

Information Bulletin

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Preventing Commercial Burglaries

Burglary is a property crime that occurs when the operation is closed for business. Burglar's may enter through any opening such as a door, window, air conditioning duct, skylight, or even create an entry portal through an interior shared wall or an outside wall. Reduce your risk as much as possible. Burglary is a crime of opportunity that can be prevented if proper precautions are taken.

Items to Remember:

Be prepared – Burglary usually happens to those who are least prepared. Although no security system is 100 percent effective, there are many things that you can do to reduce chances of becoming a victim.

Assess your vulnerability – Use the following checklist to see how your security could be improved and/or modified.

Security Checklist and Concerns:

1. Burglar alarms – install a good quality alarm system to detect unauthorized entry. Check with your law enforcement or crime prevention authorities before you invest in this sort of product.
2. Doors – are your exterior doors and frames sturdy? Secure doors need more than good locks. The door, frame, and hardware (hinges, locks, and fasteners) form a mini-security system that is only as good as its weakest point.
3. Fencing or barricades – does a wall, fence, hedge (thorny) or other deterrent protect your business? Fences, although not impassable, act as deterrents to burglars. Plant barriers however can conceal burglars as well. Therefore, a fence or wall that you can see through is suggested.
4. Ladders – are tools and ladders left on the exterior of the building that could be used by a burglar to assist them in a break in.
5. Lighting – install bright interior and exterior lighting to

make all openings visible from both the exterior and interior of the store. Do exterior doors have good exterior lights, which are turned on at night? Well-lit entrances discourage burglary. Lights should be protected to prevent breakage or tampering as well.

6. Locks and Safes – purchase only high quality doors and use them as specified in the instructions. Grills and storefront gates delay entry. Safes should be Underwriters Laboratory listed and bolted to the floor. If possible position your safe so that it is visible from the street.
7. Valuables – valuables should be marked for identification and stored securely. Are important files and/or computer backup disks (or tapes) locked away in a secure place? Do you have the serial numbers along with descriptions of your valuable items stored in a separate location?
8. Walls – do your walls go all the way up to the highest ceiling? Many walls only go up to the false ceiling, allowing a burglar to enter the room by climbing over the wall above the hanging ceiling. Skylights are also another point of entry from the ceiling area.
9. Windows – are your windows and doors all visible from the street or from adjacent offices? With all accesses visible, burglars are less likely to break in. Are windows near your doors protected from breakage. Windows in or near doors should be treated (safety laminated or tempered) glass, break-resistant acrylic or polycarbonate plastic. If they are not, you should consider replacing them. Can your windows or sliding doors be pried from their tracks? All fasteners and screws for tracks and frame should be inaccessible from the outside.

Your local Police or Sheriff's Department can be a major asset and an ally in setting up your security; its officers can conduct a free security survey and give advice on alarm systems and other security devices. Become active in local crime prevention programs in your neighborhood to deter crime.