Preventing Retail Crime

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Preventing Retail Crime

Crime prevention series
General Editor Paul R. Wilson

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Australian Institute of Criminology

Acknowledgments

Contents

Introduction

Retail crime includes shoplifting, employee theft, fraud, robbery and violence to staff. Costs include loss of profitability, low staff morale, loss of work due to physical and psychological damage, and even loss of life.

How serious is the problem?

Shrinkage

In 1987, Coles-Myer, Australia's biggest retail chain, estimated that about 1 per cent of its turnover—$120 million—was lost to theft, that is, more than half its $219 million after-tax profit.

The Victorian Retail Association's guesstimate is that theft costs its members $70 million a year, while the police say shop thefts valued at $8 million were reported in 1987-88.

In the 1988-89 financial year Grace Bros security officers in 40 New South Wales stores apprehended 3,500 people, including staff. Thefts cost the store about $15 million per year. In 1987 the Coles-Myer Group—which includes Grace Bros, Coles New World, Fosseys, K-Mart and Target stores—announced that 45,000 people had been caught stealing. Of these, 1,400 were staff.

According to the Retail Traders' Association of New South Wales, the major department stores lose .875 per cent to 1.125 per cent per year in stock shrinkage, and boutiques—stores with an owner and up to two employees—lose up to 7 per cent. That extrapolates to $400 million a year in New South Wales alone, and $1 billion for the whole country.

Stock shrinkage—the difference between the book value of a retailer's stock at selling price and the actual value of stock on hand—is caused by unaccounted for stock through bad

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invoicing, receiving, despatch and bad recording; theft by staff; and customer theft.

How much does each of these causes contribute to shrinkage? Estimates for Australian department stores range from 30 to 60 per cent for customer theft, 30 to 50 per cent for staff theft and 10 to 20 per cent for poor paperwork (Challinger 1989). The National Retail Merchants Association in the United States rates these causes at a third each, while a large United States department store chain sees poor paperwork as the largest cause at 50 per cent, staff theft next with 35 per cent, and customers trailing at 15 per cent.

Employee theft

One security expert, who heads national security for a jeans chain, says Australian retail staff help themselves to $70 million worth of stock a year—70 per cent of all shoplifting (*Sydney Morning Herald*, *Good Weekend* 16 August 1990). The National Retail Crime Prevention Council put shop theft by staff at $300 million per annum, half the then national estimate.

There are numerous ways for staff to steal from their employers:

- straightforward theft of goods and money;
- under-charging customer accomplices;
- adjusting delivery dockets;
- under-ringing purchases at the cash register;
- fiddling the shrinkage records;
- deliberately damaging goods to buy at staff discount;
- using company time and facilities for personal projects;
- increasing creditors' invoices and keeping the difference;
- replacing perfect items with seconds in the warehouse or store;
- adding a last-minute item to the receipt but not ringing it up;
- picking up receipts for later inclusion in the register as 'voids' or 'refunds';
- palming a forgetful customer's credit card;
- fraudulent refunding; and

- conspiracies of middle management employees.

Some retailers choose to turn a blind eye to much staff theft: they may be unwilling to hound staff because of the effects on morale, it may simply be cheaper to ignore it, or some degree of pilfering may be regarded as a perk to keep otherwise satisfactory employees. Besides, the cost can always be passed on to the customers.

Customer theft

Most customer theft goes unreported. An American study maintained that four out of 10 people had stolen from a shop at some time in their lives (Kallis & Vanier 1985), and in an Australian study, 54 per cent of Tasmanian 15-year-old boys and 44 per cent of girls surveyed admitted stealing from a shop in the previous three years (Warner 1982).

An American study showed that younger males seemed to shoplift more than younger females, but that girls caught up as they got older (Challinger 1989). These findings were supported by a Victorian victim survey, which found the average age of females detected shoplifting was 26.4 years and 19.4 for males.

Professional thieves

While most customer thieves in Australia are amateurs with no market and sometimes no need for the items they steal, there are individual professional thieves and gangs active in shoplifting. They often concentrate on items like cigarettes, which retain their resale value and are easy to turn into cash, and steal to order. The Retail Traders' Association discovered a scam in which thieves were concentrating on stealing large quantities of expensive supermarket items like tins of salmon, which indicates resale rather than personal consumption. And Australian shoplifting gangs are legendary in England.

Robbery and violence

Australia does not have to deal with the terrorist bomb attacks in major stores that happen in London, or with demonstrations against products and the high incidence of convenience store

and supermarket robbery that plague the United States. There is no room for complacency, however, as the 1991 mass shooting at Sydney's Strathfield Mall demonstrates.

With high unemployment and a recessional economy, armed robberies are on the increase. Australian banks have taken this to heart and vastly improved their security, with very promising results (Clarke et al. 1991). The reality is that any organisation with cash on the premises can expect to be hit: post offices are the latest target in Sydney.

Customer aggression has not been addressed in any detail in this volume: for valuable information on dealing with this growing problem, consult *Protecting counter and interviewing staff from client aggression* by Bruce Swanton and Daryl Webber, published by the Australian Institute of Criminology.

Possible solutions

This manual concentrates on strategies and programs devised in a number of countries to prevent retail theft. Some are simple and inexpensive; others involve sophisticated technology and require huge outlays.

Among the crime prevention strategies examined and, where possible, evaluated are:

- target hardening, for example securing shopping trolleys, electronic surveillance systems and tags and chains;
- crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) strategies which improve visibility, cut down congestion and route potential offenders away from potential victims;
- more efficient inventory methods:
- the use of computers to track fraudulent transactions;
- the use of the police force to prevent retail crime and the need for cooperation between security staff and police in apprehensions;
- methods of raising the awareness of managers and staff about the problem;
- the effectiveness of prosecution of offenders as a deterrent; and
- what to do in case of armed robbery.

Wide aisles and lack of congestion can prevent shop lifting.

Finally, the case studies included demonstrate the need to describe the problem properly before proceeding with crime prevention programs, to keep good records, and to evaluate those programs for effectiveness.

SHOPSTEALING
IS A
CRIME

OFFENDERS
MUST BE REPORTED TO THE
POLICE

THE RETAIL TRADERS' ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES

The approach:
situational crime prevention

Rational choice

While traditional criminology tended to see criminals as driven by their conditioning and environment, economics-based theories portray criminals as rational decision makers who base their decision to commit crimes on an analysis of the risks compared to the expected profits. That is, the criminal does a rudimentary cost-benefit analysis.

Rational choice theory makes the following assumptions:

- offenders freely and actively choose to commit crimes;
- the decision to commit the crime is made in response to the immediate circumstances and the immediate situation in which an offence is considered;
- the motivation to offend is not constant or beyond control; that is, it is dependent on a calculation of costs and rewards rather than being the result of an inherited or acquired disposition to offend (Bennett 1986).

To put it concisely, one school of thought maintains that criminals analyse a given situation, and will not proceed if the going looks too tough.

Opportunity reduction

An approach to crime prevention which sets out to make the crime too difficult for the criminal by closing off opportunities to proceed is called 'opportunity reduction'. Opportunity reduction forms the basis of situational crime prevention.

The opportunity reduction school came to prominence in the 1970s with the work of Mayhew, Clarke, Sturman & Hough (1976) and was expanded in the 1980s with the research done by the UK Home Office Research Unit (Clarke & Mayhew 1980) and

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Patricia and Paul Brantingham, the Canadian criminologists (1981). Strategies for opportunity reduction include the following.

Formal, organised surveillance: covers a range of observational strategies, from self-help groups such as Neighbourhood Watch, School Watch, Business Watch (in which people monitor their environment and report suspicious activities) through uniformed, sometimes armed security patrols to electronic surveillance via closed circuit television (CCTV).

Access control: means minimising, securing or blocking off ways in and out for potential offenders by natural surveillance; electronic surveillance; reception desks; entryphones; and target hardening such as better locks, secure doors, security grilles on windows, and alarm systems.

Employee surveillance: refers to vigilance by employees working in public places—bus conductors, car park attendants, receptionists, caretakers in schools or housing estates, and shop owners, managers or assistants—as a means of crime prevention.

Physical design and kinetic management: building on theories that criminals and victims find the shortest route, spend the least time and seek the easiest means to accomplish something—'the principle of least effort'—this strategy maintains that, by manipulating the built environment, we should be able to minimise the contact between potential offenders and their victims (Felson 1987). This can be done by diverting flows of offenders away from likely targets or restricting flows to where they can be monitored, and by channelling potential victims away from risk.

Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED)

The CPTED school of crime prevention emerged in the 1960s and the early 1970s, with a surge of interest in the possibilities of manipulating the built environment to prevent delinquency and crime. In *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (1971), C. Ray Jeffery suggested urban design, including the

design of streets, parks, terminals, and super highways could prevent crime by reducing 'opportunities'.

In *Defensible Space* (1972), a seminal work on CPTED, Oscar Newman established a definite relationship between urban design and crime rates.

For many goods, in particular cigarettes, it is wise to keep stock under lock and key.

Situational crime prevention

Criminological research has identified four major categories of crime and delinquency prevention (Perlgut 1981).

Corrective prevention attempts to prevent crime by ameliorating the social conditions which seem to lead to crime, for example, by job creation schemes, reducing overcrowding, creating viable neighbourhoods, rehabilitating slums and providing community health clinics and recreation facilities.

Punitive prevention uses police to deter crime through the police courts, the legal system and lawyers and gaols.

Mechanical prevention emphasises hardware such as locks, doors and protective grilles.

Environmental prevention manipulates building design and

the relationship between buildings and their environment to reduce opportunities for crime.

Taken together, the last two categories comprise what is called the 'situational crime prevention' approach.

Successful security planning is likely to incorporate some aspects of all four approaches. This manual will concentrate on **situational crime prevention**, with an emphasis on crime-proofing different environments against property theft, vandalism, violence and nuisance behaviour.

Situational crime prevention seems most effective against offences which cluster in time or space, and which are of a high rate (Poyner 1986). While there is no doubt that situational crime prevention measures can reduce crime such as burglary, vandalism, shop crime and autocrime, there is some dispute about its effectiveness against violent crime.

Displacement

It has been argued that situational crime prevention, by reducing an offender's opportunity to commit crime in a certain place or at a certain time, simply causes the criminal to go elsewhere to offend. Research seems to show that, where the offender is not strongly committed to a crime, and where the costs and risks of committing the crime are high, displacement is unlikely to occur (Bennett 1986).

For example, a recent analysis of improvements in bank security found little evidence that bank robberies had been displaced to other states in Australia or that the fall in bank robberies had led to increases in robberies of other targets in Victoria (Clarke, Field & McGrath 1991).

Where the converse is true, however, displacement does seem likely.

Planning a crime prevention program

Successful crime prevention measures must be tailored to specific conditions. It is therefore not possible to recommend measures which fit all situations. There is, however, a planning

process which is likely to lead to successful crime prevention programs (Poyner & Webb 1987).

The following steps are recommended for devising an effective crime prevention program, and should be followed in order.

1. Search for local crime problems.
2. Select specific crime problems.
3. Analyse the crime problem you have selected.
4. Consider a range of possible measures.
5. Identify who will implement the measures.
6. Document the implementation process.
7. Monitor changes in the crime situation over several years.
8. Evaluate the program before proceeding with another.

For further information about planning a crime prevention program, see Susan Geason & Paul R. Wilson 1988, *Crime Prevention: theory and practice*, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.

SHOPPING BAG SEARCHES
RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF CUSTOMERS

RIGHTS

1. You have the right to know before entry that the store conducts bag searches.

2. You have the right to refuse inspection of your personal handbag unless it is large. **The size of a sheet of foolscap paper will be used as a guide. THIS NOTICE IS PRINTED ON A SHEET OF FOOLSCAP PAPER. ANY BAG LARGER THAN THIS SHEET OF PAPER WILL BE INSPECTED.**

3. You have the right to refuse interference with your person or with your bags. Inspection means that staff can look and not touch. You can be asked to assist inspection, e.g., by removing obstructions to visualise inspection.

4. You can refuse inspection of your bags but you can then be asked to leave the store with your purchases and not return.

OBLIGATIONS

1. Having entered a store knowing that bag searches are conducted, you have accepted the store's right to ask you to make your shopping bags available for inspection.

IMPORTANT NOTES

1. Where there are real grounds for suspecting theft, customers may be held at the store and/or the police may be called.

2. If a shopkeeper or employee forcibly interferes with you or your goods, you may complain to the management or the police.

3. If you have comments about bag searches or your experience, please send them to the following address:

   Bag Search
   Department of Consumer Affairs
   1 Oxford Street,
   DARLINGHURST, 2010

**Approved by the
Department of Consumer Affairs
and the
Retail Traders' Association of NSW**

Shoplifters' motives

Who are the shoplifters, and why do they do it?

All sorts of people shoplift, from 15-year-olds thieving for the thrill through depressed middle-aged women doing it to give themselves a lift, to poor people who cannot afford to buy goods. Males predominate among juvenile shoplifters, but the majority of adult shoplifters are women. One reason for the high amount of shoplifting by women is that the majority of shoppers are female, but when opportunity is equal, males are more likely to shoplift than females (Buckle & Farrington 1991).

While shoplifting is the most common crime for which females are convicted or cautioned in England and Wales, more males are convicted or cautioned for shoplifting than females— 57,503 males as opposed to 35,371 females in 1989 (United Kingdom Home Office 1990).

In an English study on shoplifting in two counties, it was found that shoplifting was most prevalent among those aged over 55 and those 25 and under (Buckle & Farrington 1991). The authors speculate that shoplifting might be most prevalent among relatively young and relatively old people because these groups are the least likely to be prosecuted after apprehension.

Studies into the motivation of shoplifters point to economic disadvantage and psychological and social stress as major reasons for offending. In the case of women, it is difficult to disentangle economic and psychological motivations, as the two often go together. Marriage breakdown or separation, for example, are likely to cause a decrease in income and an increase in emotional stress for many women.

Accumulated stress

In a study of the economic situation and actual goods stolen, Elizabeth Yates (1986) divided 101 shoplifters into three

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categories—shoplifting for profit or gain and two levels of 'nonsensical' shoplifting, that is, not apparently motivated by need or desire. The groups were compared on demographic and relevant background information, psychological stressors preceding the offence and general psychological profile.

Yates found that shoplifters were more likely to be female than male. The nonsensical (unmotivated) shoplifters were more likely to be older, married, foreign-born, adopted, to have experienced unusual childhood stress and to be depressed and socially isolated in comparison to other shoplifters.

Yates suggested that an accumulation of stressors over time could account for shoplifting in some people.

Economic motives

According to JoAnn Ray (1988) little is known about the extent to which economic need shapes or contributes to shoplifting behaviour. If people are shoplifting because they need the merchandise and don't have the money to buy it, interventions such as psychological treatment may be useless.

Using two databases, Ray attempted to assess the influence of economic variables on shoplifting—a court sample, or random sample of 200 cases filed with a municipal court in an urban area in the north-west of the United States between September 1981 and October 1982; and a self-report sample, derived from a shopping centre survey designed to obtain shoplifting self-report rates, shoplifting profiles by age, attitudes to shoplifting, and perceptions of motives. 1000 anonymous questionnaires were distributed—100 at each of 10 shopping centres, with centres chosen to provide a spread of socioeconomic conditions.

The two databases produced different shoplifting profiles. The self-report study suggested that shoplifters were likely to be young, white and female. The court sample study showed that men, ethnic minorities, the young and the elderly were more frequently arrested and referred to court.

An analysis of the responses of those sampled in the self-report study showed that shoplifting was strongly related not only to economic and employment variables, but to several

other factors as well. People who shoplifted frequently were more likely than others to tick the following items as stressors:

Personal (psychological) stresses
  regrets over past decisions ...
  feeling sad and blue ...

Social stresses
  being lonely ...
  watching too much TV ...

Family stresses
  problems with divorce or separation ...

Physical stresses
  personal use of drugs ...
  sexual problems ...

Some of these factors could be related to, or caused by poverty, however, affirming the pervasive influence of economic factors on behaviour and attitudes.

The study also showed that shoplifters were more likely to agree that shopping made them feel better when they felt blue; that people shoplift because items are overpriced and that the stolen items would never be missed, but disagreed that they would get caught if they shoplifted.

Character defects

Five patterns of shoplifting were identified in a clinical study conducted in a court setting of 300 shoplifters, 67.6 per cent of whom reported weekly shoplifting (Moore 1984).

Overall, 56 per cent were males. Character defects rather than mental illness were the dominant form of pathology. Primary motivation in 67.6 per cent of cases was financial benefit.

Economic disadvantage appeared to be a contributing factor in 72 per cent of the adult chronic shoplifters. Although mental illnesses were distributed evenly between the sexes, nearly twice as many women were experiencing psychological stressors.

Moore's recommended treatment intervention was short-term crisis counselling followed by education which encouraged the offender to admit that shoplifting was a crime and to consider the realistic consequences of additional shoplifting (though it is difficult to see how this would address the poverty problem).

For the thrill of it

Shoplifting for the thrill of it is usually attributed to young people, many of whom are sucked in by the dare or by peer pressure— 'everyone is doing it'. In an American study (Klemke 1982) 42 per cent of a sample of young shop thieves identified as important the 'sporting motivation'.

The fact that males outnumber females as shoplifters in the teenage years could also mean that it is a manhood test in some circles.

Professional thieves

According to Weaver and Carroll (1985) the way shoplifters think depends on whether they are amateurs or professionals.

In their fascinating experiment involving shoplifters and how they assess crime opportunities, Weaver and Carroll recorded the words of 34 subjects—17 non-shoplifters (novices) and 17 expert shoplifters—walking through stores thinking aloud about shoplifting.

These findings emerged:

- Expert shoplifters proved more efficient and strategic than non-shoplifters in their considerations.
- Novices were deterred from shoplifting by fear, guilt and the possibility of being caught: experts, on the other hand, were deterred by strategic difficulties like the size of the item.
- Any deterrent put novices off, but experts tended to see deterrents such as store personnel and security devices as obstacles to be overcome.

Prosecution as a deterrent

Apprehension

Does catching and prosecuting shoplifters prevent shoplifting? Does it deter those who are caught, all shoplifters, anybody? Given that prosecuting shoplifters is expensive, it is worthwhile looking at the value of apprehending thieves.

There is a certain amount of pessimism among retailers about the possibility of apprehending thieves, and some disagreement about the benefit of prosecuting them. Hard-liners insist on charging those they catch, while others find it too expensive and time-consuming to go to court about shoplifting. Many find it simpler to factor the cost of theft into the retail price and let the community as a whole bear the brunt. Who is right?

While most merchants would see failing to take some action against shoplifters as offering thieves an open invitation, it is not clear that juveniles and amateurs consider the consequences of apprehension, let alone a store's policy on shoplifting. They act on impulse, responding to an opportunity, and do not expect to be caught. Neither do professional shoplifters.

A survey of 1301 non-professional shoplifters was carried out by Shoplifters Anonymous in the United States. According to that study, 54 per cent of the respondents admitted theft patterns ranging from once a day to once a month. The psychological pattern that emerged was high tension during the theft, followed by euphoria (Canton 1987).

Canton postulates that amateur shoplifters become habituated to the high they get from successful thefts and that, by breaking the pattern and eliminating the euphoria, apprehension deters those who are caught from offending

again. He also suggests that a non-apprehension policy may produce more theft in a store by lowering the morale of employees and stimulating some of them to theft.

Finally, he says that the decision whether to apprehend shoplifters must be weighed in the context of the store and its environment—size, location, volume of business, personnel, and most importantly, the percentage of shortage attributed to shoplifting. It may well be more cost effective for a small businessperson to ask shoplifters to leave than try to apprehend them.

On-the-spot warning for first offenders

A warning system for shoplifters was tried out in New South Wales and is now in operation in Victoria. For a first offence where the value of goods was less than $50, police issued a warning on the spot and the details were entered into the police computers. For theft ranging in value from $50 to $100 the offender could either receive an infringement notice of $100 or be charged; over $100, the offender would be charged. All subsequent offenders would be charged, regardless of the value of the goods stolen.

The objectives of the scheme were to reduce time spent by police processing first offenders for shopstealing; reduce the involvement of retail security staff following the detection of a first offender for shopstealing; increase the reporting rate of offenders detected to increase early identification of persistent offenders; ease the trauma of apprehension for some first offenders; and ward off criticism of police for introducing certain offenders to the criminal justice system.

According to a spokesman for the New South Wales Retail Traders' Association, only 7 per cent of people issued with the on-the-spot warning were caught re-offending.

Preventing retail crime in department & speciality stores

Because of the practice of displaying goods openly to attract consumers, department and specialty stores suffer a high incidence of theft, not only from customers, but from staff—some retailers put employee theft as high as 70 per cent of the total (*Sydney Morning Herald* 16 August 1990).

Theft prevention strategies range from electronic surveillance mechanisms, closed circuit television (CCTV), access control barriers, use of computers, staff training, increased management attention to the problem, changes in layout of the store, use of security consultants and 'honesty' shoppers to detect thieves, identification of much-stolen items with special stickers and signs, and better internal operations review and audit procedures.

Electronic article surveillance (EAS) systems

Electronic article surveillance (EAS) systems rely on a variety of electronic technologies. Several systems are available, most notably electromagnetic, low frequency and high frequency and all follow the same basic principles of operation.

1. The EAS system creates one or more protective energy field(s) at a store exit.
2. A detector or receiver filters out interference, as it scans the exit area for a particular type of signal—for example, a radio signal from a merchandise tag.
3. The system sounds an alarm if the signal is detected within the field.

An EAS system based on dual high-frequency signals provides the sharpest, state-of-the-art performance for the

retailer—broad, precise coverage, low false alarms, flexible installation and an aesthetically pleasing tag.

Electronic article surveillance is now common practice world-wide for clothing.

Design of appropriate tags has been a problem for EAS systems. At present, tags must be manually affixed and removed from garments or items. Ultimately, manual merchandise tagging will be eliminated, possibly by some type of 'gun' that
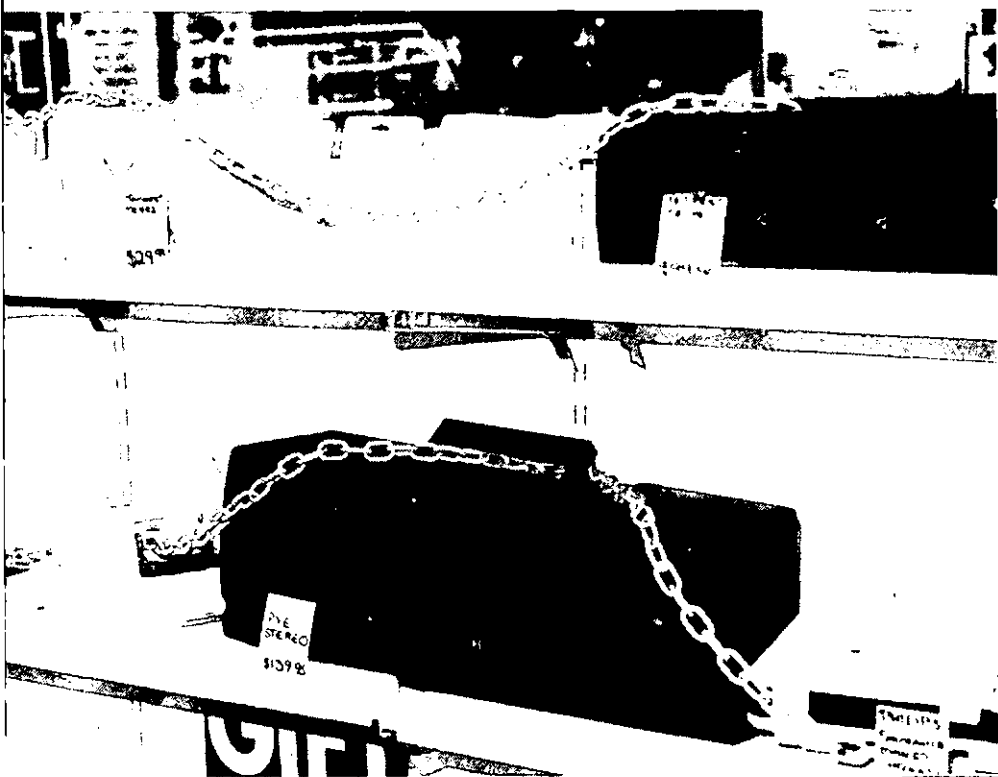
In the absence of EAS, chaining goods will cut down on theft.

will quickly and neatly affix tags to garments and other items. It is also possible that laser scanners will be used to deactivate tags while simultaneously totalling a shopper's purchases (Fancher 1984).

Case study: EAS in Wherehouse Entertainment home entertainment and informational software chain, California, United States

To combat theft of costly movies and compact disks, Wherehouse Entertainment used computer software, EAS and

CCTV and redesigned their stores to facilitate surveillance by staff. As well, they set up a private investigative team to catch professional thieves and established Wherehouse University, a loss prevention training school.

Company policy was to make loss prevention as important as making sales. Listed are some of its loss prevention techniques.

- Installation of over 300 EAS systems in their ground floor video stores. The EAS concept is a pass-around system, where the tag is never deactivated and stays alive. Each store has about five EAS systems—electromagnetic, microwave and voice-activated.
- Formation of a shrinkage (inventory shortage) committee from a cross-section of the organisation to share intelligence
- Use of CCTV with monitors where customers could see them.
- Installation of customer flow barricades.
- Elevation of counters so clerks operating the terminals could view the store with ease and eventual redesign of the stores so the whole interior is visible from one location.
- Establishment of a retail task force which set up surveillance on thieves' homes, followed them, collected data on their associates and business, set up a sting operation and notified the police. Many people were arrested and the company recovered hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of their own and competitors' products.
- Use of computers to fight shrinkage.
- Establishment of Wherehouse University, a classroom for training staff in loss prevention, with mock-ups of all company systems.
- A system of rewards for individuals who contribute to the company's objectives (Gabbard, Mongang & Leonard 1986).

As well, the 83 top managers make a loss prevention checklist every Friday and visit 97 per cent of the company's stores. Those who perform appropriately are rewarded with an overseas trip.

Integrity or 'honesty' shopping

Acting as ordinary shoppers, trained integrity or honesty shoppers can provide valuable information about sales procedures and customer service and can give retail security managers an abundance of useful information at a reasonable price. The most effective integrity shopping programs are those designed specifically to elicit the information a company needs to make corporate decisions, and where those who receive that information know how to use it properly (Cowden 1987).

Because an honesty shopper can only concentrate on one or two concerns per visit, store managers must first decide what their priorities are—employee theft, adherence to store procedures, customer service, the look of the store, or physical security? Then the integrity shopper should be given a list of details to observe. Finally, the shopper should submit a written narrative-style report or fill out a form.

Using this report, the security manager can identify the store's strengths and weaknesses and implement corrective measures. Information from the reports may be passed on to departments, but the identities of integrity shoppers should be kept secret.

A well-conceived integrity shopping program will act both as a deterrent against employee theft and as positive reinforcement for conscientious work practices.

Using computers to reduce theft

Case Study: using computers and training to reduce employee theft at the Hudson department stores, Detroit, United States

The 1984 merger of Hudson's department stores in Detroit and the Dayton Hudson Corporation in Minneapolis was followed by a major inventory shortage or shrinkage. As well, the number of

apprehensions of dishonest employees by the company had dropped from 473 in 1982 to 232 in 1983.

Hudson's responded by forming a task force which identified all possible causes of the shrinkage, and distributed a survey listing these factors to executives, sales managers and employees asking for comment: 43 per cent named inadequate theft-control programs as the primary cause of the rise in shrinkage.

As most retail theft originates at the point of sale, store management used this point to identify dishonest employees. A computerised charge credit analysis of three- and 12-month periods determined the number of transactions for employee charge accounts, and identified individual purchases, the credits and what the rate of return was for employees with accounts. This helped store management isolate rings of employees with high credits. Six or seven prosecutions for dishonesty recovered about $28,000.

Another computer report analysing third-party credits by account or terminal number showed incidents of employees ringing up credits to their own or family members' charge accounts. Another tool was a terminal control report coupled with a terminal detail report. The company also instituted daily and weekly void and no-sale reports to identify repeated unusual transactions by particular clerks.

To catch more internal thieves, the company improved investigations, interviewing, and interrogation training for loss prevention investigators. After training improvements had been implemented and computerised detection methods instituted, the apprehension rate for employees rose to 476 in 1984 and again to 800 in 1985.

Setting up a task to identify all possible factors contributing to shrinkage, surveying employees, analysing the results and using computers enabled Hudson's to save $5 million in a year.

Hudson's management believes its employee theft program worked because the shortage task force tapped into the knowledge of the company's executives, managers and sales staff and responded to their most pressing concerns.

The need for individual analysis

The Selfridges study below shows that global anti-theft measures should not be adopted, but that each department, boutique or shop should be treated as a separate case for the purpose of analysis and design of prevention measures.

Case study: controlling shoplifting in Selfridges Oxford Street department store, London, United Kingdom

Selfridges is one of the largest department stores in the world, with retailing on seven floors and 380 different shops within the one store. Several of these shops have some degree of autonomy, being staffed or stocked by independent concessionaires.

The security department has responsibility for all security arrangements within the store, providing a general cover in the form of electronic surveillance, a team of store detectives and a small number of uniformed security staff. As well as theft by shoppers, their responsibilities cover dishonest staff, terrorist threats, general protection of staff, policing of delivery and storage areas and even lost property.

Selfridges' CCTV system is the largest of its kind in the UK, with about 90 cameras, eight of which monitor external areas and operate as a general theft deterrent. Electronic tagging of merchandise was rejected because of the expense, the large number of entrances and the sheer size of the crowds.

Instead of introducing heavier levels of security to the whole store, Selfridges adopted a more flexible, local approach, monitoring individual departments for losses and introducing appropriate security measures.

One approach was to adopt more traditional methods of sale, for example selling shoes in the old-fashioned manner with personal fittings. Clothing chains were introduced, with chains long enough to allow customers to remove a garment and inspect it, but not try it on without assistance. Special lightweight chains were devised for delicate garments. One chaining system was abandoned as, unless deactivated by staff, it would set off the alarm—upsetting innocent customers and threatening sales—when garments were removed.

Effectiveness: In 1986 Poyner and Webb (1987) evaluated the effectiveness of some of these local security measures using known losses from 1982, 1983 and 1985.

They found that increased management concern for security in the swimwear department—in 1983 a new buyer arrived and introduced a more rigorous regime of stock counting—produced a drop in losses from almost 7 per cent to between 1 and 2 per cent. As costumes were displayed on racks with no security devices, the security department concluded that the improvement was mainly due to better staff supervision of stock.

In Reldan, a specialty store, layout was changed and staff numbers increased to improve supervision of stock. The original layout had made it difficult for one sales representative to supervise stock, as well as the fitting rooms and cash point which were some distance away in an adjacent department.

As well, a new buyer introduced better staffing arrangements and supervision of staff in 1983, and losses fell for six months. But when the department was moved and stock increased, losses began to increase again. In December 1985 the department was enlarged and moved into a more central position with staff increased and better supervised. Losses fell again, even though the department was carrying much larger quantities of merchandise.

After a rise in losses coinciding with the opening of Escada, an up-market fashion range normally displayed against one wall of the fashion floor, clothes were chained on free-standing racks and fitting room procedures were tightened. Losses were almost eliminated for three years.

Lighter security chains were eventually introduced to prevent marking of delicate fabrics. Chains do not appear to discourage customers from examining clothes: in fact, with more up-market items, security devices appear to enhance the perceived value of the goods. Experience in the dress department of Selfridges also suggests that chains protect stock even when they are not properly locked.

The Selfridges study demonstrates that conventional security measures such as closed circuit television surveillance
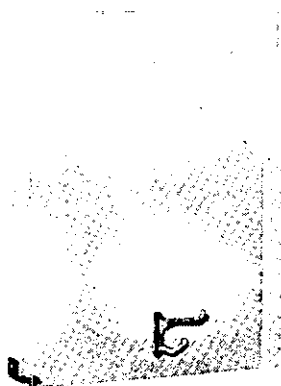
and store detectives are not sufficient to prevent shoplifting, but that local security devices, staff supervision, management concern and the physical layout of the store can contribute to a reduction in theft. It also shows how the combination of these security measures can lead to a satisfactory compromise between open merchandising and theft reduction.

Identifying shoplifters' targets

In the following study, shoplifting was reduced by the use of specific signs and stars identifying frequently-shoplifted goods.

Case study: reducing shoplifting by the use of specific signs in Uppsala, Sweden

The object of this study (Carter et al. 1979) was to extend an earlier study (McNees et al. 1976)—showing that signs and stars identifying clothing as frequently taken by shoplifters reduced theft—to other items and see if price and size of the item affected the outcome.

The Uppsala study showed gross sales for the store for 1976 were approximately $21 million, with disappearances costing $411,600 or 1.96 per cent of sales.

Except for an exit guarded by a uniformed guard, shoppers had to pass one of 25 cash registers in the front of the store to get out. At the start of the five-week study the store employed 60 full-time cashiers. During the study 15 part-timers were employed, and by the end of the study the store employed a total of 120 people.

The initial choices for identification as frequently-stolen items were flavoured lip gloss, Elvis Presley records, leather coats and small, adjustable wrenches, which were subsequently dropped from the study and replaced by halogen lights.

Identification marks: Before the study, each of the items was marked with a small red adhesive dot (circa 1 cm in diameter). It was placed on the screw-off cap of the lip gloss and on the price tag of the other items. Cashiers were shown samples of the marked items and instructed to tick a measurement sheet whenever somebody bought one of the marked items. These sheets were returned to the supervisor at the close of the day and a new one issued next morning.

To determine the number of missing items, an observer made inventory checks in the store each morning before opening. All marked merchandise was counted and recorded. Using the cashiers' forms, the number of missing items was calculated. The number of items on the shelf became the starting point for the new day. On 30 per cent of the days a second recorder made independent counts, and on half the days three observers counted the shelf items. An observer also 'bought' coded lip gloss to see if the cashiers were marking the forms.

Warning   signs: Following   one   week   of   baseline measurement, three signs (17.5 x 27.5 cm) were placed on the

cosmetic displays near the entrance to two checkout lanes, and one on a rack near the cash registers. The signs read:

ATTENTION! CONSUMER!
THE ITEMS MARKED WITH A RED CIRCLE
ARE FREQUENTLY STOLEN BY SHOPLIFTERS.

Three red circles approx. 12.5 cm in diameter were taped to the display directly above and behind the target merchandise.

Prior to observation day 15, two signs and four circles were placed on clothing racks containing leather coats, and three signs and three circles near the Elvis Presley records. From observation day 15 to day 21, baseline data were recorded for halogen bulbs, and prior to opening on day 22, three signs and two circles were placed near them. The signs were up for 27 days for lip gloss, 20 for records and leather coats, and 13 for bulbs.

Effectiveness: The number of missing items in all target categories was reduced when the merchandise was specified as being frequently taken by shoplifters, while sales showed moderate to marked increases.

The number of missing lip glosses fell from 18 per cent to 9 per cent; missing Elvis Presley records fell from 9 per cent to 3 per cent; disappearances of leather coats fell from 18 per cent to zero, and the loss of halogen bulbs was reduced from 31 per cent to 10 per cent.

This reduction occurred in conjunction with the intervention and remained below baseline levels for the duration of the study.

Employing outside consultants

Some stores have found it profitable to bring in outside security experts to solve their shrinkage problems.

Case study: employing consultants to reduce shrinkage in Bermans specialty stores, United States

To deal with internal shrinkage, Bermans, a specialty retail chain with stores in 30 states, reduced stock shrinkage in two ways: consultants were hired to raise awareness of staff from

selected stores about loss prevention; and investigators were
sent in to apprehend staff suspected of stealing. Experienced in
investigations, the consultants collected evidence on staff
suspected of stealing so they could be prosecuted.

An initial awareness-raising meeting, followed by monthly
visits to stores by the consultant, reduced shrinkage by 40 per
cent in the first six months at a cost of only 5 per cent of the
savings in shrinkage (Gabbard, Montang & Leonard 1986).

As well, undercover investigators were infiltrated into two
high-shrinkage stores. This cost $4,500 but uncovered six
employees stealing—all but two of the staff in one store. The
saving from the highest high-shrinkage store was 33 per cent.

Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED)

While some CPTED strategies will work in most cases, the key
to successful programs is a careful analysis of the specific
circumstances and the development of site-specific programs.

*Case study: reducing robberies in convenience stores in
Tallahassee, Florida, United States with CPTED strategies*

Between 1981 and 1985, Jeffery, Hunter and Griswold (1987)
tested the influence of internal and external environmental
factors on the rate of robberies in 34 convenience stores in
Tallahassee. Basing their analysis on the 'opportunity' theory
of crime prevention—which maintains that the physical
characteristics of a location either present an opportunity to
potential criminals or deter them—they analysed individual
crime sites and recommended physical changes.

Jeffery and his colleagues found that you cannot judge where
crimes will occur just by general location: it does not follow that
a particular store will suffer a high rate of robbery simply
because it is in a high-crime area. Individual crime site data and
analysis are needed to determine how secure a particular store
will be.

Their findings were as follows.

Location of cashier: Stores with the cashier located in the
centre were robbed less often than were stores with the cashier
on the side.

Number of clerks: Stores with more than one clerk were less likely to be robbed than were stores with a solitary clerk.

Visibility within. Stores with unobstructed views within were less likely to be robbed.

Visibility outside. Stores with unobstructed windows and shelving that permit clear viewing of the interior of the store were less likely to be robbed.

Land use. Stores located next to commercial property were less likely to be robbed than were stores near residential property, and these in turn were less likely to be robbed than were stores near vacant lots or wooded areas.

Access to store. Stores with concealed access and escape were more likely to be robbed.

Exterior lighting. Stores with well-lit exteriors were less likely to be robbed.

Evening commercial activity. Stores near areas with evening commercial activity were less likely to be robbed.

Petrol pumps. Stores with gasoline pumps in front were less likely to be robbed than those without.

Cash handling. Stores with good cash handling procedures—and with signs letting shoppers know this—and safes clearly visible were less likely to be robbed.

The authors found that '...convenience store robberies are very responsive to both internal and external physical and geographical features which involve the design of the store and the design of the external environment' (Jeffery et al. 1987, p.69). These findings were used to justify an ordinance restricting convenience store operations in Gainesville, Florida, and served as a partial basis for a later state-wide analysis of convenience store robbery (Hunter 1988).

Hunter (1990) re-examined the Tallahassee stores four and a half years later to determine what changes might have occurred. He found a general decline in robberies of 24 per cent from June 1985 through December 1989, with some store robberies decreasing by as much as 86 per cent, while other stores increased by up to 50 per cent.

Both the 1985 and 1989 data demonstrated that crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) works, but that the influence of environmental factors varies over time.

This means that crime prevention strategies must constantly be upgraded and improved.

In 1988 Hunter and Jeffery undertook a Florida-wide survey of convenience store robberies to test the application of CPTED principles from a local area to a state-wide area. They found that the model had greater applicability at the district level than at the state level (Hunter & Jeffery 1991).

Enhancing accountability and staff awareness

In its survey of business crime prevention initiatives, the UK Home Office (Burrows 1991) found that increased shrinkage losses and recessionary pressures had caused a reassessment of operating cultures, with managerial accountability displacing the entrepreneurial sales orientation of the recent past.

Case study: educating branch staff and developing accountability of individual branch managers at British retailing chain B and Q, United Kingdom

Despite increasing profitability throughout the late eighties, B and Q, an English do-it-yourself retailing chain, found stock losses had risen to an unacceptable level by late 1991.

The company set up a top-level working party representing all the main company functions to formulate a loss-prevention strategy. The working party developed a 95-point action plan and devolved its implementation, and introduced a three-pronged program for educating branch staff and inculcating accountability in branch managers.

Storewatch: An intensive training program for managers and their two deputies was mounted. Over 1100 staff attended sessions which used sophisticated audience-response devices to guarantee participation. Management were set realisable targets for their stores and given training material to help get the message to their staff.

Management 'hit' teams were sent into the worst 25 stores in the chain. Headed by a district manager from another region, these teams of six or seven (audit, security, personnel and training) did intensive week-long investigations, then presented an action plan to the Operations Director.

Audit and security were intensified in the worst regions, reversing a company trend. A regional auditor and security manager were appointed to arrive at a program with the regional management team which targeted stores with the greatest potential payback.

The cost was modest, comprising training material and equipment, hotel accommodation for the hit squad and marginal increases in audit and security staff.

Evaluation: The overall effect of this package of measures in their first full year (February 1990—February 1991) was to reduce B and Q's stock losses by 25 per cent. The original investment was returned twentyfold in the first year.

Internal operational reviews and audits

Many small businesses could be wasting time and money on security programs because they have mistaken the causes of their shrinkage problem (Moberly 1985). According to Moberly, the following steps are necessary to determine the cause of shrinkage:

1. Identify all operations within the firm that could conceivably affect inventory loss—for example merchandise, shipping, shoplifting, receiving, employee theft, storage, movement of merchandise and accounting.
2. Rank these operations, in descending order, according to proportion of shrinkage assumed to be attributable to each.
   Moberly suggests taking the first list and turning it upside down to gain a new perspective and perhaps a more accurate picture of inventory flow. Occasionally examination of seemingly insignificant operations reveals practices that require immediate attention.
3. Develop an operational checklist similar to a work simplification/methods improvement process chart (a means of analysing the details of a job operation). This checklist can be used to describe and record each part (who, what, when, where, why, how and how long) of each operation in detailed sequence. Draw upon the experience and knowledge of employees here.

4. Describe the operations to be examined using work simplification/methods improvement by reducing them to some combination of the following five steps.

STEP	SYMBOL	DEFINITION
Operation	O	Doing something to the merchandise
Transportation	T	Moving the merchandise
Delay	D	Any action that causes the movement of merchandise to stop or be delayed
Storage	S	A normal part of the process that requires storing merchandise to prevent unauthorised use
Inspection	I	Any point where an inspection of the merchandise occurs

These steps can be arranged into a flow diagram, like the simplified inventory handling example below:

SYMBOL		OPERATION
S	=	Receiving and storing merchandise at warehouse
D	=	Merchandise lies idle in warehouse/storage area
T	=	Transferring merchandise to selling point/floor
O	=	Taking merchandise from storage cartons and presenting for sale
T	=	Placing merchandise on sales floor
O	=	Pricing merchandise

The flow diagram for this particular operation may appear as S D T O T O. To be effective, an actual diagram would be much more detailed, noting the person, location, time and manner in which each operation was accomplished.

Besides complementing existing procedural review methods, diagrams depicting the flow of merchandise from receipt to point of sale are important tools for:

- scrutinising specific procedures within an operation;
- examining interdepartmental relationships;
- identifying inefficiencies and errors;
- comparing existing merchandise-handling practices with company policy;
- highlighting operational security weaknesses.

For example, the S D T O T O flow chart illustrated above shows that merchandise was at no stage subjected to inspection for quantity, defects, loss or damage. Further analysis would show who could exploit this vulnerability and how, where and when.

To determine where inspection points should be located, this firm could review previous loss reports and then apply the work simplification concept to the operational flow chart, asking the following questions:

- What type of illegitimate act/s could occur to the merchandise in this operation that would result in a loss?
- How could those illegitimate acts be performed?
- When?
- By whom?
- Where?

Ultimately, however, the effectiveness of the initiative depends largely on these factors: the accurate selection of the operations to be examined; the thoroughness of those examining them; and their ability to recognise points of vulnerability and the ability to secure managerial support for corrective measures.

Preventing fraudulent refunding

Fraudulent refunding involves thieves returning stolen goods to retailers and getting a full refund (Clifford 1988). It can be dealt with in a number of ways:

- enforcing a rule of 'no original receipt, no refund';
- using a phone alert system to other stores to warn them of fraudulent refunders;
- refunding on goods above a certain amount by cheque through the mail from the store's head office;
- requiring management approval on all refunds without a original sales slip;
- keeping a file of all refunds made without a sales slip so they can be reviewed for names, addresses and phone numbers.

To prevent people paying with bad cheques, some retailers code register receipts to show that the item has been paid for by cheque, and refuse to refund the money until the original cheque has been cleared.

Preventing retail crime in supermarkets

The major crime problems affecting supermarkets are shoplifting and the theft of shopping trolleys. In the United States, robberies of supermarkets are increasing, and demonstrations of consumers against certain products are causing problems for management. Occasionally, supermarket chains are targets of extortionists who tamper with goods or food—for example, the Tylenol case in the US and a recent Australian case where criminals contaminated toothpaste and mouthwash with arsenic.

A 1990 survey by the American Food Marketing Institute (FMI) showed an average of 62 apprehensions per store for shoplifting from the 41 supermarket companies who responded (FMI March 1991). The average value of each item stolen by the 250,000 shoplifters was nearly US$18, and the companies recovered more than US$4.5 million worth of merchandise.

Both in the United States and Australia, shoplifters' favourite targets are cigarettes (60 per cent), health and beauty items (17 per cent) and meat products (14.3 per cent). In some states in the US, alcohol is sold in supermarkets and is popular with thieves.

In the five-year period 1985-1989, shoplifting arrests in the US increased 30 per cent, but fewer than 35 per cent of the people apprehended for shoplifting were arrested (FMI February 1991). The arrest rate has not changed over the past 10 years.

EAS in supermarkets

Electronic article surveillance (EAS) systems rely on a variety of electronic technologies. Several systems are available, most notably electromagnetic, low frequency and high frequency.

Supermarket chains began to install EAS systems in the US in the early 1980s (Ohlhausen 1987).

Typically, EAS users tag only a small percentage—2-3 per cent—of supermarket items, such as the most stolen items mentioned above. The tags can be disguised as bar codes or otherwise hidden.

Some supermarkets install sensors at each checkout aisle. After groceries are rung up, the customer walks between two arched steel bars, and any tagged items hidden on the person will cause an alarm to sound. The cashier can then ask the customer to step back and walk through again, and suggest that

the person has forgotten something he or she intended to pay for.

Other supermarket operators put EAS sensors at the store's exit. This is obviously cheaper than placing them in each aisle, and does not require each checkout to be rewired. Most importantly, cashiers do not have to be retrained and are not expected to handle shoplifter problems—a security officer at the store's exit makes sure shoppers walk through the scanner and responds to alarms.

Closed circuit television (CCTV)

Closed circuit television is in wide use as a management tool and a deterrent to crime. One of the most recent innovations in the technology is systems which trigger only when activated by alarm sensors or other signals.

Case study: use of CCTV at Tesco Stores Ltd, United Kingdom

One of England's largest retailers, Tesco, is vulnerable to crime such as attacks on staff in the course of robbery, shoplifting and internal theft. Disillusioned with the piecemeal security arrangements for their supermarkets, particularly their larger superstores, and concerned about the cost of store detectives, Tesco has begun installing TISS—the Totally Integrated Security System.

Over recent years a number of new and existing Tesco stores have been fitted with this internally-developed security package, the TISS program. TISS incorporates changes in store design and procedures, but its central component is centralised CCTV monitoring of all vulnerable areas inside and outside the store.

Three areas are covered by TISS, and CCTV coverage and each is relayed both to a security control room and the manager's office:

1. Central cash handling areas have been modified into a suite of rooms comprising a cash room and a safe room—separated by a sterile, airlock area. This internal 'fortress' incorporates internal alarms, CCTV cameras and monitors

Notices to customers are backed up by closed circuit television in many supermarkets.

and hardened doors. Safes are only accessible when management and cash carriers unlock in tandem.

2. To protect against cash snatches at the cash register, as well as staff theft and collusion, check-out lanes are all separately monitored by CCTV and cash lifts from the registers are carried out by the use of an air conveyancing system to the 'fortress'.

3. Vulnerable external areas like staff entrances, rear doors and waste disposal areas are kept under surveillance.

In most cases, monitoring is not continuous, but is triggered by defined usage or activated by the operator.

The capital cost of this system is high—about £150 for an average superstore—and running costs in the form of security staff are about £15-20,000 a year.

Evaluation: The first installation of TISS at an existing store made an immediate impact. Unknown losses dropped from some £12,000 a week to £5000, recouping the capital expenditure outlay in six months. In addition, cash losses from the cash registers dropped from about £500 a week to £20, and violent incidents in the store almost disappeared (Burrows 1991).

Performance at eight stores running complete systems indicates that unknown losses can be reduced by between 40 and 60 per cent at high loss stores, while violent incidents virtually disappear. And when professional thieves are arrested, taped evidence increases the likelihood of guilty pleas in court.

Loss of shopping trolleys

Shopping carts have a way of disappearing, especially where customers walk to the store instead of driving.

In Australia shopping trolleys cost about $200 each and most supermarkets have about $25,000 worth of them at any given time. About 5 per cent of all supermarket shopping trolleys disappear (personal communication, Australian Supermarket Institute 1991).

Shopping cart corrals: Supermarkets have dealt with trolley disappearances in a number of ways, for example many stores have installed barriers to keep carts at the customer loading zone in front of the store, though this does not stop all trolley theft.

Some markets allow customers to take carts to their cars and send employees out to scour the neighbourhood for carts people have taken home; others offer rewards for finding lost carts.

Cart corrals allow people to use carts however they want, but encourage them to return them on their own. This is how they work. A customer walks over to the cart storage area and puts

a coin or a token in a device that has locked a cart to the cart in front of it. The first cart is then freed and the customer can use it in the store and the parking lot. The customer's coin is returned when he or she pushes the cart back into the cart corral.

Rewards for returned trolleys: Friction has arisen in Australia where some local councils have impounded trolleys found on streets and released them on payment of a $30 bounty or auctioned them off. The supermarkets feel this is too expensive (although they admit passing on the cost to the consumers).

A fairer system, the supermarkets believe (personal communication, Australian Supermarket Institute 1991) would be a smaller payment to council employees who alert a supermarket to the location of trolleys.

Loss through the back door

Not all items stolen from supermarkets exit by the front door: some losses occur through the back receiving area. Vendors might deliver stale goods or fewer goods than the store is paying for, and receiving clerks can collude with them (Ohlhausen 1987).

Educating receiving clerks is a common method of preventing this sort of loss. Some chains conduct a formal certification program for receivers, and others have security supervisors checking receiving as part of their regular round.

Securing cigarettes

As well as being one of the items most frequently shoplifted from supermarkets, cigarettes are of special concern to supermarket management in Australia because it is against the law to sell them to people under 18 years of age. To make sure they are within the law, Australian supermarkets now keep cigarettes behind the checkout counter where only the cashier can reach them. This also prevents theft.

Shopping bag searches

Most Australian supermarkets reserve the right to search customers' shopping bags. Searching bags is a contentious issue, with implications for individual rights and privacy, and pressure from consumer organisations has required supermarkets to agree to a code of practice and to post signs informing customers of their rights and obligations. The NSW RTA members' sign reads:

DEAR SHOPPER,
IT IS A CONDITION OF ENTRY THAT YOU WILL PRESENT ANY BAGS,
CARTONS, PARCELS AND CONTAINERS FOR INSPECTION BY OUR
STAFF BEFORE LEAVING OUR STORE.
THANK YOU

One of the admitted weaknesses of the existing bag search system is that it is impossible to tell—especially since the introduction of bar coding—whether specific items originated in the supermarket doing the search or another shop. Negotiations are under way between customers' rights organisations and supermarkets about the provision of lockers for people to store pre-purchased goods.
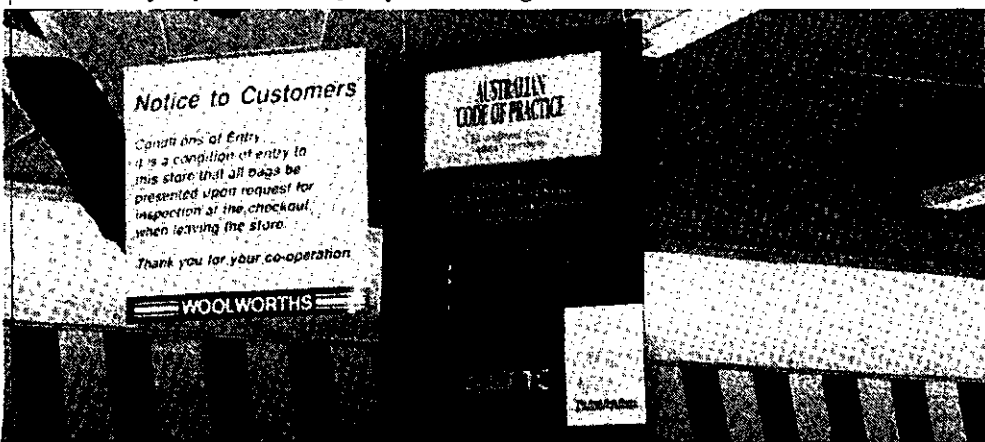
Robbery

Robbery is not a serious problem for Australian supermarkets yet. In the United States, where supermarkets open for long hours, sometimes around the clock, robbery is a growing problem.

In the US Food Marketing Institute's 1991 Security and Loss Prevention Issues Survey, responding supermarket companies reported one robbery per 10 stores in 1990. Most robbers were armed with a gun or knife and most made threats. The average loss per robbery was US$3789. A guard was on duty during

about 6 per cent of the incidents. Thieves favoured Saturdays and Tuesdays.

Case study: preventing retail theft in a grocery store in Uppsala, Sweden by identifying and inventorying high-risk items

In 1985, retail theft cost an estimated $500 million in Sweden, five times the 1977 rate. Carter, Holmstrom, Simpanen and Melin (1988) carried out a project to measure the role of employees in preventing retail theft in a grocery store.

The study was conducted in an independently owned and operated grocery store in Uppsala, Sweden, population 130,000. The store grossed $7.2 million in 1985 and lost $216,000 or 3 per cent. There were 60 employees, of whom 45 were part-timers.

Existing security measures included a sign notifying customers that the store was patrolled by a plain-clothes guard and that shoplifters would be prosecuted. Such a guard did visit the store irregularly, but was not present during the intervention. Four convex ceiling mirrors had also been installed.

First the researchers identified frequently stolen products from three groups of items and twice weekly graphed losses for the separate groups.

The store used an optical price-scanning system. Most items in the store were enclosed in factory packaging containing European Article Number (EAN—a unique 13-digit code readable by scanning equipment). The cash registers were connected to a central computer that maintained data on sales, number of transactions, stock, prices and other relevant informtion.

The intervention included three components: an oral presentation about the study was made to employees, a list of target items was distributed to employees and posted in the lunchroom, and data on losses for each of three groups of target items—sweets, personal hygiene products, and jewellery—were graphed bi-weekly on a diagram in the lunchroom following each inventory. The target items were selected on the basis of industry statistics showing them to be frequently stolen.

After the products were identified and losses graphed, thefts from the three groups dropped from 8 per day to 2 a day.

The number of missing items for each of the three target categories was reduced in conjunction with the introduction of the intervention and remained below baseline levels for the duration of the study.

For sweets, theft rates averaged 4.7 per day before intervention and 1.2 after; for personal hygiene products, theft rates averaged 1.6 per day before and 0.8 per day after; for jewellery, the theft rate during baseline was 2 per day, whereas only 1 item was stolen during the three-week intervention.

Although the intervention was directed solely at employees, it is unclear whether employee or customer theft was affected. The possibilities are:

- employees were made aware that taking products was noticed and considered to be stealing;
- specific identification of target items could have increased the threat of detection;
- customer theft could have been reduced by increased employee attention to target items; and
- although only a minority of employees questioned indicated that they had changed their behaviour, subtle but effective changes may have occurred in the behaviour of several employees.

Taken with other findings, this study shows that identifying high-risk items can be more effective than identifying a suspected individual or group in preventing retail theft.

Preventing retail crime in shopping centres & malls

History

The term 'shopping mall' is used to describe a cluster of shops and stores designed and developed as one architectural unit (Brantingham, Brantingham & Wong 1990). They may be small, large, covered, uncovered, one or many-storeyed, with exposed or undercover parking, or none at all.

Shopping malls are an American invention, evolving out of main street shopping centres. The first recognisable shopping mall was built in 1907. With the post-War baby boom and the move to the suburbs, small malls were integrated into the plans for new communities. Continued growth and the proliferation of cars saw the emergence of larger malls serving mobile regional populations. Most recently, huge regional malls housing office complexes and cinemas as well as department stores, specialty chains and individual boutiques have appeared.

Initially the private developers who built malls usually chose to site them in upper-income areas, where the mall evolved into 'town centres' where people went to socialise as well as shop. This no longer holds true, and malls are appearing in areas which attract customers with a lower socio-economic background, creating new problems for mall management.

Malls fall into five major categories: neighbourhood malls; community malls; regional malls; city centre malls; and multi-use megamalls (Brantingham, Brantingham & Wong 1990).

Neighbourhood malls are often anchored by a supermarket and serve up to 40,000 people. Community malls add a large inexpensive chain store and serve up to 150,000 people from several neighbourhoods. Regional malls usually support two

main department stores and a large number of smaller specialty shops.

These malls are usually located on busy roads—neighbourhood malls on local streets, community malls on arteries, and regional malls on major highway intersections.

More recently, city centre malls have appeared in North America. These can be built underground, such as the Pacific Center in Vancouver, Canada; or, like the Reading Terminal mall in Philadelphia and Toronto's Eaton Center, as part of an urban redevelopment program, replacing an older centre development.

Multi-use megamalls join hotels, cinemas, restaurants, bars, offices, sports arenas and even amusement parks with traditional shops within one vast structure—for example, the West Edmonton Mall in Alberta, Canada. In Australia, malls have been built as part of town centre developments comprising office blocks, cinema complexes and restaurants—Bankstown Square in Sydney's south-west is such a development, as are Belconnen Mall and Woden Plaza in Canberra.

City centre malls and megamalls attract a much more mixed clientele than other malls. Many of the new users are simply looking for a place to rest or come to cause nuisances, commit thefts or traffic in drugs.

Britain has developed the 'stand-alone'—one large, mainly food, supermarket surrounded by parking, often with a petrol station attached, where shoppers can shop, fill up and run.

Australian malls

Wherever America goes, Australia is never far behind, and we are already moving towards vast regional malls. By the end of 1992 the refurbished Westfield Miranda Shoppingtown in Sydney will open a $200 million extension, making it more than a kilometre long, the largest regional shopping centre in Australia.

Already 20 per cent of Australians use regional centres. Westfield, which owns the largest proportion of regional centres in Australia—21 out of 60—attracted 150 million shoppers in 1990, and this is growing (*Sydney Morning Herald* 17

Riverside Plaza, Queanbeyan, is a good example of an Australian regional mall.

June 1991). In 1991 their Eastgardens centre catered to 7.5 million visitors, up from four million in 1988.

Australians increasingly see browsing around shops as a leisure activity, though many still want to get in and out quickly. Some centres have already specialised to attract a particular group—Harbourside at Sydney's Darling Harbour, for example, concentrates on food, fashion and tourism. Some observers see specialisation as the way of the future.

City centres depend on 9-to-5 workers and focus on the more luxurious and easily portable end of the market—fashion and

recreational goods, along with quick food outlets for the lunchtime crowds. This is the mix, for example, at Skygarden, the newest luxury shopping centre in Sydney's central business district.

But what goes around comes around. A Sydney architect was commissioned recently to revamp a huge Los Angeles centre, and intends to try to make it feel more like shopping on a street in the good old pre-mall days.

Malls & crime

Shopping centres and their retail tenants must attract increasing numbers of customers to survive, but more people, cars and merchandise also attract crime. Shopping centres have become focal points for theft of, and from, vehicles as well as shoplifting, passing bad cheques, and credit card fraud. Crimes against persons—purse snatching, robbery, abductions and sexual assaults—have been infrequent in Australia, but the recent shooting of seven shoppers in a mall at Sydney's middle-class Strathfield has shattered the complacency of the public, mall managers and the police alike.

Shopping centre management has to answer to community residents, local law enforcement officials, customers and individual retailers. All of these expect shopping malls to be safe places to shop and spend leisure time. As a result, shopping centre developers and operators in the United States are now viewing security as a major design consideration when planning a new mall or renovating an existing one (Potter 1984), and mall managers are spending an increasing percentage of their operating budgets on security personnel and equipment.

Unlike most other industries, however, shopping centre operators seldom pay for security programs. Although capital expenses such as closed circuit television (CCTV), alarms and communications systems are generally considered to be construction costs, the security department's operating budget is paid from common area maintenance (CAM) charges levied against tenants on the basis of space leased. But because CAM charges are added to rent, shopping centre managers are under constant pressure from tenants to keep them low.

Malls as crime 'nodes'

One way of looking at criminal events is to see them as the convergence of potential offenders and victims in specific behavioural settings at particular times and places (Clarke 1980). By looking at the way people move around in the course of everyday activities, we can predict where their paths will cross.

Criminal activity seems to occur at or on the way to the end points or 'nodes' of criminals' routine daily travel—the offender's home, work or school sites, and favourite shopping areas and entertainment spots.

The crime rate increases further when a node such as a shopping centre or mall attracts the sorts of groups most likely to commit crimes—teenagers, alcoholics, drug users, the unemployed. To develop effective situational crime prevention strategies, we must understand shopping malls and the populations who use them.

Factors affecting crime in malls

The relationship between crime and shopping areas has been well documented in criminology. Situational crime prevention techniques can be used to solve the problem, but understanding the environment surrounding the crime is crucial.

Shopping mall crime problems appear to occur in predictable patterns that depend on:

- the location of the mall;
- the types of malls situated in a shopping region;
- the design of the mall, its grounds and facilities;
- the mall's administrative and security systems; and
- the security systems used by individual mall tenants (Brantingham, Brantingham & Wong 1990).

Information about the type, location, design, administration and store security of a mall should make it possible to predict whether a mall will have crime problems and what these will be.

Location

Crimes in and around malls include burglary, robbery, theft, vandalism, graffiti, nuisance behaviour and violence to the person.

Because they were built in middle-class affluent suburbs and were accessible only by car, older malls tended not to attract great numbers of crime-prone groups. However, newer city malls, those with movie theatres and bars, and those near public transit stops, are vulnerable.

Research shows that crime nodes produce crimes in nearby areas which become part of offenders' normal travel paths. The growing practice of councils allowing the construction of apartment blocks near malls simply places the most 'at risk' type of housing (flats are often empty during the day and vulnerable to entry) in an 'at risk' location (Felson 1987).

Design

Design seems to be the key to property and nuisance crimes in and around malls. Nuisance behaviour is most frequent near high-activity spots that attract juveniles or areas where non-buyers hang out. Thefts seem to occur in busy stores with easy access. Burglaries occur near busy stores with blind entrances.

People sitting in one place for a long time, noisy conversations, unusual behaviour, especially by juveniles, derelicts or drunks, can all be perceived as nuisances and can generate fear of crime among mall users.

Design influences people's use of space, and in fact design is used to control behaviour—either to encourage mall users to buy or to prevent nuisance behaviour. Lack of benches, for example, encourages people to buy food to get a seat. Railings on balconies are often designed to make it uncomfortable to lean for long periods.

Malls are faced with the dilemma of wanting to be seen as 'town centres' while wanting to keep out undesirables. As public spaces real town centres did not have this luxury.

CPTED strategies for reducing crime in and around malls

Researchers from the University of Queensland's Architecture Department examined the relationship between break and entry and the urban and architectural environment of small shopping centres in Brisbane (de Gruchy & Hansford 1980) and found the following.

- Incidents were most likely to happen when occupancy was lowest.
- Windows were the most vulnerable point of illicit entry and the rear facades of buildings were attacked twice as often as the sides and three times as often as the fronts.
- The influence of private security patrols on the distribution of break and entry was minimal.
- The existence of after-hours premises nearby did not discourage crime. In fact, it might even have brought offenders into the area.
- Alarms did not reduce the risk of shop-breaking, but lowered the success rate, as they interrupted some offenders.
- The sorts of businesses in a shopping centre did not influence the type of crime committed there, but the type of environment did. For example, the siting of a large, paved car park behind the shops attracted skateboarders and may have caused 'accidental' damage in one shopping centre, and a late-opening skating arena adjacent to the paved car park probably made the problem worse.
- A retail premises of solid construction, with secure windows and door locks and adequate lighting both inside and out, would be less vulnerable to a shop-breaking attack than a similar premises with poor security and low lighting.
- The ability of close neighbours to see what is going on (natural surveillance) seems to be the best protection for medical premises.

As a result of their investigation, de Gruchy and Hansford came up with a number of strategies for reducing crime in small

shopping centres, some easily within the means of most shop-owners and others involving some capital outlay.

They recommended that shop-owners protect themselves in the short term, at little extra cost, in the following ways.

- Improve internal shop surveillance by removing as many obstructions as possible from the front window display so passers-by, or even official security guards, can get a clear, unobstructed view of the inside of the shop.
- Leave interior lights on all night.
- Leave outside lights on all night, especially in the rear of the premises.

Strategies involving some outlay included:

- good quality deadlocks on all doors;
- security grilles on all windows, particularly at the side and back; and
- installation of a security alarm system.

The authors also recommended longer-term strategies for local authorities, architects, town planners and commercial property developers to reduce the overall risk of shop breaking in shopping centres.

For example, local authorities should encourage residential development within sub-centres by offering developers incentives such as commercial floor space bonuses. This would make shopping centres less isolated by ensuring that there were people on the street after trading hours.

In the design of shopping centres the number of enclosed structures should be minimised and the level of natural surveillance maximised.

De Gruchy and Hansford suggested the following design for shopping centres, incorporating an open rear service court overlooked by residential development.

Increasing surveillance

Designing or redesigning vulnerable spaces so that the people who work, live, or pass by there can monitor activity and discourage crime by their very presence—that is, to enhance

surveillance—is one of the major tenets of crime prevention through environmental design, and a popular situational crime prevention strategy.
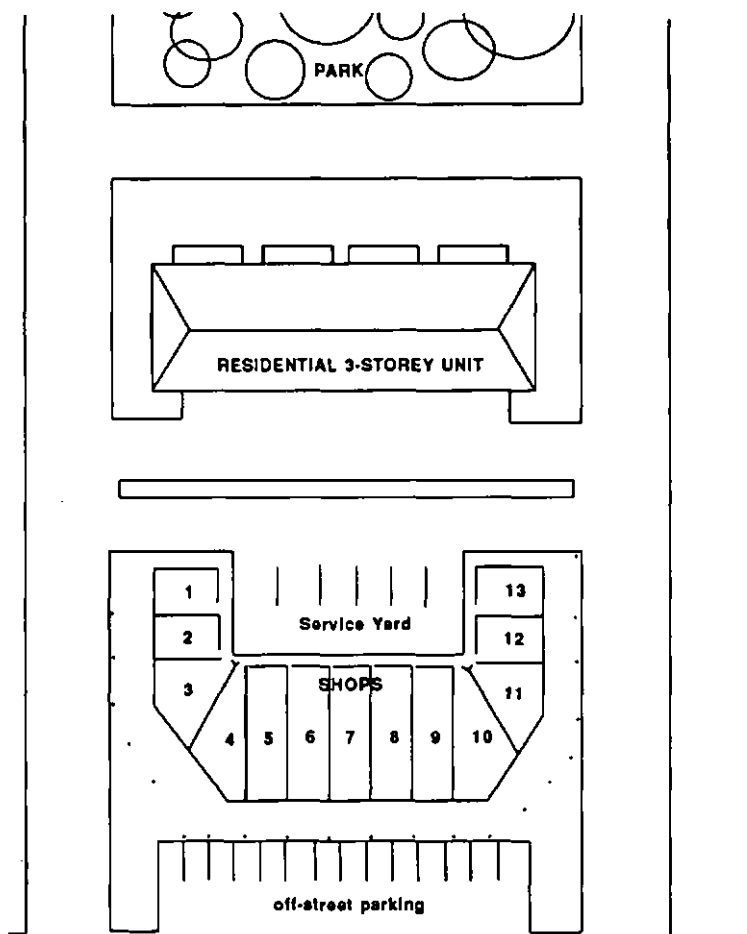
Case study: reducing theft from shopping bags in the Birmingham Markets, United Kingdom, by design changes

The Birmingham Bull Ring is one of the largest retail markets in the United Kingdom, with over 1000 stalls, some occupied six

days a week, selling fresh food, clothing, household goods and antiques. There are four main market areas: two Bull Ring Markets open six days a week, one indoor market selling most of the meat, fish and poultry, and the Bull Ring Open Market with fruit and vegetable stalls. Other markets are the under-cover Rag Market and the outdoor Flea Market, which open three days a week.

The most common form of crime in these markets was the theft of purses or wallets from shopping bags. The offences occurred in a very specific area of the city centre and at very specific times—Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, the busiest market days, between 11 a.m. and about 6 p.m., and the thefts occurred most often in the two markets with the more densely packed stalls rather than in the three with the more spacious layout.

The Open Market, which suffered a high level of theft, had been replanned in 1983. The narrowest access way between stalls was increased from 2.5 m to 3 m or more, with more space behind the stalls and wider cross access ways, and a new lighting system was installed in the Rag Market. As well, the police carried out a covert operation against purse thieves in 1982.

Results: The program was evaluated by Poyner & Webb (1987) from London's Tavistock Institute for Human Relations, with the following findings.

- Crime had decreased in both the Open Market and the Rag Market.
- The incidence of purse theft in the Open Market had fallen by 40 per cent between 1983 and 1984, and by 70 per cent between 1983 and 1985.
- The police action seemed to have redistributed the crime rather than preventing it, with most of the thefts from the Open Market and the indoor Market Hall displaced into the Rag Market.
- The installation of the new lighting system in the Rag Market was followed by a drop in crime between the summers of 1983 and 1984.

- The reduction in crime in the Rag and Open Markets was accompanied by a smaller reduction in the surrounding area. That means the whole markets area benefited from an improvement in the worst area of risk, as thieves found the area less attractive.

As reducing congestion was obviously the key to reducing crime, market security staff also got rid of stallholders who gathered large crowds around them to make a sales pitch.

This study demonstrates how crime can be reduced by improving the design of a shopping area to reduce congestion and enhance surveillance, in this case by widening access ways and improving lighting.

In Australia, Westfield Limited builds small kiosks or shopping islands in open spaces where crowds and trouble build up. By asking people if they need help, shop assistants can move people on who are just hanging around (Des Hayes, Westfield Limited, personal communication 1991).

Architecture as well as design of malls is changing. The earliest malls simply converted a footpath into a private space by enclosing it. Neighbourhood malls were usually L-shaped. Community and regional malls typically had a pair of major stores as end anchors with smaller stores arranged along a straight walkway between them. Larger malls tended to have a few smaller, narrower side walkways. The stores on these malls were usually narrow but deep, which maximised shop space and minimised public space. However, these linear designs create clusters of people at every major entrance or intersection, producing points of conflict between individuals.

More recent regional malls and 'post-modern' megamalls have a much more complex layout, with multiple levels and open courts. This disperses crowds, making the mall feel less congested, but also reducing the number of spots where people might congregate. There are fewer nuisance problems associated with loitering in post-modern malls than in older malls.

Poor design can also create crime opportunities outside malls. For example, the design of a parking lot can make car theft

or break-ins easy as well as making car parks dangerous for staff after dark.

The management of Australia's Westfield chain of shopping centres is consciously designing security measures into the construction of new shopping centres and incorporating them into renovations. Westfield takes responsibility for the security of the perimeter of the mall—except where tenants' back doors open onto a public street—using target-hardening techniques such as strong doors and locks, access control by electronic security at entry points boosted by CCTV after hours, and loading docks enclosed by roller shutters.

Westfield's head of security is involved early—liaising with electrical engineers on the placement of security points for alarm systems, and with architects on doors, locks, and lighting systems. The company's leasing strategy is to seek a retail mix that not only maximises sales, but enhances security.

In its newest malls, Westfield is compartmentalising types of retailing to improve security. For example, eating areas are separated from financial institutions by passages or walkways that can be sealed off in an emergency, such as a bank robbery, to minimise the risk to shoppers.

Public or private space?

There is one problem associated with security which may become increasingly important in newer regional, city centre and megamalls—a conflict over whether a mall is public or private space. Although a mall is usually considered private space, it may be converted to a public space if it becomes a major pedestrian thoroughfare. This has profound implications for both the control of nuisance behaviour and criminal opportunities.

At Toronto's Eaton Center, for example, mall security staff originally controlled undesirable behaviour by issuing $53 trespass tickets, enabling management to evict 30,000 people, primarily teenagers, derelicts and others in 1985. A legal challenge overturned the practice: the courts ruled that, as the mall owners had allowed subway routes through the property, they had given up their normal rights to control access and to

expel people (Brantingham, Brantingham & Wong 1990). As large numbers of teenagers and derelicts now loiter in the mall, management has begun to remove benches and adopt other design strategies to deter them.

A similar problem bedevils Vancouver's largest megamall complex. The mall development will eventually house a hotel, a regional pub, a casino, a major fast food franchise, several office towers, several food fairs and two multi-screen movie theatres as well as hundreds of specialty stores, a number of grocery superstores, several major department stores and on-site parking for 11,000 cars. It hopes to attract 40,000 people a day. Major apartment complexes are planned for the surrounding area.

As a condition of its development permit, the mall had to permit a 24-hour public easement through its parking levels to connect a nearby light rail transit stop and an adjacent arterial road. Because some parts of the mall are clearly private space and other parts would now be regarded as public space, security arrangements are confused.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police staffs a one-person office on site, but has no plans to carry out general security for the complex. Individual stores have their own security arrangements but are not responsible for common areas. Mall security covers some common areas, but the high-traffic areas that might be regarded as the most risky, are not covered by any security measures. There has already been a shooting between rival teenage gangs in the insecure, apparently public space.

Administrative & security systems

Security goals and objectives

The goal of any shopping centre developer or operator is profit, and every operating function within the shopping centre must ultimately be measured in terms of its contribution to profit. Since security cannot generate profits, its cost-effectiveness must be measured in terms of its contribution to the overall profitability of the shopping centre. To make this contribution, security must concentrate on two interrelated and equally important objectives: loss prevention—including crime prevention, and public relations, that is, making customers feel safe.

Loss prevention

Although many security directors still think in terms of crime prevention, loss prevention is more appropriate. Shopping centres must be protected from any loss, not just that arising out of crime (Potter 1984). For example, if a security officer sees spilled liquid on the floor that could cause a customer to fall and sue the mall management, he or she should call housekeeping and stand by till it is cleaned up. Similarly, fire risks should be reported.

Crime prevention is an important part of loss prevention, and effective shopping centre programs can prevent criminal activity in three ways.

Deterrence: Security must provide a highly-visible, effective deterrent to criminal activity. Adequate lighting, alert and aggressive patrols and appropriate physical security measures such as controlling access to non-public areas are all effective deterrents.

Detection: While no retail facility can deter all criminal activity, crime can be prevented by the use of closed circuit television and intrusion alarm systems followed by an appropriate response.

WARNING!

THESE PREMISES ARE
ELECTRONICALLY
PROTECTED

Limitation of loss: Responses to crime or threats of crime must be designed to prevent loss of life and limit or eliminate property losses and potential liability. Where appropriate, shopping centre and tenant security personnel should coordinate their activities with any police or emergency services response.

Loss prevention programs

According to one American corporate director of loss prevention (*Security Management* February 1988), three key elements are necessary for successful loss prevention programs—clear guidelines, open lines of communication and motivation.

Clear guidelines are imperative so employees know exactly what is expected of them. These should be in writing and be reviewed periodically to keep them up to date. Policies should be introduced to new employees in orientation classes or incorporated into employee handbooks which must be signed for and read. Periodic routine training programs should be held to review rules and procedures. Keeping employees conscientious is an ongoing process.

Open lines of communication: Employees may be stealing to get back at the company or a supervisor. An open door policy that allows employees to feel comfortable discussing work problems may prevent this type of theft. If employees identify with the company, they are less likely to steal.

Motivation: Money is not the only motivation. Company programs that show employees they are appreciated can help instil identification and prevent theft.

Public relations

Often the only visible, readily identifiable representative of shopping centre management is the security officer. A courteous uniformed officer can be a major public relations asset. Research has shown that the public react very favourably to security officers in police-style uniforms.

To enhance their public relations function, some centres allow officers to help customers in car parks who are locked out or have mechanical problems.

The experience of Horton Plaza is that security and marketing programs for developments must be designed to complement each other.

Case study: overcoming fear of crime in Horton Plaza, San Diego, United States

Before it could be developed as the cornerstone of the urban revitalisation of California's San Diego in 1985, the Horton Plaza had to overcome potential customers' fear of crime in the downtown area.

To help them establish a framework for the Plaza's security program, Horton Plaza management analysed the police department's crime statistics for the proposed area, interviewed police and accompanied them on their beats, and held discussions with government and business leaders about problems and options for the downtown area (Brown 1987).

Once all aspects of the revitalisation program had been researched, the developers set about convincing the public that their safety and security were being addressed.

Security mechanisms included:

- an electronic perimeter using passive infra-red detectors and CCTV cameras at all entrances to the Horton Plaza complex;
- large numbers of well-trained security personnel;
- a very aggressive patrol offering assistance of all types, for example, giving directions, reuniting lost people, locating lost vehicles, helping with keys locked in cars and getting mechanical help where necessary.

Customers have to pay for parking in the Horton Plaza, and this has helped keep car theft down. Because of space restrictions in the paid parking lot, any person who does not have a claim check must present identification, which is then compared to the vehicle registration. As well panic/security stations were installed in all major thoroughfares in the parking station. All stations are identified by a bright red 'Security Assistance' sign with a button which opens a microphone feed when pushed. This action tells the security dispatcher where the call originated and lets him talk to the customer. If the button is pushed and nobody answers the security guard, security officers are immediately dispatched to that location.

Closed circuit surveillance cameras and special patrols are also used to instil confidence and deter crime in the car park.

What sort of security force?

There are three types of security programs available for shopping centres: a proprietary (in-house) security department, a contract security company, or off-duty law enforcement officers.

Regardless of the source of security personnel, every shopping centre security program must: provide a secure environment for tenants, employees and customers; be cost-effective; and be defensible in court.

Off-duty police for security

Just as there are difficulties with using proprietary and contract security forces, using off-duty police as security officers in

shopping centres can cause problems (Potter 1984). For example:

- the primary allegiance of police may be to law enforcement in general rather than to the mall management, causing them to respond to outside police emergencies while on the job;
- they can be expensive; and
- the long hours involved in a full-time job plus part-time security work may make them less effective.

There are advantages, however: they have full police powers; they come armed, equipped and fully trained; and they know how and where to get backup assistance.

Whichever alternative is chosen, security managers should undertake the following.

- Define the duties and responsibilities of all security officers, proprietary or contract, employed by or assigned to the shopping centre.
- Determine whether or not the security officers will carry weapons.
- Be responsible for the overall supervision and control of the security staff.
- Determine the level of training needed.
- Interview all security staff before employment or assignment and retain the right to terminate without cause.
- Insist on adequate insurance coverage and require that the shopping centre be named as an additional insured party on the contract security company's policy. A certificate of insurance and advance notification of cancellation from the carrier should also be required.
- Be responsible for all policies and procedures governing the conduct of proprietary or contract security officers (commissioning, power of arrest, apprehension of shoplifters, use of force, and involvement in tenant security matters).

It is worth remembering that the shopping centre security manager will be sued along with the shopping centre for any torts committed by proprietary or contract security officers.

In Boston, Philadelphia, Los Angeles and other United States cities, on-duty police officers are assigned to foot beats in urban malls. In many growing suburban communities, the need for more police stations is met by locating sub-stations in shopping centres. An extra benefit here is that police can train shopping centre security personnel. In many cases shopping centre security officers maintain direct radio contact with local law enforcement agencies to enable them to summon police help in emergencies.

Many shopping centres employ a combination of security alternatives. For example, a number of malls use proprietary security officer for interior patrols and off-duty police to patrol parking lots. Others have found an in-house security director supervising contract security to be highly cost-effective.

Advantages of choosing a contract security service include lower cost, availability, flexibility of scheduling and elimination of administrative overheads; however, while management can delegate the security function, it retains the responsibility and thus the liability.

Security staff and police

It is vital that security staff understand that their role is deterrence, not law enforcement so that they do not confuse their role with that of the police. Another way of preventing problems among mall security, tenants and local police is training retail sales staff to deal with emergencies. For their part, shopping mall managers can ease relations with police by responding to police requests when possible.

Case study: preventing crime and allaying fear of crime at the State Street Mall in the Loop, Chicago, United States

In 1977 Chicago instituted an $18 million redevelopment program to transform a crime-ridden section of its central business district called the Loop into the State Street Mall, a popular, exciting shopping precinct and tourist attraction. Marshall Field's, the huge retail chain represented in the mall,

introduced its own security system (see Preventing retail crime in department & specialty stores), but officers of the Chicago Police Department's First District bear responsibility for law enforcement in the mall.

The mall is closed to traffic other than buses and police cars, and the police patrol the mall in a special 'mall car'. Marshall Field's employs off-duty police from the city's elite tactical unit to protect its customers and the public. They help the store's security guards deal with pickpockets and other criminals who plague the downtown area.

Retailers in the State Street Mall have cooperated by joining the Store Mutual Association (SMA) of Illinois, Inc, modelled on a similar association in Washington, DC. It will serve as a clearinghouse for the collection and dissemination of information regarding individuals committing crimes against the member retailers.

The Illinois and Washington SMAs have found the following initiatives helpful in controlling crime in shopping centres like the State Street Mall:

- strong and visible perimeter security in each major store;
- use of CCTV and related technology;
- a 100 per cent prosecution policy clearly understood by law enforcement;
- strong internal control and review of security personnel;
- cooperation among all stores in their attempts to combat their common crime problems and public; and
- public and private sector cooperation in crime control, including joint seminars on business crime and sharing resources to foster closer working relationships.

On the public relations front, Marshall Field's, the Greater State Street Committee and the Chicago police department as well as other major department stores in the mall have joined forces, not only to fight crime, but also to enhance public perception of safety on the mall (Shealy & Levy 1985).

Another measure tried in Chicago—and regarded as a partial success—was the establishment of a special shoplifting court (Shealy & Levy 1985). It ran into the same difficulties as other

courts in obtaining convictions, but significantly reduced the time store security agents have had to spend in court.

Case study: cost-sharing to fund a special police beat for a shopping centre in Montclair, California, United States

The opening of the Montclair Plaza in 1968 to serve the shopping needs of the residents of the greater Pomona Valley and the west end of San Bernadino County resulted in an enormous influx of population to the city during shopping hours. Comprising four major retail stores and numerous specialty shops, this shopping centre attracted crimes such as shoplifting, cheque fraud, credit card fraud, car theft and burglary, and theft from vehicles (Moulton 1983). The major problem turned out to be the number of police hours needed to process juvenile shoplifters, most of them first offenders. As the centre had a relatively small private security staff, this placed an increasing burden on the local police force.

Juvenile shoplifters: In the case of shoplifting, an extra-legal process was employed to reduce the police workload without 'jeopardising the integrity of the role of law enforcement in the prevention and reduction of juvenile delinquency' (Moulton 1983).

In a one-stop resolution, juvenile shoplifters caught in minor incidents were contacted, identified and, after a strong warning that their next offence would result in formal arrest, released to parents or guardians without being officially booked. This reduced the police workload and kept juveniles out of the official juvenile justice system.

Plaza policeman: With only 45 officers, the police department decided against making the complex a specific beat, believing it could not be justified in the light of total community needs. Instead, they proposed that the plaza sponsor an officer on specific assignment. When the plaza management vetoed this idea, the police resuscitated the special beat plan.

After some negotiations, the plaza agreed to pay—in monthly instalments to the city's finance department—50 per cent of the beat officer's salary, including benefits, based on a 40-hour week.

Recognising that the program would be on trial, the police invited only highly-qualified personnel to apply, and selected an officer with 'intelligence, experience, personality and outstanding uniform appearance'. To prevent the officer being subjected to conflicting demands, the police and the plaza management hammered out a consensus on job design, specifically on responsibility, accountability and chain of command,

The plaza provided the policeman with an office and equipment and he had separate access to the communications centres of both the plaza and the police department.

Results: In the case of juvenile shoplifting, the unofficial 'release' program was carefully monitored, showing a recidivism rate for local residents of only 2 per cent and a slightly higher rate for juveniles outside the Montclair jurisdiction.

According to the Montclair Police Department's Chief of Police, the plaza police beat worked well. Early figures showed a dramatic decrease in the incidence of theft from cars, theft of cars and arrests for shoplifting. In addition, the police helped train plaza security staff and in return gained invaluable expertise in shopping centre security.

This study shows that an escalation in crime related to the construction of a regional shopping centre in California was checked by the designation of the centre as a specific police beat funded 50-50 by the city of Montclair and the plaza management. First offence juvenile shoplifting was dealt with outside the juvenile justice system.

Some Australian examples

Westfield runs 21 shopping malls throughout Australia, but not all have a security force. It is not considered necessary in locations such as Sydney's North Rocks, for example, which attracts mostly young families with children and few juveniles. Where security staff are employed, they are not armed.

Westfield's policy is to encourage close relationships between centre management and local police, with police carrying out patrols in the malls (Des Hayes, Westfield Limited,

personal communication 1991). For a time Westfield provided a police office in their Parramatta shopping centre, and there is currently a police station in the Arndale mall in South Australia.

At Lend Lease's Bankstown Square shopping centre in Sydney's south-west, security staff have had to deal with tensions between groups of Lebanese and Vietnamese youths. Mall management has been cooperating closely with Bankstown police on this matter, particularly with their Vietnamese Liaison officer. Bankstown Police have also appointed a male and a female youth liaison officer, who are trying to build trust through the schools (Bankstown Police, personal communication 1991).

Teenagers, loitering & rowdiness

After car thefts and break-ins, the security problems most often cited in a 1985 survey carried out by the International Council of Shopping Centres were teenagers, loitering and rowdiness (Hunter 1988). The dilemma for mall managers is keeping disruption by teenagers to a minimum without alienating them or their parents.

Proper training in security of staff is essential in managing teenagers without conflict. Security staff in Australia's Westfield chain of malls, for example, are trained to keep teenagers moving, and the design of mall furniture discourages loitering. They do not apprehend juveniles themselves, but call their parents, and if the offence is serious, the teenager is handed over to the police (Des Hayes, Westfield Limited, personal communication 1991).

Lend Lease's City Limits teenagers' precinct will be open seven days a week till 11 p.m. It is blocked off from the rest of the retail complex, and will be equipped with its own three-person security force in peak use times. Though this may help control nuisance behaviour and theft within the centre, it will be left to the police to deal with probable increases in crime in the town centre and residential area near the Square. Such a facility is bound to be a magnet for both potential offenders and their victims.

At Lend Lease's Bankstown Square shopping mall, seats are removed from areas frequented by teenagers—record stores, jeans shops—on Thursday afternoons and replaced on Friday mornings, after Thursday night late shopping (Tony Taylor, Lend Lease, personal communication 1991). There is no seating at all in City Limits, the new late-closing teenagers' precinct containing a dance floor, specialty shops and a 'family amusement centre' (including pinball machines).

In Holland, some shopping malls have laid down rules for schools attending centres, established 'free' zones where the rules are suspended (if you can't beat them, join them) and brought youth workers into the centres (Sutton & Fisher 1989).

Shopping centre parking lots

In a 1985 security survey of 50 managers of shopping centres of more than 27,000 m^2 carried out by the International Council of Shopping Centres (ICSC), over a third of the respondents said their single greatest security problem involved vehicles—car thefts, break-ins and vandalism (Hunter, Margaret 1988). Mechanisms for reducing crime in carparks—improved lighting, and CCTV, for example—have been implemented, with smaller, cheaper cameras with low light sensitivity, automatic focusing and programmable panning sequences. Radios are also more powerful and cheaper.

To be cost effective, however, most experts agree that such technology must be planned into construction—or at least renovation—of a centre. Retrofitting can be expensive.

Another way of solving crime in existing car parks is using environmental design techniques (Hunter, Margaret 1988).

- Natural surveillance can be effected by promoting family activities, and therefore foot traffic, around the parking lot and clearing storefront windows of promotional signs.
- Controlling access to the lot by limiting entrances and exits can have a positive psychological effect on security.
- Siting parking deep into the property increases pedestrian traffic and makes it harder for thieves to get away.

- Loading docks should be made easy for police to patrol, or ideally, made visible from the streets police already patrol.
- To make patrolling easier, cars should be laid out in lines, so security officers or police can see between them from patrol points.
- If possible, the parking lot should be laid out for maximum visibility of all parts.

The effect is circular. If a parking lot is safe and is perceived to be safe by customers, they are more likely to use the centre at night and odd hours. This increases the centre's productivity and makes the parking lot safer by increasing traffic.

Pittsburgh reported a sharp decline in crime after it passed an ordinance in 1984 requiring closed commercial parking lots to have emergency buzzers on all levels, minimum lighting levels and security patrols.

In Australia's Westfield malls, car parks at inner-city shopping centres are incorporated into the malls for improved security, though car parks in suburban malls are open. At Miranda Fair in Sydney, for example, the car park is enclosed by a wall topped with security mesh and can be locked off by steel gates. Car parks are well lit with 4-5 metre high light poles with mesh-protected 50-lux bulbs.

Car theft at Westfield's Parramatta shopping centre has been all but eradicated by the installation of boom gates on the exits. Lend Lease is following suit at Bankstown Square and installing staffed boom gates at all entrances and exits at a cost of $1.35 million (Tony Taylor, Lend Lease, personal communication 1991). Shoppers will get three hours free parking and pay $2 per hour thereafter; people not using the shops, commuters for example, will have to pay.

It is worth noting that, according to police statistics, an intensive uniformed and undercover police campaign against car theft at Bankstown Square in May 1991 had the effect of displacing theft of cars from Bankstown Square shopping centre during the day to surrounding areas at night. It is highly likely that the new boom gates will also increase car theft in other parts of Bankstown.

Appendix I: Armed robbery

Apart from terrorist attacks, armed robbery is the form of retail crime most likely to cause long-term physical and/or psychological harm for employees and customers alike. The following advice has been prepared by the National Police Research Unit, in conjunction with the Australian Bankers' Association, to help small businesses minimise the threat of armed robbery and maximise the chances of apprehending the offenders.

Preventing armed robbery

Consult a security specialist

All Australian police forces run specialised Crime Prevention Units providing advice and information on all aspects of home, business and commercial security. Some conduct site analyses to appraise the security of a business.

Limit cash and publicise the fact

The less cash held on the premises, the less attractive it is as a target. Keep a float of under $100 if possible.

Deposit money in banks or secure holding units frequently.
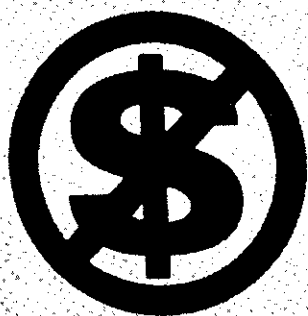
Keep money out of sight.

Never count cash in view of customers.

Never discuss takings in public.

Advertise the fact that you keep a minimum of cash on the premises. For example, the window sticker (over) is available from the NPRU.

Don't advertise your profits: never flash a large roll of bills.

Use a cash drop box with a time delay lock and advertise this with a sign.

MINIMUM CASH HOLDIN

**This business is adhering to police approve
cash handling techniques**

No large sums are kept on the premises

A joint project of the National Police Research Unit (on behalf of all
Australian Police Forces) and the Australian Bankers' Association

Locate a cash register where it can be seen by passers-by to increase the likelihood of identifying the robber.

Avoid routine: if staff transport cash, do not establish a routine, and do not let them wear a uniform identifying the business. Vary routes.

Providing credit facilities reduces the amount of cash you need to hold. Electronic Fund Transfer at Point of Sale (EFTPOS) is one example.

Requiring exact money in transactions means you do not have to keep open cash tills, especially at night. Robbers may tender large bills specifically to find out where you keep them.

Time controlled vaults reduce the opportunity for theft. Advertise them with signs.

Layout of premises

Open environment: An open and uncluttered environment which provides a clear, well-lit view of the sales area from outside is a deterrent to armed robbers.

Rear access: Any rear access should be fully secured with strong locks, and lanes leading to premises illuminated. Minimise curtains, posters and advertising materials which obscure vision, as they provide cover for bandits.

Doors and windows: All exterior doors should be of solid construction with good quality locks. Bars on windows may be necessary. Get rid of louvres. If you count money at night, make sure the premises are secured and you are not visible from outside.

Counters: Customers do not belong behind counters. Design counters to maximise space between staff and customers. Deep counters with raised floors behind make it difficult for offenders to assault staff.

Surveillance cameras: Though they may not deter robbers, surveillance cameras help in their apprehension. Make sure they are well maintained and serviced regularly.

Lighting: Making the target highly visible increases the chances of identifying the offender.

Mirrors: Mirrors allow staff to monitor otherwise blind spots, but make sure they don't allow offenders to see behind the counter.

Electronic sensors: These can alert staff that customers are entering or leaving the premises.

Bullet resistant barriers: If you handle large sums of money such as payrolls, you might benefit from these. By carrying out a risk assessment, a security consultant can help you choose the right strength.

Staff training

Vigilance: Staff should note any suspicious behaviour and report it to the police. This can often nip an offence in the bud. Be careful about personal name tags, especially with surnames, as this can place staff at risk after a robbery.

New staff: When selecting new staff, ask for references and check them out.

When staff leave: Make sure you get keys back. If keys are missing, change the locks. If staff leave under difficult or strange circumstances, it may be wise to change locks, safe combinations and even cash-handling procedures.

Minimise the harm

Victim counselling: No amount of money is worth the risk of personal injury or death. Many robbery victims suffer physical and emotional problems. Emotional reactions last longer and are more likely to occur if the victim puts up a fight. While these problems usually fade with time, professional counselling by qualified post-holdup trauma counsellors should be considered. This has been found to decrease significantly the emotional harm caused by armed robbery.

Assistance is also available from police and health professionals, and there are Victims of Crime Support Organisations operating in South Australia, Victoria and the ACT.

During an armed robbery, adopt the following tactics:

- do precisely as you are told, and no more;
- avoid eye contact with the robber;
- speak only when spoken to;
- tell the robber exactly what you are doing;
- make no sudden movements;
- don't activate alarms unless it is safe to do so;
- try to remain calm and control your emotions; and
- remember as many details as possible about the bandit and the incident.

Insurance against armed robbery: There are a range of types of insurance cover for retail businesses, including insurance against the loss of money, either 'in-transit' or 'on-site'. Premiums depend on the sum insured.

Maximise chances of prosecution

Ensure that staff are trained to act appropriately after an armed robbery.

Raise the alarm as soon as it is safe to do so, perhaps by activating an alarm during the robbery.

Phone the police immediately on 000 (free call), or local police in the country, giving:

- name and address of premises, area and location including nearest cross street;
- number of offenders and description;
- description of weapon used;
- description of vehicle used and direction of travel.

Make sure you call the police before you call anyone else.

Preserving the crime scene: After an armed robbery, do the following.

Close the premises to the public and keep out unauthorised people. Isolate the area for later forensic examination, in particular fingerprints. Keep staff away from areas the offender was in, places he/she may have touched, and any articles left behind, such as a ransom note.

Get staff to independently note down a description of the offender and the words used in the crime. First impressions are vital.

Do not make statements to the media without clearing it with the police.

Do not comment on how much money was involved except to the police.

Give police all details, even those which seem insignificant to you.

Identifying the offender: Any small detail may help the police apprehend the offender. Watch out for:

Physical appearance:
    height
    age
    build
    colouring
    hair
    tattoos, scars, prominent or unusual features
    clothing

Behaviour:
    speech, accents, language used
    nicknames
    actions/interactions with other offenders

Other aspects:
> weapons used
> method of escape
> vehicles used for escape
> direction of travel when escaping

To produce a computerised facial identification/photo fit police may be able to reconstruct the offender's face from your description. However, the result will only be as good as the description provided. Police specialists may ask you to describe the following parts of the face:
> hair (length and style), forehead and ears
> eyes and eyebrows (shape)
> nose (length and shape)
> mouth (width and shape)
> chin (length and shape).

Use a reference point in the store to determine the offender's height, for example, some shelves or mark on the wall.

The prosecution process: The success of a prosecution against armed robbery depends on evidence from victims and witnesses. You may therefore become involved in the prosecution process. Police will be available to guide you through the judicial system.

You may be asked to view a line-up to identify the offender. If the police arrest somebody, you may have to attend a Magistrates' Court hearing to give evidence based on your previous statement to the police. You may also be required to give evidence in a higher court before a judge and jury. In both cases, you will be represented by a police or crown prosecutor and enjoy the total support and guidance of police investigators.

In the event of an armed robbery, take the following seven steps:

1. Activate any alarm you may have as soon as it is safe to do so.
2. Call the police—before you do anything else.
3. Close the premises to the public.

Appendix II: A checklist for preventing loss•

Shopstealing

Serve customers, particularly children, as quickly as possible.

Staff should have an unobstructed view of customers and stock.

Fitting rooms should always be supervised.

Watch customers carrying merchandise around.

Don't leave stock lying around. Good housekeeping discourages shopstealers.

Keep highly pilferable and expensive merchandise under constant care. Location is important here.

Remove empty hangers from display racks.

Watch for people in unauthorised areas such as stock rooms.

Look out for nervous customers, bulky clothing, shopping bags, strollers and prams, and people changing or removing tickets.

Be especially vigilant at entrances and exits.

Have a definite plan for all staff, where shopstealing is suspected or detected, for quiet and immediate reporting to management.

Apprehension must be carried out with great care—never accuse a customer; be sure what has been stolen and where it is concealed; keep the suspect under constant observation; never apprehend a customer before s/he leaves the store.

If you have a clear-cut case, you must prosecute.

If in doubt, do nothing.

• Prepared by the Retail Traders' Association of New South Wales

Internal theft

Careful staff selection and reference checking is vital.

Induction of new staff should clearly indicate the penalties for dishonesty and encourage the reporting of dishonest action by other staff.

Those committing crimes should be prosecuted, and other staff advised, without naming the offenders.

You must have strong control over keys and alarm systems and the documentation of cash and stock.

Visitors, including suppliers and delivery personnel, should always be escorted while on your premises, and gifts from suppliers should not be permitted.

Your receiving of goods and stock room areas must be strictly controlled, and only by authorised staff.

Have a system of control over such matters as staff shopping and refunds, charge accounts, and discounts.

The handling of cash registers, safes and banking must be well organised, with staff responsibilities clearly defined.

Operate a petty cash system for items such as stationery and cleaning materials.

Burglary

Burglary can be minimised by observing certain precautions, even though the modern burglar is well equipped. Check the following.

Maintain fences and gates in good condition and lock with close shackled hardened steel padlocks.

The exterior of your building, including roof, windows and doors should be in good condition and fitted with good quality locking systems.

Both external and internal security lights should be used at night.

Bars and grilles are recommended on skylights and windows.

Use a watching service if possible. Alarm systems are also advisable.

Strict control over keys is essential. Safe keys should never be left on the premises.

Police should be in possession of after hours contacts.

Ensure that all possible cash is banked frequently at least daily, or deposited in a night safe.

Empty all cash registers every night.

Make special arrangements for storage of valuable, easily-negotiable merchandise such as cigarettes, watches, and cameras.

Keep a record of serial numbers of equipment and stock if applicable.

Christmas/New Year

This trading period is a time when retailers are vulnerable to robbery. During that period the following steps should be followed.

Continually reduce money from more vulnerable points to a secure location within the premises.

Make arrangements with your bank to use their night safe—with an escort.

Banking

Banking money using a vehicle

If a vehicle is used, travel on a busy route rather than isolated streets.

Use a second vehicle as an escort. Keep car doors locked.

When carrying money to a residence, keep it in a locked container in the boot of the vehicle.

Be constantly alert to any suspicious person or vehicle, and consider the possibility of a bogus accident.

The driver of the vehicle should be prepared to take evasive action.

Banking money on foot

At least two able-bodied males should be used for the cash transfer.

An escort should leave the premises to survey the immediate location. The escort should be constantly alert to suspicious vehicles or people.

Do not establish a routine with movement of money.
Walk facing oncoming traffic and away from the kerb.
Know the locations of telephones along the route.
Do not use employees in uniform to transfer money.

Holding money

It is advisable to keep money in a safe within a secure room, keeping doors and windows locked.

Money left on premises in safes should be further protected by personnel from watching patrol organisations visiting the location, to reduce the time available for the criminal to attack the safe.

Pay office & distribution of pay

The premises should be searched for hidden offenders prior to payroll delivery.

Payroll delivery should be made behind locked doors, as quickly as possible and as near as possible to time of pay out. This is a high risk period.

Enveloping of the pay can be done by security organisations. This reduces the duration of the risk at the payout point.

The pay office should be of solid construction. Nobody is to be admitted while large sums of money are held.

If it is essential to admit people to the pay office, ensure they are alone and recognised by the admitting member.

The office door should be able to be locked from within the office only.

Don't distribute pay near exits or passageways.

Consider an alarm. Ideally, the system should warn others removed from the pay office that a robbery has or is about to occur and the police can be notified.

Grilles or bars should be installed across any glass areas and in particular the payout point.

If the pay is carried around the premises, the bulk should be divided to reduce the amount carried and make the target less attractive.

Carry the money in a substantial, lockable container securely fixed to a wheeling device to reduce the chances of a grab-and-run. Keys should be carried in a separate movement.

Keep alert to anything unusual or suspicious. Advise police accordingly. If possible, do not establish a routine.

Payment by cheque

Where possible, holiday payments should be made in advance by cheque to reduce the risk of employees handling or receiving larger sums of money than normal.

General points to remember

Do not discuss cash holding or movement in public.

Report to police any suspicious circumstances.

Before counting money, search the premises and ensure doors and windows are locked.

Ensure you are not visible from public areas.

Do not admit unknown persons.

Expose money only at a secure location.

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