



# Shoreline Police

# BUSINESS WATCH

Eastside and Westside Shoreline Police Neighborhood Centers  
Partnership for Crime Prevention in the Business Community

2nd Quarter 2005

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Partnership for Crime Prevention in the Business Community

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## Protect Your Business Against **ROBBERY**

The majority of robberies involve either the threat, or the use of a weapon, making this crime against business the most dangerous to employees and customers. Furthermore, according to the Small Business Administration, two-thirds of all money obtained by robbery comes from small business.

It is therefore imperative that businesses take as many measures as possible to prevent robbery. Some of the following recommendations may not be feasible in certain businesses. But the more of them you are able to follow, the greater security image you will present, and the less chances that your business will become a target for robbery.

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# ROBBERY PREVENTION

## Preventive Measures: The Premises

- Install sufficient lighting to provide good visibility for the interior and exterior of your business and the parking lot. Well-lighted areas enable employees to keep an eye out for suspicious-looking persons and it also increases the possibility—in the event of a holdup—that someone outside will be able to see the robbery occurring.
- To further enhance two-way visibility at your cash register area, avoid hanging signs or posters on the front doors and windows.
- Practice and advertise a cash control policy. Law enforcement experts consider this measure to be one of the strongest deterrents for robberies. Keep the lowest possible amount of cash on the premises and adopt a policy to limit the amount of currency for small purchases. Let everyone know that you practice these cash-control measures. Put a sign, such as “\$50.00 Maximum Cash In Register,” near your check out stand.
- Keep “bait money” in your till. Record the dates and serial numbers of a few bills and keep them separate, such as at the bottom of a till section, as “bait money” that can be traced by the police.
- Place colored tape markers at the main entrance to help employees gauge the height of a robber as he/she leaves your business. Using different colors, place the strips at 5’5”, 5’6” and 6’ heights.
- Install an alarm system. The most important factor in alarm selection is the safety with which it can be activated without arousing the robber’s suspicions. A “bill trap” or “money clip” alarm is silently activated and considered to be one of the safest types of alarms during robberies. Consult your police department’s crime prevention officer for information.
- Make sure that side or back doors are kept locked at all times to prevent a potential robber from entering undetected.
- Install an enunciator on all unlocked doors.
- Vary your banking routine. Deposit money as often as practical, but never less than daily. Carry the cash in different containers and avoid using a money bag. Bank at various times of the day, so a routine cannot be determined by anyone casing your business.

## Preventive Measures: Employees

- If possible, have two persons on hand at both opening and closing, the times that are most vulnerable to robberies. Before opening, have one employee check the business before others enter. At closing, check all rooms for persons before locking up.
- Have employees use the main entrance to avoid the chance that a back door will be left unlocked accidentally.
- Post your law enforcement agency's emergency telephone number on or near all of the phones in your business. Keep suspect identification forms obtained from your law enforcement agency on hand for all employees.
- Train employees to be aware of unusual behavior. Inside the business, this may include "customers" who seem to be loitering or glancing around the store while appearing to shop or browse through a magazine. Employees should also be concerned with customers wearing inappropriate clothing, such as someone wearing an overcoat in hot weather. Outside, be aware of individuals in parked cars and telephone booths, two favorite observation posts for casing a business. Call law enforcement and ask for a patrol check.
- have employees greet customers as they enter the store and ask if they need help. Robbers don't like to be noticed or to have personal interaction.
- Finally, after these preventative measures have been taken, walk and talk through the steps of a robbery and the follow-up with your employees. Review these steps periodically.

**For more information about crime prevention, call one of your storefront offices below:**

*Westside Neighborhood Center*  
624 NW Richmond Beach Rd.  
Shoreline, WA 98177  
206-546-3636

*Eastside Neighborhood Center*  
521 NE 165 St.  
Shoreline, WA 98155  
206-363-8424



## IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

In an  
Emergency,  
CALL 911



Police  
Non-Emergency  
(206) 296-3311

Shoreline Police  
Precinct  
1206 N 185 St  
(206) 546-6730

Police West Side  
Neighborhood  
Center  
624 NW Richmond  
Beach Rd  
(206) 546-3636

Police East Side  
Neighborhood  
Center  
521 NE 165 St  
(206) 363-8424

## IN THE EVENT OF A ROBBERY:

Despite taking preventative measures, there is still always a chance that a robbery may occur. In that event, it is crucial to know how to handle the situation to protect the safety of employees and customers.

The average robbery takes less than two minutes. Once a robbery begins, your main objective is to end it as quickly and safely as possible:

- **NEVER RESIST A ROBBER!** You are dealing with a highly volatile individual and the stakes are not worth serious injury or death.
- Be as cooperative and efficient as possible. Remember, the longer the robbery takes, the more nervous the robber becomes.
- Follow his instructions exactly. If he asks for tens and twenties, for example, give him those only.
- Inform the robber of any unexpected moves or possible surprises. If he wants the money in a bag and you have to reach below to get one, tell him what you are going to do. If someone is in the back room or expected in the store, let him know.
- Do not try to use an alarm, especially of the hand or foot activated type, unless you can do so without any obvious movement which might cause the robber to react in panic. A silent "bill trap" alarm can be used (see Preventive Measures).
- If possible, try to take note of the robber's appearance and his height from the height marker gauge as he exits the store.
- Don't chase or follow the robber. To chase a robber is to invite violence and the police could also mistake you for one of the criminals.

## FOLLOWING THE ROBBERY:

- Once the robber has left the business, try to observe through the window:
  - type of getaway vehicle
  - license plate number
  - any accomplices
  - direction of escape.
- Call 911 immediately. Do this even if you already have activated an alarm. State your name, address, telephone number and what happened. Stay on the line until they tell you to hang up.
- Discontinue business and close the store if at all possible.
- Ask any witnesses to stay until police arrive. While they wait, encourage them to write down what they remember. If they can't stay, get their name and addresses so police can reach them later.
- Fill in your suspect identification form while you wait for police. Write down exactly what the robber said and any details you can recall about the robber's appearance, speech and mannerisms.
- Do not discuss details of the robbery or compare notes with anyone else, including fellow employees or witnesses.
- Protect the crime scene, including fingerprints or any evidence such as a demand note. Use a box, bag or anything else handy to cover or block off any merchandise, counter area or door handle which the robber may have touched. Avoid handling these items yourself.
- Give the recorded serial numbers of your bait money to the police.
- Let the police answer any inquiries from the news media. Do not disclose the amount of money taken to anyone except law enforcement.

# “GAIL” WARNINGS

How quickly your company can get back to business after a terrorist attack or tornado, a fire or flood often depends on emergency planning done today. While the Department of Homeland Security is working hard to prevent terrorist attacks, the lessons of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing and the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks demonstrate the importance of being prepared. When you also consider that the number of declared major disasters nearly doubled in the 1990's compared to the previous decade, preparedness becomes an even more critical issue. Though each situation is unique, any organization can be better prepared if it plans carefully, puts emergency procedures in place, and practices for emergencies of all kinds.

America's businesses form the backbone of the nation's economy; small businesses alone account for more than 99% of all companies with employees, employ 50% of all private sector workers and provide nearly 45% of the nation's payroll. If businesses are **READY** to survive and recover, the nation and our economy are more secure. A commitment to planning today will help support employees, customers, the community, the local economy and even the country. It also protects your business investment and gives your company a better chance for survival.

*Ready Business* outlines commonsense measures business owners and managers can take to start getting *ready*. It provides practical steps and easy-to-use templates to help you plan for your company's future.

These recommendations reflect the Emergency Preparedness and Business Continuity Standard ([NFPA 1600 <http://www.nfpa.org/PDF/nfpa1600.pdf?src=nfpa>](http://www.nfpa.org/PDF/nfpa1600.pdf?src=nfpa)) developed by the National Fire Protection Association and endorsed by the American National Standards Institute and the Department of Homeland Security. It also provides useful links to resources providing more detailed business continuity and disaster preparedness information.

**Business continuity and crisis management** can be complex issues depending on the particular industry, size and scope of your business. However, putting a plan in motion will improve the likelihood that your company will survive and recover. The following information is a good start for small- to mid-sized businesses. Companies that already have their emergency plans in place can continue to help create a more robust sustainable community by mentoring businesses in their own supply chain and others needing advice.

Preparing makes good business sense. Get ready now.

For more information, contact your EMC:

*Gail C. Marsh*  
*City of Shoreline*  
*Emergency Management Coordinator*  
*(206) 546-7873 office*  
*(206) 391-2316 cell*  
*(206) 559-2847 pager*

## Ready Business!