

## Secure Your Business Against Crime

REMEMBER...crimes against business are usually crimes of opportunity. If you make it easy for someone to steal from you, chances are, someone will.

Make crime against your business risky and unrewarding... Start a BUSINESS WATCH program.

Law enforcement agencies would rather work with you to PREVENT crimes than spend time apprehending the criminals!!



# MIND YOUR BUSINESS...

(IF YOU DON'T,  
BURGLARS WILL!)

FOR ASSISTANCE IN ORGANIZING A  
BUSINESS WATCH IN YOUR AREA,  
CONTACT:



THE NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION  
1450 DUKE STREET  
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314  
(703) 836-7827  
IN COOPERATION WITH  
YOUR LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY



**KEEP  
CRIMINALS  
OUT OF  
YOUR BUSINESS**

**BUSINESS  
WATCH**

NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

# IS YOUR BUSINESS A TARGET FOR CRIME?

*"...The County Sheriff's Department has charged a local couple with robbing Tom's Tailor Shop at gunpoint and beating the shop owner, Thomas Harris, with a pistol around 5 p.m Friday. This incident is the latest in a series of recent robberies of a number of area businesses, including banks, convenience stores, gift shops, clothing stores, and gas stations, and has created a tense climate for businesses and local law enforcement officials..."*

This account from the newspaper of a small southeastern community typifies those that appear almost daily in the media across the country. It's a fact—the threat of crime is part of doing business. NO business is immune from the growing menace of burglary, robbery, shoplifting, personal assaults, internal thefts, check forgery, and computer and credit card fraud. Studies have shown that at least 30 percent of all small business failures are the result of losses from crime. Hardest hit of all are retail businesses, but statistics show that ALL small businesses suffer devastating effects from crime.

As a business owner, you are often told that the responsibility to prevent external and internal theft lies squarely with you. But what, exactly, can you do to create a safe, secure environment for your employees and your business?

First... When you start a BUSINESS WATCH program in your area, block or shopping mall, you will take an important step. Neighboring businesses working with the local law enforcement agency can establish and support a network that works. This will make YOUR business community an attractive and safe place to work and shop.

BUSINESS WATCH is hardly a new idea; in fact, it is based on one of the oldest and simplest concepts known to man—neighbor-helping-neighbor. And when neighboring merchants get together and cooperate with law enforcement, crime CAN be reduced.

## Lessen the Opportunities for the Criminal

Take control of what happens in your business community, and lessen your chances of becoming a victim. Through BUSINESS WATCH, you will be making crimes against yourself and your fellow business neighbors as difficult as possible. Thriving BUSINESS WATCH programs across the nation are deterring criminals by:

- Promoting communication and understanding between law enforcement and the business community;
- Encouraging cooperation between neighboring merchants;
- Teaching merchants to crime-proof their own properties and to watch over neighboring businesses and report any suspicious activity to authorities;
- Developing a telephone tree system for quick dissemination of information regarding criminal activity in the area;
- Encouraging the development of signals to activate in adjacent businesses when someone needs help.

Additional benefits of BUSINESS WATCH participation include:

- Authority to display signs and window decals that warn, "This is a BUSINESS WATCH area... suspicious activities will be reported to authorities and to fellow merchants";
- Security surveys of members' premises to identify high crime opportunities.

To form a BUSINESS WATCH in your area:

- Call a meeting with nearby merchants/businesses. Arrange for a trained crime prevention officer to attend and ask him or her to discuss BUSINESS WATCH and crime prevention techniques with your group. Decide on the next meeting; make this an ongoing prevention program.
- Invite speakers to regularly scheduled meetings for crime-prevention tips and planning group strategies. Internal or employee crime should be one of the first topics for discussion.

## Take Protective Measures

- Secure all obvious (and not so obvious) points of entry to your business. Pretend you are the burglar... stand outside of your store and plan how you would get in. Then install secure locks on all doors and windows. Remember... a cheap lock can be jimmied with a knife or plastic card, so use sturdy deadbolts on doors with glass panels. (Or have a locksmith inspect your entries and prescribe appropriate locks.)
- Replace hollow-core doors with doors of solid construction.
- Avoid displaying valuable goods in store-front windows, and install tempered or laminated glass or impact resistant plastic windows.
- Brightly illuminate all entrances with vandal-proof fixtures.
- Leave empty cash drawers open after hours.
- Keep all shrubbery and debris away from windows and doors. Don't provide concealment or climbing platforms for the burglar.
- Lock up all ladders, ropes, and tools that could help a burglar gain entry.
- Install an alarm system, and check it regularly for failure.
- Make frequent bank deposits at varied times. Use an armored car if feasible.
- Teach employees to be aware of persons who are loitering or behaving in a suspicious manner. Such persons may be casing the premises for burglary, robbery, or shoplifting.

- Do not work alone. If you must do so, leave a radio or television playing to suggest someone else is present.
- If you are robbed, observe the robbers, rather than fighting them off. Call law enforcement authorities immediately afterward. Quickly jot down a description.
- Advertise a policy of prosecuting all shoplifters, and stick to it.
- Establish effective shoplifting deterrents within your business. First, heighten shoplifters' feelings of being watched. Second, minimize shoplifters' access to merchandise without inconveniencing customers more than is necessary.
- Deter bad check artists by establishing a check-cashing policy. Make sure employees know and adhere to store policy.
- Teach employees to exercise caution before accepting charge cards. Make sure cards are not expired, that they have not been altered, and that signatures bear a "reasonable resemblance."
- In pinpointing sources of losses, do not overlook the possibility of internal theft. Surveys indicate that employee theft accounts for the biggest chunk of dollar losses to crime by businesses.
- Maintain conscientious KEY CONTROL. Keys issued to employees should be stamped "DO NOT DUPLICATE." Install new locks and issue new numbered keys whenever employees leave their jobs.