

ROBBERY PREVENTION AND TIPS

Robbery is one of the most serious and potentially dangerous crimes committed in the United States today. Robbery usually occurs quickly and can be very violent. The business owner or manager should plan ahead and reduce the dangers and the potential losses. The criminal will be less likely to choose a target if he sees that the profit margin is lowered and the chances of getting caught have increased greatly by safety measures put in place by the business owner. Personal safety should always be at the top of the list when planning how to react to an armed robbery.

Employees should be trained in the latest methods of robbery prevention, which will improve their chances for their personal safety and allow them to assist police in the follow up investigation. The Cheshire Police are very well trained in criminal investigation and we offer advice to the potential victims of what to do before, during and after the robbery occurs.

The following measures should be followed by all businesses to enhance the safety of employees, customers, members of the public and law enforcement:

- Light all entrances. Maintain good exterior lighting. Keep windows clear of signs that block the view from the street.
- Do not open to strangers before or after regular business hours.
- Lock rear and side doors during evening hours.
- Use signs to indicate you have an alarm system.
- Instruct all employees on the use of an alarm system.
- Devise a system whereby employees can alert each other of a robbery in progress.
- Do not allow persons to linger in your business.
- Have several employees present when opening and closing the business.
- Inspect the business for forcible entry before entering the business.
- At closing, make sure no one is hiding in the business.
- All employees should follow good cash handling practices i.e. minimum cash on hand, use a safe and take precautions when making bank deposits.
- Try not to open the cash safe too often. Do not maintain more surplus cash in the store than is absolutely necessary.
- Always keep money out of reach of customers.
- Mark the edge of the doorway at varying heights to identify the height of a robber.
- Storage rooms should have a lock that can be opened from the inside.
- Use surveillance camera equipment, convex mirrors and place cash registers in an area that is clearly visible from the outside.
- Report all suspicious activity to the police.
- Maintain a list of emergency contact numbers.
- Trim all shrubbery and trees that a criminal could use to hide.
- Greet all customers and ask for identification as needed.
- An effort should be made to always have two employees on duty.
- Be aware of the alarm verification and robbery procedures with police.
- Do not activate the alarm unless it can be done safely.
- If confronted with an armed robber take no action that will jeopardize your safety, or that of others. Most robbers do not want trouble; be courteous and cooperative and this will prevent injury or possible death. The average robber is probably a bundle of nerves, is a drug user and has a history of arrests. All of us should remember safety first. Cash can be replaced but a life cannot.

IN THE EVENT OF A ROBBERY:

- Remain calm, cool, and observant. Give the robber the money he wants. Be sure to give the bait money.
- Do not make overt moves. If you must go into your pocket for a key or take any action a robber might misinterpret, tell them what you are doing, and why you are doing this.
- Follow his directions but do not volunteer more than he asks for. Be cooperative and do exactly what you are told to.
- If you are handed a note, place it out of sight and retain it for evidence.
- Make as many mental notes as possible, such as characteristics, mannerisms, age, height, weight, peculiarities such as tattoos, scars, birth marks.
- Note type of clothing, type of weapon, if jewelry is worn, which hand the weapon is held in.
- Look for a getaway vehicle. Note color, make, license number, and distinguishing features, such as damage, equipment malfunctions.
- Activate the alarm only if it is safe to do so.
- Try to keep customers and employees calm during the robbery.
- Follow the robber's commands, but do not volunteer to help. The longer the robbery takes, the more nervous the robber may become and more apt to become violent.
- Do not resist the robber. The money is not worth risking a life. Take no action that would jeopardize the safety of personnel or customers.
- Do not use or encourage the use of weapons.
- If the robber displays a firearm or claims to have one, consider it loaded and that they would use it.

THE FOLLOWING STEPS SHOULD BE FOLLOWED AFTER A ROBBERY:

- Establish which personnel will take certain actions if a robbery occurs. Decide now which employee will lock the doors, who will call the police, who will care for the injured, who will look for the getaway car, who will protect the evidence, etc. Don't assume these jobs will be done automatically.
- Do not chase or follow the robber.
- Call the police immediately and give a description of suspects and locations.
- Lock the door and touch nothing until the police arrive. Prevent anyone from going into areas where the robbers may have been.
- Do not trust your memory; write down all descriptions and facts about the robbery.
- Do not discuss the robbery among employees or other witnesses until the police have had the opportunity to interview all those involved.
- Care for the injured.
- Ask witnesses to remain until the police arrive. If they insist on leaving, try to obtain their names and addresses.
- Protect the scene, preserve any potential evidence. Keep people out of the area.
- Assist the investigating officers in every way possible. Cooperate with the police by being available for interviews, not being reluctant to identify suspects and giving evidence in court when notified to do so.