

## Shoplifting Methods and Techniques

**Concealment:** Clothes are the preferred concealment method for stolen retail goods. Some shoplifters use baggy clothes, others go as far as to make clothes with hidden pockets. Shoplifters also hide merchandise in strollers.

**Diversion:** Be wary of people causing distractions. Always be on your guard for diversionary tactics when a suspicious pair or group arrives.

**Misrepresentation:** Some customers will steal from your store and then return the stolen merchandise for a cash refund. Refund policies requiring a sales slip that is then carefully examined will discourage refund frauds.

**Openly Aggressive:** This approach depends on boldness and a disbelief in, or disregard for, consequences. Thieves will rely on their audacity and the element of surprise to blatantly walk or run out of the store with unpaid property in full view. Early recognition of these offenders and well-designed store layout are the best deterrents against this method of theft.

**Palming:** Concealing small articles such as lipsticks, perfume, necklaces and bracelets in the hand.

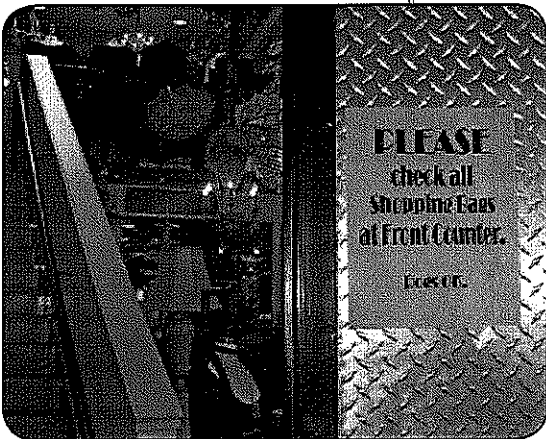
**Handling:** Customers that inspect three or four items at a time and then returns most, but not all, of the items to the display shelf. Opening sealed boxes and pilfering the contents is another common example of handling.

**Team Shoplifting:** One customer will serve as a lookout while the other is concealing merchandise. Diversionary tactics are also common here.

**Modifications to Clothes:** Examples include hidden pockets or hooks for hiding items, extra long belts with extra eyelets, wide skirts, capes and overcoats. Knitting bags, shopping bags from other stores, briefcases, umbrellas and folded newspapers can also be used as effective pouches for small articles.

**Forgetful Shopper Ploy:** A customer "forgets" a bag of merchandise in your store. S/he calls to see if the bag is there and then returns, with a friend, to pick up the bag. When s/he picks up the "forgotten" goods, s/he claims that some items are missing. While your staff is in a panic looking for the "missing" items, s/he and/or the friend are stealing items from the store.

**Cover Ups:** Many shoplifters place their coat or jacket on top of a counter over the article they want. Then, it's simply a matter of picking up the coat with the item and walking out.



## Fitting Room Security

**Fitting Rooms:** Keep rooms locked and limit the number of items that can be brought in at one time. When the customer leaves, the room should be emptied of any hangers or tags. If you have a suspicious situation, make sure to check the pockets of items left in the fitting room for price tags or cut security tags.

**Monitor Items:** Employees should regularly check in with the customer and count the items (not hangers) when they check in and out of the room.

**Electronic Security Systems:** Consider using on merchandise.

**Bag Check:** Consider for large purses, computer bags, or other bulky totes or shopping bags.

**Café Doors:** Allows for some visibility of the area.

**Return Rack:** Use for unwanted clothing.

**Signage:** Post signs that ask customers to see a sales associate before taking items in and out of the dressing room, and indicating that your business will prosecute shoplifting to the highest extent of the law and make sure to follow through on that.

## Rules of Conduct and Shoplifting

Have a written set of Rules of Conduct posted for all customers and employees to see. These rules should be from the owner or manager of the property. All employees should have the authority to enforce these rules. The Rules may include, but not be limited to:

1. No person shall engage in conduct that violates any Federal, State, or City law.
2. No person shall loiter or remain on store premises without purchasing a product.
3. No person shall interfere with ingress or egress of others at the entrance to the store.
4. No person shall use the store in ways that they were not intended to be used.
5. No person shall refuse to obey any reasonable request of a store employee.

## Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

Changes to your store's layout, lighting, and landscaping may deter crime by increasing visibility, and your ability to observe customer activities and suspicious activities outside of your store.

- Position the cash register to facilitate observation, and locate it toward the exit of the store. It is important to be able to monitor customers entering and exiting the store to provide good customer service and decrease opportunities for shoplifters.
- Keep store shelves, floors, and other areas of your store uncluttered. Maintaining items in an orderly fashion helps to identify if something has been stolen.
- Ensure your store is evenly lit with no dark pockets or glare, and that the outside of your store and parking lot is well-illuminated.
- Do not place merchandise by exits, preventing grab and run scenarios. This is especially true of expensive or "hot" items - CDs, small electronics, jewelry.
- Do not post signs on windows or doors that block visibility to the outside.
- If you have shrubs and trees in entrance ways or in front of windows, trim them so that they do not compromise views.
- Install an enunciator or bell on your door to alert employees of customers entering and exiting the business.
- Use convex mirrors to allow greater visibility throughout the store. Minimize blind spots.
- Place hangers in alternate directions to prevent grab and run on displays close to the exits.
- Keep small and expensive items in locked display cases.



More detailed information about CPTED can be found online or by calling your Crime Prevention Program Coordinator.