



# Victim Services of Waterloo Region

## Fact Sheet on Robbery and Burglary

### Robbery

Robbery is a crime directed "at the person" and a frightening experience. It can result in injury or even death to the victim. In protecting your business from robbery, it is important to remember to take preventive measures and make it obvious that those measures have been taken.

### Robbery Prevention

- ❑ Avoid working alone. If you must, turn on a hidden radio or TV so robbers will think there is someone with you.
- ❑ Vary the schedule and route for your bank deposits each day. Keep only necessary cash in the drawer. Then, if you are robbed, you'll reduce your losses.
- ❑ Make sure your cash register is clearly visible to passers-by. Arrange the counter so that the customer or robber is visible from the street.
- ❑ Avoid placing signs or displays near windows which block visibility from the street.
- ❑ If your business runs an exceptionally high risk of robbery, you may want to invest in a bulletproof cashier screen (other prevention measures may be cheaper and as effective).
- ❑ Display signs at entrances and exits indicating that safes require secondary keys not in the possession of employees.
- ❑ Advertise your security alarm system with signs in visible locations. Make sure your employees know how to operate a panic button if one is included in your alarm system.
- ❑ Develop a mutual aid system among stores on your block. Agree to keep an eye on each other's buildings and watch for any suspicious activities. Install "buddy buzzer" alarms so you can signal your neighbor to call law enforcement if you are being robbed.

### Tips and Preparations

- ❑ Record the serial number of the bottom bill in each bin of the cash drawer, and instruct employees not to use these bills in making change.
- ❑ Place colored tape markers at exits, at heights of 5 feet 6 inches and 6 feet. If you are robbed, you can then get an accurate estimate of the suspect's height as he or she leaves.
- ❑ Keep "bait" money in a spare compartment of cash registers. The bait packet should be separated by face value as other bills. Keep a list of the serial numbers to give to law enforcement officials if you are robbed.

### If a Robbery Occurs

- ❑ Give them what they ask for. **Never refuse a robber!**
- ❑ If you have a silent alarm and can reach it unnoticed, use it. Otherwise, wait until the robber leaves. (Use your alarm with care - false alarms can cause problems for law enforcement and for you).
- ❑ If possible, signal other employees – have a prearranged signal for such emergencies. If the robber will see you, wait. Avoid sudden moves. Many robbers are as nervous as you.
- ❑ The most important thing to do if you're robbed: observe. The description of the suspect you give to law enforcement may be the only information they have to go on.

### After a Robbery

- ❑ Call 9-1-1.
- ❑ Write down everything you can remember about the robber and the crime itself: The

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robber's appearance (height, weight, color of hair and eyes, scars, tattoos, accent, anything unusual), their clothing, weapon, mannerisms, and exact words. Try to observe any vehicle the robber uses to get away and the direction of travel.

- ❑ Keep everyone away from the surfaces or objects the robber may have touched.
- ❑ Cooperate fully with the law enforcement and prosecutors. Your help is crucial.

## Business Security

If you own or operate a business, make sure it is safe and secure. Your customers want to feel safe when they visit, and they are likely to return if their visit is positive.

With this in mind, apply these principles to your business:

- ❑ Locate check-out counters near the front of the store, clearly visible from the outside so that employees can better watch all activities.
- ❑ Clearly mark public paths. Make private areas harder for non-employees to access.
- ❑ Use signs to direct patrons to parking and entrances.
- ❑ Prevent easy access to the roof or fire escape from the ground by trimming trees adjacent to the building. Secure roof access and fire escape ladders with locking covers.
- ❑ Provide rear access to shops if rear parking is offered.
- ❑ If possible, install rear windows to face parking areas for increased visibility.
- ❑ Do not cover up windows with advertising or display material.
- ❑ Use interior shelving and displays no higher than five feet, even lower in front of windows.
- ❑ Fully illuminate the exterior of the building and grounds at night.
- ❑ Design loading areas that avoid creating hiding places for people and merchandise.

- ❑ Maintain clear visibility from the store to the street, sidewalk, parking areas and passing vehicles.
- ❑ Place all entrances under visual surveillance.
- ❑ Place any pay telephones within clear view of employees.
- ❑ Consider installing an alarm system.

## Maintaining your Property

A run-down business can attract criminals. Follow these simple suggestions to maintain a customer-friendly business:

- ❑ Keep buildings and walks clean and repaired.
- ❑ Maintain parking areas to a high standard without pot-holes or trash.
- ❑ Remove faded posters, broken signs, and other displays that are beyond their useful lives.
- ❑ Keep plants and all landscaping in good condition.

## Burglary Prevention

- ❑ Use deadbolt locks with a minimum 1" throw bolt containing a hardened, saw-resistant steel insert on all exterior doors.
- ❑ Pin the hinges on any exterior doors that swing out. Remove the center screw from each side of the hinge and insert a metal pin or headless screw on one side to prevent the door from being removed.
- ❑ Replace hollow-core doors with solid-core doors. Replace weak door frames or reinforce them with steel or concrete. Protect glass in the door with mesh or a polycarbonate sheet.
- ❑ To secure windows, consider adding clear polycarbonate sheets, roll down covers, grates or bars.
- ❑ If purchasing an alarm system, contact several reputable companies and get a full assessment of your needs. Consider adding panic buttons, fire/smoke detectors, and monitoring (contacts law enforcement if alarm is activated).



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