



# PARTNERS IN CRIME PREVENTION

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## BUSINESS CRIME PREVENTION— SAFETY FOR OWNERS & CUSTOMERS

Crime prevention is an important element for a successful business. While this may not be the first thing that a business owner thinks about when starting and operating a business, it can be the difference between success and failure.

Obviously, preventing crime is essential to reducing loss whether it be from robberies, burglaries, shoplifting, or theft by employees. Also, having a business that is perceived to be safe helps attract and keep customers.

Crime prevention does not have to be expensive or unduly time consuming. There are basic things that you can do as a business owner to discourage criminals from being attracted to your establishment for robbery or theft.

This special edition of “Partners in Crime Prevention” will talk about a concept called Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) which can give you a broad framework to help you analyze your

work environment in a way that discourages potential burglars and robbers from stealing from you.

It will also discuss how to prevent a robbery and what to do during and just after a robbery. Also, it will talk about how to prevent your business from being burglarized.

And finally, it will discuss what to do when you find a need to call 9-1-1.

### Snohomish County Business Watch

Local businesses have banded together to form the Snohomish County Business Watch. Like a Neighborhood Watch, members of the Business Watch identify common criminal activity against business; exchange information between business owners and law enforcement; and empower their members to take control of their security through education, awareness, and prevention.

For more information about Snohomish County Business Watch visit their website at

<http://www.thescbw.org/>.



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## WHAT CAN CPTED DO?

CPTED can do the following:

1. Reduce crime
2. Reduce the fear of crime
3. Improve the quality of life

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### The Four Elements of CPTED:

1. Natural Surveillance
2. Territorial Behavior
3. Natural Access Control
4. Maintenance

## BUSINESS CRIME PREVENTION– CPTED

In business, owners want an inviting, secure environment so that their customers feel welcome to enter and do business. A crime prevention concept that law enforcement agencies like to promote, called Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) tries to encourage a safe environment and discourage criminals around structures and places.

While not an end all, CPTED can be a key component in preventing crime.

CPTED works because it provides a way for the owner of a location to make it a “defensible space.” Any location can be defended by someone with responsibility for the space from non-legitimate, criminal or unintended use. Locations that are not defended by someone with responsibility are most likely to attract crime.

CPTED works because criminals do not want to be seen doing criminal activity. A space that gives a potential criminal a feeling of uncertainty that he/she can get away with a criminal act will successfully be a safe place for a citizen. Places that are unsafe for citizens are safe places for criminals. Places that are unsafe for criminals are safe places for citizens.

Implementing CPTED principles does not have to be elaborate or

expensive. In fact CPTED works best when it is integrated with the natural surroundings of the space yet at the same time discourages criminal activity.

CPTED assumes three types of actors for any space. Normal users, those people who we desire to be at a location (customers); abnormal users, those people who should not be at a location (thieves, robbers, shoplifters, etc.) and observers, those people who are not using the space but can see the space. CPTED tries to encourage the normal users to use the space, discourage abnormal users from using the space and keep the space open to be seen by observers.

CPTED is made up of three and sometimes four elements:

**Natural Surveillance**– This is the ability to easily see into and out of an area. Usually, crooks don't want to be seen while they rob or steal. For a business natural surveillance can be enhanced by:

- Windows facing rear parking lots for increased visibility.
- Window signs covering no more than 10% of window space.
- Interior shelving and displays no higher than five feet for increased visibility.
- Exterior and parking lots are well lit.
- Loading areas not creating hiding places.



## BUSINESS CRIME PREVENTION– CPTED CONT.

- Clear visibility maintained from inside the business to the street, sidewalk and parking areas.
- All entrances under visual surveillance by employees.
- All surveillance cameras in good working order.
- Exterior parking lot lighting that is free-standing and not mounted to a building.

**Territorial Behavior**– This is the feeling that your business is your space not the crooks. A business can declare its territory by:

- Property lines and private areas defined with plantings, pavement treatments, short walls, or fences.
- Businesses identified by wall signs for those parking in the rear.
- Reception and cash register area positioned to screen all people entering.
- Parking areas clearly marked and separated from pedestrian walkways.



trance and away from private areas.

- Cash register located in front of store.
- No easy access to the roof.
- Exterior doors hinged on the inside with a single cylinder dead bolt lock with a minimum one-inch throw.
- All windows with locks.
- Detached storage sheds or other buildings equipped with lockable windows and doors.

**Maintenance**– Some people will add maintenance as an element. This means keeping an area neat

and clean shows that there is someone who cares about the location and is watching it. Maintenance can include:

- Keeping structures painted and in good repair.
- Keeping weeds abated and trimming bushes to 36” high and trees up 7’ from the ground.
- Keeping all lighting fixtures in good operating condition.

For more information about CPTED go to the Sheriff’s Office CPTED Tip Sheet:

<http://sheriff.snoco.org/Documents/CPTED.pdf>

## FOUR OBSTACLES TO ADOPTING CPTED

**1. Lack of knowledge of CPTED** by environmental designers, land managers, and individual community members.

**2. Resistance to change.** Many people resist the cooperative planning that is required to use CPTED.

**3. Perception that CPTED claims to be a panacea for crime** that will be used to displace more traditional approaches rather than complementary tool in deterring offender behavior.

**4. Many existing built areas were not designed with CPTED in mind,** and modification would be expensive, politically difficult, or require significant changes in some areas of the existing built environment.

**Natural Access Control**– This means managing entrances to defined areas. That is directing customers to the entrance(s) that they should use and discouraging or denying access through any other entrance. Access control can be accomplished by:

- Walkways and landscaping that direct visitors to the proper en-

**ROBBERY-TIPS**

- Use a drop safe that is secured to the floor.
- Post signs indicating limited cash on hand.
- Professionally install security cameras to capture the best images of the suspects.
- Trim landscaping for good view into and out of your business.

**After a Robbery:**

- Close the store and lock the doors.
- Call 9-1-1; even if the alarm was activated.
- Don't touch anything the robber may have touched.
- Ask witnesses to stay until the deputies arrive.
- Only step outside when the deputies arrive and contact you via telephone.
- Call your business owner, manager or other designated person.

**Remember:**

- If safe—get a vehicle description
- Call 9-1-1 as soon as possible

**BUSINESS CRIME PREVENTION– COMMERCIAL ROBBERY**

A robbery occurs when someone uses or threatens force to steal the money in your wallet or your cash register, cigarettes behind your counter or other items that you or your business possess.

Robbers want your property and they want it quickly.

Robbers are usually nervous. Confronting someone for their property can easily lead to the robber being hurt and/or apprehended. So, they want to have the robbery happen quickly and need to ensure that the victim knows harm will come if they do not comply.

Police always recommend that you comply quickly. Trying to resist a robber can lead to harm to you.

The best you can do is to try to prevent robbery and if you are robbed to remain calm and give deputies as good description of the robber.

**Preventing Robberies-**

The key to preventing a robbery is to persuade a potential robber that they will be caught and that there is nothing worthwhile to steal.

Some ways to accomplish this is to:

- Greet everyone who enters your business.
- Keep doors and windows clear of signs and posters to allow good two-way visibility.
- Use good video surveillance and make it well known.

- Make bank deposits at least once a day.
- Place a surveillance camera behind the cash register facing the front counter.
- Install a robbery alarm.
- Make your sales counter clearly visible to outside observers.
- A clean environment is good for business and uncomfortable for robbers.
- Keep your business well-lit inside and outside.

**During a Robbery:**

- Stay calm and don't resist!
  - Do as instructed.
  - Don't make sudden moves.
  - Keep your hands in sight at all times.
  - Get a look at the robber but don't stare.

**Remember:**

- Remain Calm
- Get a good description

- If safe—get a description of the robber's vehicle and direction of travel.
- Activate the panic alarm ONLY when it's safe.
- Personal safety first! Money and merchandise are not important.
- Don't chase or follow the robber out of your place of business.

## BUSINESS CRIME PREVENTION– COMMERCIAL BURGLARY

A burglary occurs when a thief enters a building when no one is present and steals its contents. Usually, commercial burglaries occur at night when no one is around.

Businesses are four times as likely to be burglarized as homes. Over half of commercial burglaries victimize small businesses.

**Preventing Burglaries-** There are ways for you to prevent your business from being burglarized. The key is to take away any opportunity to attract a burglar to your business and to make him think that he will risk getting caught at your business more than another business.

### Doors and Locks:

- Secure doors, windows, skylights and other openings with high quality locks.
- Locks are not burglar proof. They make entry harder.
- Double cylinder, dead-bolt locks with one inch throw bolts are preferred for doors.
- Install cylinder guards and strike plates to slow down forced entry and prevent “jimmying.”
- Use heavy-duty solid construction for rear doors with bars and

u-brackets secured to the structure for added strength.

### Windows:

- Ensure all windows are closed and locked at the end of the business day.
- Remove merchandise from display windows at night.
- Install burglar-resistant glass, wire mesh, security window film, or iron bars on windows.
- Rearrange merchandise so employees have unobstructed views outside the business.
- Windows should offer light and visibility— NOT easy access.

### Lighting:

- Light is one of the best crime deterrents.
- Use low-watt lights inside and bright lights outside.
- Illuminate all entry points and exterior sides of your business.

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### REMEMBER

- *Lock your business at night.*
- *Use lighting to deter crime.*
- *Use your alarm system.*
- *Work with neighboring businesses.*

## BURGLARY-TIPS

### Alarm Systems:

- *Alarms are an entry detection and notification tool—not a physical barrier.*
- *Research alarm companies and request a system which best fits your needs.*
- *Hire a professional to install your alarm.*
- *Have clearly visible alarm signage.*
- *Test your system regularly.*
- *Train staff to avoid false alarms.*



## BUSINESS CRIME PREVENTION- CALLING 9-1-1

You may have taken all of the precautions to prevent a robbery, burglary, theft, shoplifting, etc., but your business may have been a scene of a crime. This is the time to call for a deputy to investigate. To do that, you need to call 9-1-1.

Since 9-1-1 is for emergencies, you may wonder if making the call is the right thing to do. Emergencies are any situation where law enforcement, firefighters, or medical help is needed. If you are unsure, call 9-1-1 and a call taker will talk you through your situation and get the appropriate help.

### When Calling 9-1-1:

1. **Remain calm-** Speak slowly and clearly.
2. **Explain why you are calling-** Explain what you are reporting. Describe if the situation is still happening or not. 9-1-1 operators will ask questions about the “who, what, where, when, why & how” of the incident.
3. **Give the address-** Give the exact location/address of the situation. Include street or suite numbers, floor, and any infor-

mation that will help emergency responders find the correct location.

4. **Give your name and your current location-** While not required, giving your name helps with any investigations that occur.
5. **Give the telephone number from where you are calling-** Provide this information in case more information is later needed.
6. **Stay on the line; do not hang up-** Do not hang up until the 9-1-1 operator releases your call. Provide all the information you have. Situations change constantly and updated information may be needed.

### Emergency Calls:

- Crimes in progress
- Offender at the scene of the crime
- Witnesses at the scene of the crime
- Any incident involving injuries
- Suspicious activity

### REMEMBER

- *Remain CALM!*
- *Explain your situation.*
- *Answer all questions and follow directions as instructed.*

### CRIME PREVENTION COORDINATORS

#### OFFICE OF COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

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### SNOHOMISH COUNTY BUSINESS WATCH

For more information about business crime prevention contact the Snohomish County Business Watch:

Web Site:

<http://www.thescbw.org/>

Email:

[info@thescbw.org](mailto:info@thescbw.org)



### TIP LINES



Snohomish County Sheriff's Office: 425-388-3845

<http://www.snoco.org/app/ssh/anonymoustips/>

Crime Stoppers of Puget Sound: 1-800-222-8477