

WHAT IS SHOP THEFT?...IT'S A CRIME.

Provided By Crime Prevention Officer, Constable Ingrid Hannah, TPS Div 54

Shop Theft is theft of company merchandise and/or money by a person. This could mean external theft by a person or internal theft by an employee.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

The following strategies utilize the personnel and material you already have available to help protect your profit margin from thieves.

- Divide your store into sections and make specific employees responsible for each section.
- Develop a warning system that alerts employees in all sections when someone suspects a thief
- Never leave even one section of your store unattended
- Give customers receipts for all purchases
- Set up a proper refund policy and ensure that all of your staff follow the procedure
- Install 'fish eye' mirrors or video cameras so that you can see all areas of your store at a glance.
- Keep your display merchandise neat and in order. Empty hangers and shelves can become a signal that a thief is at work
- Control the number of articles entering or leaving fitting rooms
- Remember, if you're operating on a 10% profit margin, you need to sell an additional \$20.00 in merchandise to make up for the theft of a \$2.00 item

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS "A TYPICAL THIEF"

That's what makes Shop Theft such a difficult crime to prevent. Thieves come in all shapes and sizes, all ages, and from all backgrounds. They can generally be divided into three main categories:

Professionals – These are the most difficult to detect – and the most difficult to deter. Pros are skilled thieves with specialized techniques and they're usually after your more expensive merchandise. Some work in organized groups.

Youths – Their motives vary, but include peer pressure and lack of self-esteem. Some youths even shoplift in groups, competing to see who can steal the most merchandise

The General Public – Watch out for people who are bored, or who need to stretch their budgets, and see shop theft as the answer.

EDUCATE YOUR STAFF

Warning Sign: The shopper who wanders through your store for an unusually long time may be waiting for an opportunity to steal

Warning Sign: Pros often work in pairs; while one is distracting a sales person, the other person steals

Warning Sign: Shoppers who enter your store with large shopping bags or purses, or with unusually bulky clothing deserve special attention

Warning Sign: Offering a shopper more than one valuable item at a time for inspection is asking for trouble. Do not leave display cases unlocked

Warning Sign: Inattentive sales staff are often considered a green light for a potential thief

DISCOURAGE THIEVES

- Advertise your strict Shop Theft policy boldly. It can act as a deterrent
- Train your staff members to be attentive - and thereby alert
- Encourage your staff to circulate and to approach potential customers with a friendly greeting
- Pay a suspected thief lots of attention. A customer will appreciate your concern – a thief will rush off
- Keep your aisles broad and neat – and your counters low. Thieves work best under a cover of confusion and crowds
- Keep valuable merchandise under lock and key – and away from store exits
- Keep your small, easily concealed items near a cash register or work station
- Screen your employees carefully and check all references

For more information, please feel free to contact your local crime prevention officer:

Division 55:

Constable Jonathan Morrice

Jonathan.Morrice@torontopolice.on.ca

(416) 808-5579

Division 54:

Constable Ingrid Hannah

Ingrid.Hannah@torontopolice.on.ca

(416) 808-5429