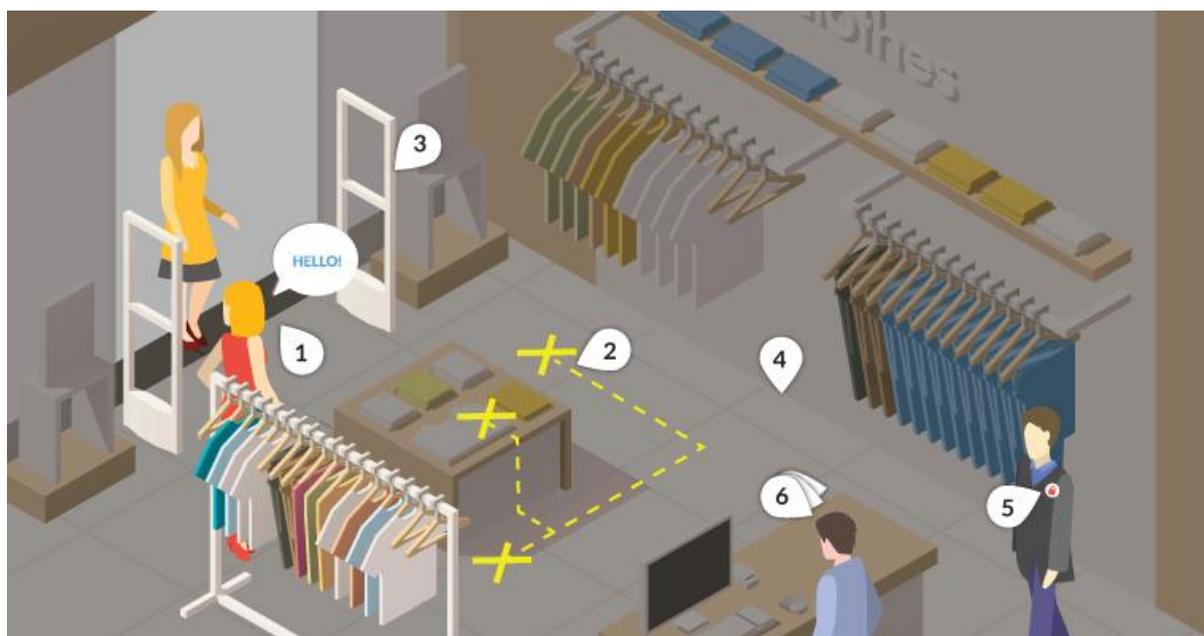


# REDUCING SHOP LIFTING AND THEFTS

Thanks to the Police for providing this information. As always, you should get a suitably qualified expert to double check everything has been done correctly:

## SIX TOP TIPS FOR SECURING YOUR SHOP



### 1. MEET AND GREET

Shoplifters can always assess how easy it is to steal from a shop by how soon after they enter they are spoken to by a member of staff. It's known as 'the three-to-five second rule'.

Therefore greeting customers as they enter your premises can put off shoplifters because it sends out a message that you and your staff are paying attention. If a thief thinks they've been spotted they're more likely to leave.

### 2. CRIME-MAPPING IN YOUR STORE

Work out where inside the store thefts are happening. Keep records of location, dates, times and CCTV of incidents or suspicious behaviour. This is called 'crime mapping'.

Take a look at this area as if you are seeing it for the first time, then work out what you can do to protect it. Can you improve the surveillance? For example, can you see it from the till? Try making the area more visible by

repositioning or lowering stock and shelving. Consider placing more staff here or displaying the items elsewhere.

### **3. ELECTRONIC TAGGING**

If possible, tag your items with 'Electronic Article Surveillance' – there are many systems available.

A correctly installed and security accredited anti-theft tagging system at a store entrance tells potential shoplifters 'this store is protected'. Most shops see a marked drop in shoplifting once they have an anti-theft terminal on the door.

### **4. KEEP IT TIDY**

A tidy store with clear visibility to all areas tells a thief everything is well managed – including surveillance. Keep things security friendly, with uncluttered, wide aisles where possible. (This makes it hard for them to steal without being noticed.) Ensure the grounds and exterior are also well maintained and clean with all spaces as visible as possible.

### **5. PERSONAL SAFETY**

You can't predict who's coming into your shop or how they will behave. Shoplifters could respond aggressively when challenged.

Employers should conduct a risk assessment in conjunction with Health and Safety directions - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/retail/> Always trust your instincts and only engage a potential shoplifter if it is safe to do so. If you feel confident with the situation, keep a safe distance and then ask them if they need any help or whether they require a basket or bag. If you're feeling uncomfortable, be polite, step away and quietly alert your manager or the Police.

### **6. SAFETY IN NUMBERS**

For as much of the day as possible, try not to be alone. Thieves are less likely to target stores where several members of staff or shoppers obviously well known to the assistant are keeping a watch. For more guidance, see the police advice on how to spot a shoplifter - <https://www.met.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/shoplifting/spot-a-shoplifter/>

## **SHOPLIFTING**

- Invest in a properly managed CCTV system. Make sure appropriate signage is displayed noting you have cctv coverage.
- Consider placing a wall mounted CCTV monitor near the till points.
- If you are designing your shop from scratch, try and use low-level aisles so customers are visible at all times. Use mirrors to reduce blind spots.
- Manage the obstructions in your store and avoid shelving or displays going so high that they block surveillance.
- Do not place displays of valuable or easy to steal goods close to doors.
- You and your staff are amongst your most important and effective defence against shoplifters - ensure all have proper training. (See internet links above)
- Empty boxes or covering of high value goods or, if this is not possible, put them behind or near checkout areas.
- Consider investing with neighbouring businesses in a security guard or join the retail radio scheme - which means you can be alerted if known shoplifters are near your premises.
- If your store has a fitting room, introduce restrictions on access and have an attendant monitor all stock going in and coming out. Be sure to check the fitting rooms frequently for garments left behind. Pay special attention to discarded price tags, security tags and hangers - these may be an indication that shoplifting has occurred.

## **BURGLARY - WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

### **SLOW THEM DOWN**

Time is a key factor in most burglaries: The risks are highest when they are conspicuous to passers-by or in the short time left after an alarm has gone off. To prevent burglaries effectively, you should use more than one deterrent as this will make the risk seem unacceptable. The more barriers you create, the more you will slow them down.

### **TRAIN YOUR STAFF**

Teach them about the burglary prevention measures you have taken and the correct use of any equipment you have installed:

#### **• REPORT SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES**

Explain to staff the importance, for example, of keeping a watchful eye for suspicious people or vehicles to prevent people 'casing' your premises.

- **GET THEM INVOLVED**

You can develop their commitment to crime prevention by asking their opinions and ideas about the measures you are taking or propose to take.

- **KEY SECURITY**

Above all, you should build key security into your staff training programme. Ensure that only specially selected staff have access to certain keys or combination locks and that keys to secure areas are not left within the shop. Selected staff or managers must thoroughly understand their responsibilities for locking and securing fastenings on windows and doors, cabinets, internal offices where cash may be held, safes, rooflights and any other exits.

- **HELP FROM YOUR CRIME PREVENTION OFFICER**

Your local crime prevention officer will be able to develop your awareness and knowledge about suitable crime prevention measures for your shop. He or she can also advise you about vetting new staff to reduce the risk of burglaries and other retail crimes being organised or assisted from within.

- **SCRUTINISE ALL RETURNS**

Crimes can be committed by criminals using sob stories: This can include goods for exchange being picked up from a shelf before walking up to customer services demanding a refund.



## **LOOK AFTER STOCK AND CASH**

- **BANK YOUR CASH**

If you do not leave cash in the store overnight it cannot be stolen in a burglary. Night safe facilities are available after opening hours. If you do not use a specialist cash collection agency be sure to vary your route to the bank / Post Office and the times you leave the shop.

- **LEAVE THE EMPTY TILL OPEN**

By leaving the till open, visible and clearly empty, any burglars looking through the window seeking cash are likely to lose interest.

- **REMOVE HIGH VALUE GOODS FROM WINDOW DISPLAYS**

You can protect portable high value goods such as jewellery or camcorders by removing them from display windows overnight – preferably locking them in a safe or secure room or cage. But be aware of the drawbacks – the extra workload on you and your staff and the likelihood that empty windows will attract less window shopping and therefore less 'informal' policing. (Having more people around increases the chance of there being witnesses who can call the police.)

- **CONCEAL STOCK**

Burglars will be less likely to break into your stock room if you hide what is in it by covering over the windows.

- **REDUCE STOCK**

The less you have in stock to attract the thief, the less can be taken. By co-ordinating with suppliers you can introduce 'just in time' deliveries, use catalogue deliveries or home deliveries to reduce stock levels. But while such methods may minimise stock taken in a burglary, they are unlikely to deter a burglar unless they know stock levels are low.

- **DUMMY GOODS**

In some cases, using dummy goods, (such as coloured water in wine bottles in off-licence displays, or empty CDs and cassette tapes) will deter some opportunistic burglars who only seek display goods, but you have to make it clear that the goods are fake. This approach will not deter burglars seeking high value stock from inside the shop.

## **PHYSICALLY PROTECT THE PROPERTY**

- **STRENGTHEN POTENTIAL ENTRANCES**

Use high quality (hardwood) door frames and doors, steel reinforcing and anti-thrust bolts on vulnerable doors, and bars on vulnerable windows. Glass panels in doors are particularly vulnerable to attack and ideally they should be avoided or boarded up. Ask for materials that comply at least to BS8220 for the construction industry as a minimum standard of strength. And the locks on doors should be at least up to the quality of a five lever mortice lock conforming to BS3621.

- **GRILLES AND SHUTTERS**

Full metal shutters or poor designs prevent window shopping and create a fortress-like hostile environment in the town centre. This reduces the number of passers-by at night and in turn may increase the level of crime. The horizontal design and projecting housings seldom fit aesthetically with the design of a building, (and this is of particular importance in the case of listed buildings and conservation areas such as Town Street, Armley). - Even worse is when full metal shutters stay down throughout the daytime as this greatly reduces the look of the town centres.

- Internal grilles are usually lattice mesh that is lowered just behind the window.
- External grilles and shutters usually roll up into a housing behind the fascia while others are taken down in sections and stored inside the shop when the shop is trading.
- External roller shutters (made from solid aluminium or steel strips or laths can have 'windows' punched into them to allow window shoppers a glimpse of your wares).

- **FIT GRILLES INSIDE**

Protect high value goods within the shop floor area by securing high risk display cabinets with protective grilles and shutters.

- **GLASS 'FILM'**

A reasonably cheap way of improving the strength of glass windows against smash and grab attacks is by applying a plastic film, available in various grades, to the rear of the window. This is a good deterrent but filmed glass windows are slightly less clear than non-filmed windows. Mirror-finished film on rear windows will both increase the strength of the glass and fully restrict a burglar's view into rear storage areas.

- **LAMINATED GLASS**

Very difficult to break through in a 'smash and grab' attack because it is made by bonding a layer of tough plastic between sheets of glass, and this will hold the window together even after the glass has broken. However, to be effective you must ensure that window frames and fixings are equally strong, and bear in mind that you will often have to pay to replace the glass, even if the burglars were not able to take your stock.

- **SAFES**

A good quality safe will protect cash and valuable items overnight but you should take the added precaution of bolting it in place and positioning it discreetly. You can include sensors inside that will set the alarm off if the safe is opened. But beware buying a fire safe that doesn't necessarily protect against theft, and vice versa. Your insurers will be able to help you choose a suitable safe and suggest minimum standards of specification.

- **SECURE CAGES**

Secure cages in the stock room can provide additional security for high value stock. They can be constructed using expanded metal sections or created by increasing the protection within an existing internal room.

- **VEHICLE TRAPS**

Fixing bollards into the ground around your premises will protect against ram raiders but you will need permission from the planning authority / Highways and your landlord. Some types of bollard can be removed during trading hours. Large concrete plant containers can be used as an alternative. 'Road blocker' devices can be used to close off vehicle entrance overnight. Much depends on your location and circumstances. Your crime prevention officer can advise you.

- **OVERALL DESIGN**

If you are planning a move to a new building or intend making major refurbishments you have an excellent opportunity to build in preventive measures. For example, you can build stall risers, add multi-pane windows, ensure telephone lines are hidden and you protect vehicle approaches. The Secured by Design scheme has been developed to help identify builders who have consulted the police and have incorporated specific crime prevention measures. The use of the Secured by Design logo is available to those who meet the required standards. You may also seek advice from your police force's architectural liaison officer (ALO) who is trained specifically in building design to prevent burglary and other crimes.

- **AND IF IT HAPPENS ...**

Sad to say, if you have been burgled the statistics show your risk of being burgled again is much higher. So be sure to upgrade defences and not merely put things back the way they were. Obviously if an attack takes place you will have very little time to liaise with planning authorities, the police and so on – so make contingency plans now and arrange what you will do if the worst happens.

## **WATCHING AND DETERRING INTRUDERS**

- **INTRUDER ALARMS**

You may deter some potential burglars if you display evidence that you have fitted an intruder alarm. Others may be scared off if they are breaking in and hear alarm bells go off. Seek reliable advice about different types of burglar alarms and how to buy one.

- **VIDEO SURVEILLANCE**

Burglars are deterred by CCTV monitoring the outside or inside of the building. CCTV can also help police detect the burglars. Stringent codes of practice need to be followed – including ensuring the date and time are incorporated into the recording – before video evidence can be successfully used in prosecution.

Images captured by the Council's CCTV cameras (Leedswatch) are available to the Police and legal bodies in certain circumstances.

- **CONTROLLING VEHICLE ACCESS**

If a burglar cannot bring their vehicle close to your premise because the access is barred, you eliminate the ram raiders and become a less attractive proposition to burglars relying on vehicles to drive stock away. Permanent additions such as bollards or window / door shutters will require Planning permission. Details on what is acceptable are available in the LCC booklet "Shopfront Security Design Guide."

- **LOCKING ESCAPE ROUTES**

Commercial burglars often plan to use exit routes that are different from their entry ones. Therefore make it as difficult to get out as it is to get in. Make sure windows, doors, panic escape bars and internal doors are well locked overnight, and shut off the power supply for loading bay shutters.

- **LIGHTING**

If you install lights that are activated by someone approaching your shop you may deter some potential burglars. Where your shop is overlooked by passers-by you will increase the chances of an intruder being noticed if you simply increase the level of lighting both inside and outside the building. But take care: if your shop is never overlooked at night (say because it is in an out-of-town shopping park) then increased lighting may simply make it easier for burglars to work.