electro-magnetic lock which pulls the door into the frame. These aren't as unusual as they sound. They are quickly becoming a very common locking device used with most combination or card swipe mechanisms. The lock is linked into the fire alarm system so that when the fire alarm activates the power to the door is cut off and the door may be opened. If required, a separate push switch can be fitted near the door to allow easy access or egress.

It must be stressed that your personnel safety is more important than the safety of tangible assets. If you are in any doubt that you may be compromising the safety of your staff in the event of fire, obtain advice from your local fire station.

Some fire doors may benefit from having a separate alarm fitted. Staff misuse of fire doors would then be discouraged.

## Gated Doors

To improve the security of an external door, a metal gate could be fitted externally over the door. Similar to a traditional side gate from a house, the gate could offer some of the benefits of a roller shutter.

## Roller Shutters

Dependent on the individual criminal risk to your premises, it may be appropriate to fit metal security shutters.

The consequences of fitting shutters should be explored from every aspect before a decision is made. For example, shutters may be prohibited by local authority planning requirements; they may restrict prospective sales to “window shoppers”; they may restrict the public from actually seeing a burglar in the premises; oppressive shutters may, if everyone fitted them, curb legitimate use of the area due to a perceived fear of crime - especially if they become a target for graffiti.

A shutter on the inside of a display window can be more effective than one placed on the outside, due to the fact that the breaking of the glass would activate the alarm before the shutter is forced. However, if it is the window itself that has to be protected from damage (eg a furriers from attack by animal welfare groups) then the type of shutter, and its placement, would need to be reconsidered.

Carefully consider the type of locking mechanism fitted. Most shutters would benefit from additional padlocks fitted along the bottom of the shutter, about every 6 to 10 feet.

All shutters should have an alarm contact fitted so that the alarm is activated at the first moment a burglar tries to gain entry.

## Window Locks

To obtain the correct type of lock for a wooden framed window, try to choose the sort which does not involve any of the window catches. The type of lock that pulls the window into the frame with a key are normally stronger. They may even stop a person forcing the window open or leaning through a smaller window to undo it.

If the opening section of the window is quite large, fit two window locks.

Window locks can be supplied and fitted by a locksmith, but most types can be fitted by anybody who can use a screwdriver.

Self-locking window locks are a little more expensive than other types, but may be more convenient to use on windows which are frequently opened and closed (canteen or lavatory windows etc.).

Louvre windows on the ground floor should generally be avoided. If you cannot replace a louvre window, consult a glazing firm who may be able to secure each pane of glass in each frame with strong adhesive.

Remember that windows of upper floors are vulnerable to a climbing burglar and one who brings ladders.

## Bars

There is now a wide range of commercially produced “bar” systems designed to protect a window. They range from simple steel bars like something from a prison cell, to subtle folding systems in a variety of colours and finishes which only become obvious when in use. Some businesses have non-oppressive designs fabricated especially for them, incorporating their company logo or name.

Some systems may be folded out of the way, or even removed, when not in use, although this may become a chore that doesn’t always get done.

Such protection does not have to be oppressive - they can even be painted white or made a feature (most cathedrals used ornate designs to successfully protect windows).

## Double Glazing

If choosing double glazed windows, it may be preferable to check to see that it is not just the handle that stops a window from opening. Many windows use a number of bolts coming out of the opening frame into the fixed frame, operated when the handle is turned. You should need a key to unlock the window.

Whether your window unit is glazed from the inside or outside you should be satisfied that the glass cannot be removed without it being broken. A good glazier familiar with UPVC frames should be able to secure existing externally beaded frames.

Fitting extra locks to UPVC or aluminium framed doors is usually beyond the DIY amateur. If the door does not lock along its full length, consult a glazier or locksmith for advice, or ask them if they can do the job.

It is advisable to check with the company which installed the double glazing before fitting any additional locks to windows or doors. Unauthorised fitting may invalidate the guarantee.

## Glass

Laminated glass is preferable to toughened glass, for security and safety. When broken, toughened glass breaks into many small pieces over the entire pane of glass. Laminated glass will break as normal glass, but will hold in place in the window, slowing down a burglar from entering, or stopping a child from cutting him or her self. The thicker panes of laminate glass are often called “unbreakable”.

Georgian wired glass is not a security glass - it is designed for fire resistance. Polycarbonate, a “plastic” type of glazing material, is unbreakable during normal use. However, the disadvantages are that most types can be easily scratched and usually discolour with age.

Specialist contractors can fit a security film to most types of existing glazing. Apart from affording protection from burglars and bomb blasts, these can often pay for themselves through energy efficiency.

## Doors - Internal

Locking internal doors while you are away from the business can sometimes stop a burglar from going further into the property, but in other instances the locking of an internal door can result in a lot more damage if the door is smashed down.

As with exterior doors consider the strength of the wood in the door and how well the door frame is secured before fitting any lock or bolt.

## Keys

Don't leave spare keys for your windows and doors about the building. All keys that have to be used during the normal working day should be retained in a secure cabinet designed for that purpose.

There should be strict control of who borrows keys, a trusted employee allocating only that specific key.

It may be appropriate for your business to use only security keys - keys which can be copied only by a designated locksmith under proper authorisation.

Never leave keys in the door locks. This makes it easy for a burglar to unlock them and remove larger items from your property.

## Walls & Roofs

Although it is often not very cost effective to replace roofs or walls, weak sections, especially in some modern industrial units, may need additional protection.

This can often be achieved by cladding the internal wall or roof with weldmesh fence panels. Any burglar entering through the wall would then have to negotiate the new panel - whilst, if the system had been designed correctly, the alarm had been activated.

## Post Boxes

Letter boxes give easy access for the both the determined arsonist and the prankster to fire a building.

Specially constructed post boxes are available which are separate from the building. Some now have heat sensors and fire extinguishers incorporated.

## Safes

If you wish to protect items of high value, check with your insurance company first to see if they recommend any particular type of safe.

Some safes appear cheap to purchase, but are very difficult to fit. Discussing your needs with a qualified locksmith will help.

## Smoke Generating Units

Systems are now available that fill an area with thick smoke in seconds when an intruder is detected, making it impossible to see for more than a half a metre.

These systems are designed to keep an intruder out of a building rather than trap a burglar inside.

This type of security device is constantly being improved. There are now several "types" of smoke making it possible to install these devices in most environments without it damaging your property or stock.

Further advice can be obtained from the manufacturers, or approved alarm companies.

## Fire

With all this security some people worry about escaping from a fire. Good security is designed to stop burglars getting in, not people getting out. Burglars want to operate quietly without being seen, whereas if there was a fire you want everybody to see and hear you.

Fire prevention may be a requirement in law, although it is obviously within everyone's interest to make sure they are safe. If in any doubt whatsoever, always take expert advice.

Remember to be safe as well as secure.

## Permission?

Remember that whenever considering the use of any external protection, consideration should be given to any Local Authority planning permission requirements.

Your local Planning Department will offer advice before costly mistakes are made.

# Alarms

Burglars don't like to draw attention to themselves. The sound of an alarm will cause most burglars to grab what they can quickly before making their escape, without exploring the rest of the building.

Choosing the correct alarm system can be quite difficult due to the variety of features available.

## Which Type of System?

In a nutshell, there are two types of alarm system: Type A and Type B.

Both types of alarm system should have an automatic cut-off so that the noise does not continue for more than 20 minutes.

### - Type A (Remote Signalling) Alarms

A monitored alarm system, also known as a "remote signalling" system or "Police Call", is similar to a Type B system, but is monitored by a private central station 24hrs a day.

On activation the alarm system automatically informs an approved monitoring station somewhere in the country, who will notify the police on a dedicated line. You can give a password or code number to stop a false alarm.

Unlike monitored alarms at domestic properties, systems at commercial premises cannot make any audible sound at the scene for 10 minutes. This allows time for the police to attend and apprehend the intruders.

This type of alarm system is particularly suitable for isolated buildings away from residents, or where you do not wish to rely on the assistance of neighbours.

Discuss with the alarm company the various ways in which the alarm system can be protected from attack by a burglar (eg if the phone wires are cut, will the alarm still activate?). Enquire about the additional annual charge for the monitoring.

### - Type B (Audible Only) Alarms

If a thief sets off the alarm, or you press a personal attack button, it will ring instantly outside whether in commercial or domestic property. This system then relies on someone hearing the noise as it does not signal to a monitoring station or the police.

You are advised to leave key-holder details with your local police. The key-holder may be any person you trust.

The cost of this type of alarm system should be for the installation only, although some customers prefer to take out a service and maintenance contract.

DIY “Bells Only” systems are currently available, but make sure that the system you are considering conforms to BS6707. If you are considering fitting an alarm yourself, you should be fully competent in working with electricity. You should also ensure someone else is totally familiar with the system for the occasions when you are not opening or closing the premises yourself.

Most people prefer to choose an alarm company recognised by their insurance company.

## **Which Alarm Company?**

### **- Type A (Remote Signalling) Alarms**

Police will only attend remote signalling alarms installed by alarm companies whose business is subject to inspection by a recognised Independent Inspectorate organisation.

Currently, these Inspectorates are:

NACOSS (National Approval Council for Security Systems)

Tel. 01628 637512

SSAIB (Security Systems and Alarm Inspection Board)

Tel. 0191 296 3242

AISC (Alarm Inspectorate Security Council)

Tel. 01704 500 897

IAI (Independent Alarm Inspectorate)

Tel. 07000 780 831 or 01706 210 999

Integrity 2000

Tel. 01277 262 000

These organisations publish lists of authorised alarm fitting companies.

### **- Type B (Audible Only) Alarms**

The police do not recommend individual alarm companies (or even “recognised” companies). Of course, most of the companies that install Type A alarms also install Type B alarms.

## What Should I Ask?

You should seek answers to the following questions:-

- *Before disclosing personal security details, have I checked the address and credentials of the company and seen proof of identity from their representative?*
- *Is the company subject to an independent inspection process and if so by which organisation?*
- *Is the installation of an alarm a requirement of my insurance company and if so, is the company acceptable to my insurer?*
- *Have I sought written quotations from at least three alarm installers?*
- *Type A (Remote Signalling) Alarms only - Can the company representative provide me with a list of police rules for occupiers of premises with alarms and written confirmation that the alarm and the company are currently acceptable to the local police for the transmission of alarm messages from new installations?*
- *Does the quotation:*
  - specify that the installation will be to British Standard 4737 or BS 7042 (high security systems), or if it is a wire free alarm, BS 6799 clause 6 as amended by NACOSS Code of Practice NACP 12?*
  - include the terms of maintenance and monitoring contracts?*
- *Do they operate a 24 hour call-out service and emergency attendance within 4 hours?*

## Personal Attack Buttons

### - Type A (Remote Signalling) Alarms

Personal attack buttons should not be used as an easy way to summon the police, unless you are unable to get to the phone without putting yourself in danger. A “999” call is always preferable, both to you and the police.

### - Type B (Audible Only) Alarms

The only purpose of a personal attack button in a Type B alarm system would be to make a noise, thus attracting attention, and scare the attacker away.

In many situations the noise would scare away shoplifters, attackers, rowdy customers, etc. However, in some situations it could make an attacker more annoyed.

The only answer is to have good staff training. All staff should know under what circumstances it would be preferable to press the button, why they are actually pressing it and what happens when they press it. See the section on Robbery.

## Designing the System

Remember to try and achieve an alarm system that will activate at the first stage of entry into your building, not just when someone has actually entered a room. This could be achieved by having alarm contacts fixed to roller shutters, break-glass detectors over windows or, at the very least, detectors in the reception and corridors, etc. The installing alarm company can advise you in this respect.

Passive infra-red detectors (alarm sensors fitted in the corner of rooms) have a red light that illuminates when the sensor detects someone, regardless of whether the alarm system is switched on or not. It has been found that some intruders will plan their route through a building so that they will not activate the alarm. The alarm engineer can easily disable the light without affecting the sensor's main function.

## Generally..

Consider an installation contract carefully before you sign, checking all details. Check such things as whether you own or rent the system, the maintenance contract, the cost and whether it could be easily operated by all your appropriate employees.

An alarm system should cause no mess to the decor, since the wiring will be concealed.

All alarm calls should be treated as genuine by neighbours and they should be encouraged to call the police if they see something suspicious, whether the alarm is monitored or not.

Remember that the employees who may be opening or closing the premises need to be fully conversant with the system. False calls will result in the alarm response being withdrawn by the police, which may affect your insurance cover.

**Try to avoid false alarm calls. False calls can cause a loss of credibility with neighbours, who may stop taking any notice of your alarm.**

# CCTV

## Why CCTV ?

Before you start looking at the many different types of CCTV systems which are available today, first ask yourself the question “Why do I want CCTV?” or “What do I want to achieve from a CCTV system?”.

There are only three business objectives in installing CCTV:-

- *the Detection of Offenders*
- *the Anticipation of Offences*
- *the Prevention of Crime*

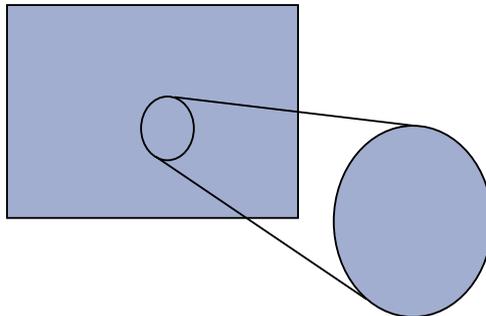
Each point will be explained in detail:-

## Objective: Detection of Offenders

Time and time again people give the police a video tape of an entire floor area and expect them to enhance the picture so that they can get a perfect picture of an offender.

The reality is totally different. The technology does not exist to enlarge and enhance any CCTV picture so that you can, for example, read a newspaper that someone in a crowd is holding.

A TV Camera breaks things down into little squares called pixels. When you zoom in on a recorded picture, all you get is a closer view of these little pixels. This becomes an unrecognisable shape that could be anyone.



With this in mind, you should try and get the best close-up you can with a camera. In a shop, this usually means facing a camera at the door so you will get a clear head and shoulders shot of everyone entering. No matter what happens in the shop, you will have already recorded a good picture to use in identification. Remember, though, that a bright background outside may cause the exposure to overcompensate and silhouette the person in the picture.



The quality of the picture will depreciate the longer the tape is set to record. For example a picture from a tape recorded on 36 hour time-lapse, or even “long play”, will be appreciably worse in quality than a picture from one recorded at normal speed.

Remember that you must have a system which outlines how often a video tape is used and for how long each tape is retained. You may wish to keep all recorded tapes for a set time in case offences do not get discovered until a much later time or date.

Also remember that all video tapes have a limited life, as the picture quality becomes appreciably worse with use. A good “rule of thumb” is to use a tape for only 12 recordings. The video recorder itself will also need regular maintenance.

When you are recording video images, it is important to ensure that the video recorder itself is secure. Both domestic and industrial recording machines are very desirable to a thief, and you don’t want the evidence to be stolen!

Do not assume that just because you have a good clear picture of the offender that the crime will be detected and all stolen property recovered. People seem to forget that the offender has got to be recognised by someone. Of all the thousands of CCTV pictures taken every day, very few end up in the news or on a TV crime show!

## **Objective: Anticipation of Offences**

Another possible objective of installing a CCTV system is to anticipate offences about to be committed, so that action can be taken to stop the suspect before a crime is committed.

An example of this objective is where security guards monitor a camera overlooking a car park. When they see suspicious people they either go out themselves to prevent the crime or call the police.

The problem with trying to achieve this objective is that for the system to be effective, someone has to sit monitoring the video screens all the time. A receptionist or secretary cannot be expected to constantly monitor the screens whilst doing another job, and then be held responsible for not seeing something happen. Even trained security staff have a limited concentration span.

It is for these reasons that some very advanced systems have had incorporated into them a movement alarm that notifies an operator if something moves within the camera's field of vision.

It is dependent on the individual circumstances whether the video image should be recorded. In some situations the person monitoring the screens could switch on the video recorder only when something begins to happen. Alternatively, other people prefer to record constantly in case a person misses seeing something (in which case reference should be made to the previous objective).

A CCTV system may be required to verify a caller at a door. This type of situation would also fall under this objective as the occupant has installed the system to anticipate an offender calling and then being able to restrict entry. A person's attention is normally drawn to the screen due to a doorbell or similar and it is usually not necessary to record the image.

## **Objective: Prevention of Crime**

Most people considering the installation of a CCTV system have the main objective of trying to prevent crime. That is, they do not want to detect or anticipate offences, only to stop them happening in the first place!

For a CCTV system to be a preventive measure against any potential offender, it is obvious that the criminal has to know that you have a CCTV system. Cameras should be visible and obtrusive - not covert. Warning signs & logos should be placed at all possible points of entry to advertise your system, even if all the cameras are "dummy" units!

Recent criminological research has shown that CCTV systems are more effective in preventing crime if monitors are placed at the points of entry to a shop or building showing live coverage of that point of entry.

It is for these reasons that some premises combine a cheap monitored system - monitors which the public can see - with dummy cameras and many warning signs.

## Summary

CCTV should not be perceived as a magic wand for preventing crime - it is just another crime prevention tool from a long list available to a business.

# Security Guards

Although security guards possess no special powers of arrest different from any other member of the public, they can range from someone simply taken off the street and given only a flat cap, to highly trained professionals from established organisations.

A security guard used in the correct environment may not only assist in reducing crime, but can also reduce the fear of crime by reassuring the public and employees.

Security staff can be hired from various manned guarding businesses, or employed directly by the company as with any other member of staff.

## Contract Guarding Companies

The police do not recommend or endorse any individual security company.

Suggested questions which could be used when enquiring about obtaining such services include:-

- *How long has the company been trading?*
- *What kind of liability and indemnity insurance does the company have?*
- *Does the company issue written contracts?*
- *What is the company's vetting procedure for employing staff?*
- *Do the company's guards have terms of employment?  
(maximum working hours per week, maximum 5 shifts per week)*
- *What type of uniform does the company use and do they produce identity cards?*
- *Are staff trained and to what qualifications?*
- *Will the company sub-contract to a lesser security company?*
- *Does the company operate a control room or how are staff controlled supervised in work situations?*
- *Does the company work to an Industry Code of Practice (BS 7499)?*
- *Has the company independent certification to verify this?*
- *Can they supply references from companies similar to yourself?*

## Security Guard Employees

Consideration should be given to a replacement when a guard is ill or on holiday.

Careful consideration should also be given to the consequences from any unlawful arrest. The employers of the security guard may be liable to pay any damages under the principle of “vicarious liability”.

Dependent on the circumstances, it is possible that the most damaging consequence of any civil action for wrongful arrest may be the publicity and ensuing damage to the company name that such an incident could attract.

# *Identifiable Property*

If your computer were stolen, would you know its make, model and serial number? If you could find the receipt, you will probably be able to find out the make and model. Unless, however, you've made a special effort to write the serial number down, your computer would be no different from the millions of others stolen all over the country.

If the serial number of a stolen item was known, it could then be circulated throughout the country as stolen, in a similar way to a registration number of a stolen car.

Not only are your chances remote of getting unidentifiable possessions returned, but also without being able to prove an item was stolen it can be very difficult to substantiate a charge against a suspect. Arresting offenders isn't difficult. Getting evidence is!

Don't just restrict your list to highly expensive items like computers and their peripherals. Telephones and fax machines are just as desirable to a thief.

## **Ultra-Violet Marking**

Available in all good stationers, security shops, etc., are ultra-violet marker pens for about \$1.00.

These felt-tip type pens are designed for writing on your property, including audio/visual equipment, in an ink that is invisible to the eye under normal light.

All Police Stations in the country have portable lights that clearly illuminate the writing on such possessions.

By printing your postcode followed by the street number, or the first three letters of your property's name, it is possible to trace an owner from anywhere in the country.

Just a few tips, though. Always mark your items underneath as the postcode can be slightly visible on non-porous surfaces, and try to renew every twelve months. Don't worry about an impending move. Simply postcode your items again. Then the police only have to make two or three phone calls to make to trace an owner instead of two or three thousand.

## **Branded!**

Although secretly marking possessions may be ideal for certain articles, it would be far better to make this identification obvious to a thief, thus deterring the theft in the first place!

There are a variety of systems available, from elaborate branding irons which will emboss your company name or postcode into the surface, to a kit which includes a pre-arranged stencil and acidic paste for neatly marking any surface. Systems don't have to be expensive. Some schools simply make a thin cardboard stencil of their postcode and spray all equipment with a paint which will "eat" into the surface (car bumper paint is ideal for most plastics). Try it on a sample first!

## Photographs

For small items which obviously cannot easily be postcoded with an ultra-violet pen, a picture is worth a thousand words!

Photographing all items against a ruler is better than any detailed description, making it easier to make comparisons with found items.

If you have a video camera with a "Macro" lens (for close-up filming), then video record all your possessions.

## Not Wanted!

If items are suitably marked so that the true owner is permanently visible, then most criminals would not want to steal them. This has the benefit of reducing the security needed to protect a building.

## Forensic Coded Solutions: Liquid

Becoming very popular in recent years is a system of painting a special forensically coded solution over items from large TVs to small computer chips.

This solution is visible only under ultra-violet light.

Each batch of the painting solution is made specifically for just one customer and the code of the paint recorded at the Home Office forensic science laboratory. In the event of the property being stolen and recovered by the police, a tiny paint sample is removed for examination. From this swab it is possible to trace the true owner.

## Forensic Coded Solutions: Spray

It is now possible to install sprinkler devices in buildings so that if an intruder were to activate the alarm, a forensically coded solution would be sprayed over both the intruder and whatever property he is stealing.

The solution is similar to the paint described above in that it is only visible under ultra-violet light.

Warning signs placed around the building are important if a criminal is to be deterred.

Further advice can be obtained from the manufacturers or approved alarm companies.

## **Asset Records**

It is imperative to maintain accurate records of all the company's tangible assets, including make, model, serial number, whether identifiable or post coded and the physical location within the company.

If a stolen item were returned to your business, it would be necessary for you to state whether that item had been sold, thrown away or stolen.

In the case of computers, the asset record should contain details of authorised operating systems and software installed. This, amongst other reasons, enables a speedy recovery after any incident.

# Computer Security

Computers are very attractive to a thief.

The theft of a computer can have far reaching implications for a business. It's not just the replacement of the hardware that is the key issue, nor the interruption to the business until it is replaced. It is the fact that any person could have your data and use it for their own commercial advantage.

## The Targets

The main targets are:-

### - **The File Server**

The heart of your network is very costly to purchase and often critical to a core business function. It is therefore worth taking extra precautions to protect this one item of equipment.

### - **The Personal Computer**

There are many examples of thieves not stealing the entire unit, but simply stealing the valuable components within (RAM, SIMMs, processors, hard drives). It is suspected that staff theft is also responsible for the loss of certain components, especially memory chips ("Chip Dipping").

### - **The Laptop**

A very portable and valuable piece of property, easily identified by a thief when carried in a public place. Hide its designer case in a plastic carrier bag. The handles can be carried together quite easily. If you have a long walk from a car park to the office, consider dropping your laptop off at reception or returning in your car to collect it on your way home. Be vigilant in the vicinity of airports and railway stations. Obviously, these points are also for personal safety reasons.

### - **The Peripherals**

Computer accessories (especially colour and laser printers) may not be as critical to your business as a computer, but they are very attractive to a thief. The sight of a desirable printer in the reception area or through an office window may attract unwelcome attention.

## Physical Solutions

Always ensure keys are removed from lockable computer cases. There are a number of extra security devices that can physically restrain the computer. Briefly, these include:-

### - Cable Ties

A cheap, low security restraint which attaches the equipment to either furniture, the wall or floor (a minimum of 8mm diameter cable is recommended). In general, these do not protect the computer's components, but they do deter the casual removal of an item whilst you are distracted.

### - Security Screws

The replacement of existing computer cabinet screws will go some way to preventing "downgrades" of memory by employees, but the chip thief may still simply smash a way into the processor unit.

### - Lock down Plates

Generally, locking the base of the computer to the desk is more secure than using cable devices. It must be stressed, however, that this device tends only to be effective when used as part of a general security package, eg to slow down a thief whilst an alarm is ringing.

This type of device tends not to protect the internal computer components.

### - Entrapment Devices

These surround the whole computer processor unit, allowing it to be bolted down.

Some devices rely on self-adhesive plates to adhere to the desk, but they are only as good as the laminate on the desk.

Models are also available for securing laptops in vehicles or on a desk. Authorised removal is easy with a key.

The security standard LPS 1214 is applicable to entrapment devices tested by the Loss Prevention Council.

### - Security Cabinets

These are basically lockable steel safes that house the processor unit, again bolted down for maximum protection.

This device probably offers the most secure environment and is therefore ideal for file servers and critical personal computers.

## Computer Alarms

There are a number of electronic devices that can be installed around, or in, the computer:-

### - **Loop Alarms**

These effectively connect the computer to either “a stand alone” alarm or an existing alarm system.

### - **Movement Sensors**

Detecting movement of the computer, the alarm activates only when a unit is unplugged. A common type fits into the expansion slot within the computer and contains various devices to detect movement.

It is always wise to check with your supplier that fitting a device will not invalidate any warranty.

### - **Proximity Alarms**

These work on the principle that the alarm sounds when a computer is moved out of a protected area. They tend to be similar to a clothing store tagging system.

Whilst this type of alarm may be effective for detecting someone tampering with or stealing a computer during office hours, their effectiveness outside working hours is questionable.

### - **Network Monitoring**

Where a network exists, it is possible to monitor all the connected computers. However, the systems must be monitored at all times so that a person knows when to respond to an attack.

## Data Security

Use a disk lock to prevent unauthorised copying or importing of data which may contain a virus.

Make regular back-ups to minimise potential loss in case the worst scenario happens and ensure the back-ups are stored off site (at least 500 metres is preferred).

Remember that even if data is not destroyed in a disaster, access could be denied to all staff for as long as several weeks (as has been the case in recent bombings).

# Access Control

Some criminals won't go to the trouble of breaking into your business premises, if they can just walk straight in.

Bogus callers come in many shapes and sizes. They could be men or women, dressed in overalls or suits.

Not having correct access control not only compromises the security of tangible business assets, but it could also:

- *have the potential for making staff prone to violent attacks;*
- *place staff possessions at risk from theft: How often are jackets left on a chair in an office with a wallet in the pocket?;*
- *increase the opportunity for persons to hide on the premises until the building is closed; and*
- *increase the opportunity for terrorist attack.*

## External Entrance

It is good practice to limit the number of outside access / egress points to as few as possible (see Fire Doors in the Physical Security section). This would limit the areas to be controlled, thereby reducing the cost.

## Reception Areas

In most situations the reception area will need to be staffed, either by a receptionist, concierge or security guard. However, consideration should be given to when the person tasked with security in this reception cannot be present for any reason from a refreshment break to holiday periods.

Whereas personal identity cards may be necessary for employees, no one receptionist could possibly check the identity of every employee entering a large building. They cannot be informed of every lost card, personnel suspensions and dismissals, etc.

It is therefore preferred practice to have a physical device to control access (a turnstile, self-closing door, etc) overseen by a member of staff (to prohibit by-passing the barrier).

There are many manufacturers supplying aesthetic physical controls. Turnstiles, glass screens and doors have become discreet, non-oppressive in design, without compromising their function of access control.

## Control Devices

In situations where there are few users requiring infrequent access, a key controlled lock is cost effective. But for situations with more staff and frequent use, other solutions are available:-

### - Coded Lock

A coded door lock can be mechanical or electrical. These require a pre-determined code (letters or numbers) to be pressed before the door becomes unlocked.

These systems tend to be effective only in limited use situations not demanding too much pedestrian traffic.

With any lock where all the users share the same code, there will always be potential problems associated with people leaving. Every legitimate user then has to be informed of the new code.

It is not uncommon for the code in a large business to be well known by everyone, employees, paper-boy, window cleaner, office cleaners, etc.

Consecutive or repetitive numbers should be avoided. Codes should be regularly changed.

### - Card Swipes

Systems in which a personal identity card is used electronically to afford entry to a building are becoming very affordable and a cost effective option for a business.

The action of using the card swipe can be used to control a variety of security procedures, from simple door locking mechanisms to turnstiles and alarm system control.

The systems available range from the simple to the elaborate. An inexpensive type uses pairs of cards. One is issued to the employee and the other is retained by the employer. The act of swiping the employer's card through the doors for which that particular employee is permitted automatically authorises that employee entry.

More advanced systems are computer controlled and can be used for interrogating the system for a variety of reasons (eg time keeping).

In a situation where a greater level of security is needed, a coded lock and card swipe system are relatively common.

Many systems now have had incorporated into them an "anti pass-out" facility, which means that whilst the employee is recorded as being in the building their card cannot be passed to someone else for them to also gain entry.

## **- Advanced systems**

As technology has increased rapidly over recent years, so has the number of systems for controlling access.

Automatic authorisation systems that read people's eyes, scan fingerprints, read identification badges from a distance (proximity readers) are no longer confined to science fiction.

If a higher level of access control is considered necessary, then the specialist manufacturers can assist.

## **Visitors**

There may be a requirement under various laws (Health & Safety, Fire, etc) for your business to record every person visiting the premises, in addition to the common sense need for security and fire safety reasons.

All visitors' details should be recorded and verified, before issuing a visitors' badge which should be easily identifiable from employees' identity badges. On leaving, visitors should surrender their badges and be booked off site.

Visitors should be escorted throughout the building, especially when leaving, rather than be left to wander on their own. This also applies to delivery workers, service repair visitors, etc

## **Internal Access**

Visitors and employees should be excluded from certain designated areas inside the premises.

These designated areas (eg computer rooms, data storage areas, wages department, stock rooms, etc) may be identified because of the risk from sabotage (a disgruntled employee), casual and determined staff theft, or sneak-in type offenders.

# Robbery

Robbery is a lot more than just theft. In every case of robbery a person has been the victim of violence, or the threat of it, and had to suffer the associated tremendous psychological trauma.

There is no exact formula to prevent the offence, but generally the more security precautions a business has, the safer it is.

You must take into account the many variables which will be found; numbers and dispositions of employees, locations of premises, interior lay-out, cash holding, etc.

In the office environment a major consideration will also be access control (see separate section).

Although the following tips are more suited to shop premises, there will be many points applicable to office situations, especially those dealing with money or other valuable goods.

## Objectives

- *Prevent the crime from happening*
- *Secure the safety of employees and customers*
- *Reduce the monetary loss*
- *Effect the arrest of offenders*

## Section 1 - Before the Hold-Up

- *The General Design, ie wide counters, etc.*
  - *Shield around till*
  - *Cashier / till can be seen by other staff*
  - *Personal attack alarm button out of sight*
- *Low aisles, to see customers around the shop*
- *People on street should be able to see in (no posters in window)*
- *Staff should have facilities to observe the street from within premises (description of vehicles before & after)*
- *Larger shops. Tills away from each other, but within view*
- *Employee in rear of shop, able to observe, call police, etc.*
- *If staff left alone, other staff in rear (not to leave shop during dinner hour, etc.)*
- *Personal Attack button and door bell to other staff upstairs, or code name for less serious incidents- and all staff know!*
- *No access to / from rear private part of shop (cheap combination lock, key, or even buzzer on door if access is not from behind counter)*

- *CCTV Cameras covering tills and customers at tills, not just at stock for shoplifting (see CCTV section)*
- *Small shop. Consider dummy CCTV, with LED (red light)*
- *CCTV or not, advertise with stickers, esp. on till and door*
- *If alone in shop building, can you ring the police without leaving shop floor?*
- *Personal Attack Alarm. Is it a Monitored alarm or just an audible bell? (Staff should know what would happen).*
- *Test alarm by prior appointment with police*
- *Look out for people surveying the shop, even from a vehicle*
- *Look out for suspicious cars and vans outside the business*
- *Keep a pen & paper by till (suspicious reg. nos., descriptions)*
- *Don't keep too much money in till (why keep ú20 notes in till?)*
- *Consider secure cabinet / safe under till with "post-box" facility for larger & excessive amount of notes*
- *If till locks, use it when you walk away*
- *Consider putting till key on "expanding string" affixed to each member of staff's belt*
- *Consider lone member of staff being joined by extra member of staff at closing times, especially when leaving shop to close the shutter, bring advertising board in, going to night safe, etc.*
- *Lock shop door before removing drawer from till / cash box*
- *Count money in rear out of sight*
- *Locking up. Don't leave alone or park in dark car park*
- *Survey street before unlocking door to leave / open up*
- *Unlocking. Consider asking a neighbouring shop to call the police if you don't give them the "thumbs up" after unlocking and checking the property.*
- *Avoid fixed and regular routines (trips to night safe, etc)*
- *Don't park regularly in a dark car parking spot - don't put shop name on parking space*
- *If money kept in safe, still consider above if you carry shop keys.*
- *Consider cash collection company*
- *Check security requirements needed on insurance policy*
- *Talk about Robbery amongst staff (even rehearse a scenario) and have ready a PLAN*

## **Section 2 - During the Hold-Up**

Extreme caution should be exercised at this stage.

There are three types of robbers:

- *The Amateur*

This type is new and inexperienced, prone to violence because he is nervous.

- *The Professional*

The committed robber is organised and ruthless, prone to violence in order to achieve his objective.

- *The Unstable*

This type is usually unpredictable in his actions, which may, for example, be due to a drug withdrawal.

### **They are all dangerous!**

Remember that no person gets paid enough to get injured (or worse) in order to protect money.

Make sure you've done the points in Section 1, it's too late during the attack!

- *Press the personal attack alarm button only if it's safe to do so.*
- *Obey the robber's instructions.*
- *Avoid sudden or jerky movements. Control all movements*
- *Try to keep calm. Don't increase his adrenaline*
- *If ordered to fill a bag with money, "stuff" money in to fill it up quicker*
- *Give him small denominations first (ú5.00 notes or even ú1.00 coins) and hold back bigger notes*
- *Don't volunteer extra money (a lot do!)*
- *Ignore your under counter safe / strong box, unless he tells you to open it*
- *Concentrate on his description (you can practice on regular customers and test each other)*
- *Note his methods. Every detail aids detection*
- *If possible look for accomplices / vehicles outside*
- *If already out of danger (second member of staff) then it is important to stay out of trouble, out of the way*

## **Section 3 - After the Hold-Up**

Every member of staff should perform specially allotted tasks, detailed below, systematically and quickly.

It is not sufficient just to bring the recommendations to the notice of staff. Constantly remind them and rehearse what each member of staff should do.

- *Speed is vital*
- *When safe to do so, look outside for vehicle leaving, etc*
- *Telephone the police and be guided by the operator*
- *Give description of thieves & cars, and means of escape / direction*
- *Lock up the shop, and ONLY let the police in*
- *Don't touch where the robber touch*
- *Don't try to determine the loss at once if it means touching anything*
- *Preserve anything left behind (a note, etc)*
- *Keep customers involved in the crime on the premises (if they're adamant about leaving, get their names & addresses)*
- *Write down time & details of events You'll soon forget the smaller points*
- *Don't discuss what's happened / descriptions, until police have attended*
- *You can lose your cool now!*

# Staff Theft

Unaccounted losses, often called “shrinkage”, accounts for an unnecessary amount of lost profit opportunity.

In the retail environment this is often blamed on customer theft - shoplifting. However, an increasing number of studies are revealing that an appreciable cause of shrinkage is due to staff theft.

It is therefore relevant to all business environments to consider the issues of staff theft. It is insufficient to simply ask yourself, “Do I have a problem?”. It is more appropriate to ask, “Do I know if I have a problem?”.

## Reasons for Ignoring

Reasons why some businesses ignore the problem may include:

Lack of data (eg stock control cannot indicate problems until the annual stock-take);

It is easier to tackle other problems (eg it is often easier to blame it on a recent burglary or on shoplifters);

It is not seen as good for morale amongst staff;

It could reflect badly on the company (eg a bank with dishonest employees could cause adverse publicity) or it may reflect badly on an individual manager’s ability.

## Vulnerable Business?

Ask yourself:

- *How easy is it to steal from this business? Can staff simply walk away with items? Are they given unrestricted access?*
- *How acceptable is it to steal? Is it simply seen as a staff “perk” and the attitude “I do enough for them” prevails?*
- *What is the punishment? Is the punishment for theft clearly defined? Is theft perceived as a dismissable offence?.*

## Profiles of Staff Theft

Address the issues of:

- *How do staff steal?*
- *What do staff steal?*
- *Which staff steal?*
- *Do staff ever get caught?*
- *How many staff steal?*
- *Why do staff steal?*
- *Where do they steal from?*
- *What stops staff theft?*

## Prevention

The most effective prevention strategy for your business depends very much on your own individual circumstances.

On examination of businesses where staff theft has been a problem, certain organisational similarities included:-

- *Large amounts of cash & stock;*
- *Minimal supervision or staff responsible for asset control;*
- *Minimal record keeping;*
- *Lax in account reconciliation;*
- *Documents were not serially numbered and checked.*

Generally, you may wish to consider:-

- *Improving staff selection procedures (eg integrity testing, etc);*
- *Define the company policy;*
- *Define employment contracts;*
- *Develop internal controls (eg stop check staff leaving, etc).*
- *Regular stock checks involving staff.*

## In conclusion

This very extensive subject has only been dealt with very briefly. It is important, however, that the subject is not ignored.

Staff theft should be measured and managed like any other business issue.

# *Watch Schemes*

An enthusiastic Business Watch scheme will reduce crime.

Protecting your business with locks, bolts and bars is fine, but you will enjoy greater security and peace of mind if everyone around you is working with you. Employees and residents in a business community possess a very specialised knowledge of their neighbourhood that even the proverbial “Village Bobby” would take years to achieve. A police officer might not recognise someone in your property as a stranger, but an employee or neighbour would.

By letting the police know of anything suspicious you see or hear, you are helping to reduce the opportunities for crime to occur. Even going to the trouble of letting a stranger who is wandering about your area know you’re keeping an eye on him helps tremendously.

This is what Watch Schemes are all about.

Watch schemes are about mutual support, being a partnership against criminal behaviour that undermines local business.

Some workers think they should not ring the police when they see something suspicious going on at a neighbouring business as they don’t want people to think they’re being nosey, intrusive or interfering in other people’s concerns. In Business Watch the participants all agree that they want each other to be vigilant as far as crime is concerned. If you have the phone number of the building next door and you ring up a contact there to check that a suspicious van removing items from the yard is okay, who wouldn’t be grateful?

Some schemes have collectively purchased radios so that they can quickly pass on information about suspicious persons, shoplifters, crime trends, etc. Others find it preferable to have pagers or just a telephone system where one person calls another.

Regular informal meetings help establish methods of targeting resources to reduce crime by focusing on top offenders, sharing information and photographs.

If you want to start a scheme or find out if one exists in your area, contact the Watch Scheme Administrator at your local Police Station.

# *The Way Forward...*

## **Designing out crime**

The police have always recognised that the environment around a building, the construction materials used and internal layouts can all influence criminal behaviour.

The police can assist and advise on “designing out crime” whilst a building is still at the planning stage.

The Architectural Liaison Office (ALO) at police headquarters will provide advice and information for you to incorporate into new or refurbished properties. It is expensive to alter your building structure after it has been built. It’s cheaper to re-design walls on paper as opposed to knocking them down and re-building!

If you are considering building new property, or extensively renovating existing property, get free advice first.

Buildings meeting the pre-required level of design and security qualify for the prestigious “Secured by Design” award.

## **In Conclusion**

Detailed throughout this booklet are numerous ideas for managers to interpret for their own situation. Each security measure is one part of a system that either deters, prevents or minimises the loss.

Remember the importance of creating a balanced prevention strategy in which the thief is delayed trying to overcome physical devices (locks, bolts, bars, etc) whilst in immediate danger of being caught (alarms, surveillance, CCTV, etc).

This balanced prevention strategy means that a burglar will either give up or be caught, thus minimising the business loss and increasing the profit or service.

Crime prevention will then save money.