

Facts

Get the facts on
new businesses

Get the facts on business security



By international standards Sydney is a safe city. You and your business can play an important role in maintaining this by implementing some simple procedures.

It's not unusual for businesses to experience some form of crime, including shoplifting, fraud, burglary and vandalism. Good design and easy processes can reduce these risks. Your local Police Crime Prevention Officer can advise you on some simple and cost effective design and placement of security features to minimise your risk. You'll find some basic tips here.

Payment and cash procedures

Check credit cards

Reduce fraud by verifying the identity of credit card holders. If a customer is making large, unusual or multiple transactions, ask to see other forms of identification. Check the signature and cross reference the name on the card with the person's gender and other identifying features.

Secure your payment equipment and processes

Position your cash register so that it is affixed to the counter and out of the customers' reach. You could place it under the counter or behind a partition. Ensure your card payment machines can only be accessed with staff facilitation and monitoring. Verify the identification of anyone who claims to be checking your payment equipment on behalf of a bank or technology company. Have adequate computer security systems in place to prevent fraud.

Have safe cash handling procedures

Keep a maximum of \$200 in the register at any time and empty the cash drawer regularly. Do not leave a float or takings in the cash drawer outside of business hours. Carry cash in an unmarked bag and if possible, have at least two staff involved in banking activities. Offer electronic payment methods. Count cash in private and lock cash drawers. Do not discuss money handling in front of customers.

Install a safe

If you have a safe, use a time delay lock or a drop-chute facility to reduce access to it. Ensure your safe and its installation complies with Australian Standards and it is not visible to the public. Keep safes locked when not in use.

Have safe banking procedures

Deposit takings at the bank frequently. Alter times and routes to avoid predictable patterns. Carry cash in an unmarked bag. Have at least two staff involved in banking activities.

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Security measures

Use solid building materials

Elements such as external doors and frames, windows and frames, floors, walls, ceilings and the roof need to adhere to Building Code of Australia standards. Use laminated glass, shatter resistant film and metal security grills to prevent break-ins.

Install security devices and signage

Deadlocks, intruder alarms, movement detection devices and electronic door sensors also assist in monitoring the presence and actions of people onsite. Use signage to inform would-be offenders of the security measures in place. For example, you can state that Police will be called if a customer is suspected of stealing.

CCTV cameras installed on the interior and exterior of a premises, focusing on key areas including the entry/exit and service counter, can increase security and help with identifying offenders. Contact your local Police Crime Prevention Officer for advice on camera positioning.

Use sufficient lighting

Lighting increases visibility and deters crime. Where possible, ensure that all areas are brightly lit during trading with evenly distributed light. Avoid glare and ensure you can still see outside the premises. Leaving some light on after hours may deter break and enter, as it increases the risk of the offender being seen and caught.

Maximise visibility

Have a clear line of sight from the service area to the street. Avoid covering shop windows with too many posters and advertising materials. Place items that are the target of theft in areas that are easily monitored by staff, or out of reach such as behind counters. Where possible, install mirrors to assist staff to monitor the premises.

Restrict access

Limit the amount of entry/exit points. Make staff rooms, stock rooms and the area behind service counters inaccessible to customers.

Business procedures

Give attentive customer service

Pay attention to where people are in the store and what they are doing. Approach all customers and offer assistance. This is good customer service and makes it harder for a would-be offender to conceal a crime.

Keep a record of keys and valuable items

Document the details of valuable items (such as phone or computer serial numbers) and note staff possession of any business assets. Use a key register to record which staff have keys to which areas.

Network with other businesses

By maintaining relationships with nearby businesses, and joining your local chamber of commerce or business association, you can exchange information on shared issues.

Check details when recruiting

Check references provided on the resumes of potential new staff. Request original identity documents, check their authenticity and record and file details confidentially.

Provide adequate staff training and rostering

Document crime prevention and safety procedures and ensure staff are aware of and confident in using these. For example, make sure staff know your street address and the nearest cross street. Where possible, consider rostering on at least two adult staff at night and have all staff attend robbery prevention training.

Retailer powers

Bag checking

If you have a bag check policy, ensure there is adequate signage to inform the public at the entry/exit points of the premises. When conducting a check use courtesy at all times and do not touch the bag or the person. Customers are entitled to refuse a bag check.

Power to arrest shoplifters

Your safety and the safety of others is the most important thing. Make sure that you, or others, do not get hurt trying to protect your business. You should only consider this option if the person is in the act of committing an offence, or has just committed the offence. In many cases it is safer to report the theft to the Police.

No power to search

Retailers do not have the power to search, and must, as soon as practicable, contact the Police so that the matter can be dealt with according to the law.

What to do in the event of a robbery

If threatened do not put yourself in danger. Remain calm and only raise the alarm if and when it is safe to do so. Call the Police, close the premises and do not disturb the crime scene. Be prepared to cooperate with Police requests and to potentially attend court. Use a robbery description form to help you remember the details if you become a victim of crime. This is available with other NSW Police crime prevention advice from: www.police.nsw.gov.au/community_issues/crime_prevention/business

Help and Assistance

Call the Police Triple Zero (000)

for emergency assistance

Police Assistance Line

131 444 for non-emergencies

Crime Stoppers

1800 333 000 to report anonymously

Contact your local Police Station

to report suspicious activity or to discuss business security issues further.

Display emergency contact numbers in a prominent position for all staff to see.

For further information call 02 9265 9333, visit www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/safety or email council@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au. This information is a general guide only.