



office of  
neighborhood  
involvement

*Promoting a culture of civic engagement by connecting and supporting all Portlanders working together and with government to build inclusive, safe and livable neighborhoods and communities.*

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This document is available at the  
ONI website:  
[www.portlandonline.com/oni/cp](http://www.portlandonline.com/oni/cp)

# Shoplift Prevention

Office of Neighborhood Involvement Crime Prevention Program  
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Shoplifting is a common concern for many retailers. The information and strategies to follow can help deter shoplifters. For more detailed information about these tips or programs to enhance safety, talk with your Crime Prevention Program Coordinator.

## The Best Shoplift Prevention is Good Customer Service

**Greet all customers as they enter your store, and make eye contact with each person.** This conveys your interest in providing good attentive service and let's people know you're in control of your store. Honest customers will like the attention; dishonest ones won't.

**Refrain from distractions** like personal phone calls while on the sales floor.

**Provide adequate staff.** The most vulnerable times for shoplifting occur early in the day, during lunch, and near closing, especially on Fridays or holidays. It is important to have enough staff to provide adequate coverage during these times.

**Trust your instincts.** If a customer exhibits concerning behavior, step up your level of interaction. Ask if you can hold any items at the counter for them. Help them find the size that they are looking for. If there are additional employees in the store, ask them to help cover the floor while you are offering increased attention to that customer.

## Common Shoplifter Traits

**Searching Eye Movement:** Look for eyes that are checking out the location of staff, customers, store layout, surveillance cameras and mirrors as opposed to focusing on sales room items.

**Continual Head Movement:** Be alert to customers that are constantly reassuring themselves that nobody is observing them.

**Quick, Jerky Body Movements:** This type of body language could signal that a customer may be attempting to conceal something.

**Wandering or Hiding Behavior:** Pay attention to customers who wander from item to item without showing any particular interest in anything. Also notice customers who seek out and linger in areas of the store where observation is difficult.

**Aloof Behavior:** Note customers who resist all sales assistance and who seem uncomfortable in your presence.

Look online or ask your Crime Prevention Coordinator about these additional resources:

- Business Watch
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) information, training, forms
- Crime Prevention Strategies for Businesses handout
- Identity Theft Prevention information and training
- Customized trainings and prevention information

## What To Do If Someone Shoplifts in Your Store

- Report the crime to the police. Call 9-1-1 for crimes in progress, or non-emergency, 503-823-3333, to report crimes after they occur.
- Write down the details of the suspects, activities, and/or vehicles right after the crime is noticed, so that details are fresh in your memory. Make sure to document the variables that are defined, distinguished, and detailed.
- Talk to neighboring businesses about what happened; share information at Business District or Business Watch meetings. It is important to share information so others are aware of any criminal activity happening in the area.
- After a person(s) is arrested, request to pursue charges against the individual(s). Contact the District Attorney's Office (503-988-3860), to take the steps necessary to ensure that these cases are aggressively pursued.

## Shoplifting and the Exclusion Process

After a person has been caught shoplifting, or you as a store owner are suspicious of a person shoplifting, you need to develop a procedure to follow for excluding the person. This procedure should identify behaviors that deserve an exclusion and the response to those behaviors.

**Example:** When someone is caught shoplifting in your store, the procedure should be to call the police every time and issue that person a verbal or written exclusion.

Exclusions can be a verbal expression, saying that a person cannot enter the premises for a certain amount of time, or some form of written documentation describing the exclusion; this can include something as simple as a notation in a log book. In both occasions, document the date and time of when the exclusion was issued.

Also, document the description of person, and the description of what was taken. If the person happens to come back onto your property, call the police so they can be arrested for Criminal Trespass in the Second Degree.

### Crime Prevention Program Numbers

*All numbers are area code 503*

Administrative Support .....	823-4064
Central Northeast .....	823-4098, 823-4763, 823-2779
East .....	823-3505, 823-5532, 823-2779, 823-4763
North.....	823-4098, 823-4094
Northeast.....	823-4763, 823-4764, 823-4098
Northwest .....	823-4257
Southeast .....	823-0540, 823-3432, 823-2781, 823-3505
Southwest.....	823-3131
Downtown.....	823-5852
Events and Training Supervisor.....	823-9666
Program Manager.....	823-2030

#### *Related services*

Liquor license notification .....	823-3092
Graffiti abatement.....	823-5860
Code enforcement hotline ( <i>noise, nuisance, inspections, etc.</i> )...	823-2633
Neighborhood mediation .....	823-3152
City/County information & referral .....	823-4000

El Programa de la Prevención del Crimen tiene un miembro que habla español. Llame por favor al número principal 503-823-4000 si usted necesita los servicios en español.