

Alarm information continued

- ▶ Check your contract! Review carefully what you sign and make sure everything that is agreed upon is in writing. Know what the warranty period is and what is included in the warranty.
- ▶ Remember, an adequate design should consider the structure, the life style, the perceived needs, and the budget of the occupant.

You are part of the system

- ▶ When considering the installation of an alarm system, remember that you are a vital part of the alarm function. You must completely understand how the system works, what it does, and does not do, and what you must do to keep it in proper operating condition. Be sure you are provided with adequate instructions for testing and using the alarm system. Ask the alarm company to provide you with written instructions.
- ▶ If you subscribe to an alarm system that is monitored through a central reporting system that automatically calls police to your business or home, you may incur the costs of false alarms from the Longview Police Department. If police are dispatched to your business and it appears that no intrusion is detected, your business can be assessed a cash penalty.
- ▶ Longview officers responded to over 100 alarms per month that were false or canceled. Systems lacking proper adjustments or human error are the most common cause for false alarms. Ensure your alarm company tunes your systems to avoid false alarms when they are identified. Educate your employees on proper procedures for activating and deactivating the businesses alarm system at opening and closing.
- ▶ Even after all crime prevention measures are taken, alarms are installed, and police alerted to crime trends, burglars may still choose to strike your business. There are no absolute guarantees for zero crime. These decisions are made by desperate people, sometimes impulsively, using little wisdom or common sense. Effectively applying crime prevention tactics into your daily business routine will reduce the chances of burglary and greatly enhance the chances of apprehension.

Checklist

See the enclosed security checklist with a 100 points to ponder in applying crime prevention to your business. Use them and the information in this brochure to enhance your sense of security and safety.

This information provided by:

Longview Police Department
1351 Hudson Street
Longview, WA 98632
360.442.5800, emergencies 9-1-1, non-emergency 360.577.3098

Highlands Police Satellite Office
216 30th Avenue
Longview, WA 98632
360.442.5857



Burglary Prevention Tips

Tools for Change

Businesses are burglarized four times more than residential homes.

The availability of merchandise and the possibility of cash is a great temptation to commercial burglars, not always a sure thing with home intrusions.

Small businesses, some lacking the safe money handling procedures of larger stores, are targeted over half the time, where significant damage and losses can cause irreparable harm to the livelihood of its owners. Moreover, few burglars are caught. Nearly 80 percent of all burglaries go unsolved.

With these facts highlighted, businesses should arm themselves with burglary prevention knowledge and apply them into all facets of their day-to-day operations. There are many techniques and measures you can take to make your business undesirable to possible burglary. By practicing crime prevention in your business you send the burglars “shopping” elsewhere.

This pamphlet will help you identify those areas of your business where you can make changes to deter burglaries.

Crime Prevention Outside

- ▶ Business addresses should be adequately posted on front and back where rear access by alley is available. Poorly marked address numbers can increase police response time.
- ▶ Contrary to residential burglaries, most business burglaries occur at night, where darkness and the low potential for witnesses is the highest. Lighting deters loitering and significantly enhances the possibility of recognition. Decreasing concealment places with lighting reduces the chances of burglary. Adequate lighting is considered the most important deterrent to burglary. Lighting of alleyways and doors also creates safe avenues for customers who will appreciate the measures.
- ▶ Correctly installed and operational alarms systems can deter the common burglar. An audible alarm is like a flag that draws attention to a burglar that he or she doesn't want. Monitored systems can call the police and have them respond to your business.
- ▶ Doors and windows must be reinforced to withstand forced entry. Long, strong screws installed in jambs and in locks can make entry difficult (and noisy), sending a burglar elsewhere. Exterior doors must be security grade, solid core and sturdy. Replace all hollow core exterior doors.
- ▶ Deadbolt locks with a one inch throw should be installed in all exterior doors. With exterior doors with decorative windows consider installing a double-locking deadbolt. These require a key to open from the inside and out where a broke window and access to the lock is denied. Do not leave your keys in a double-locking deadbolt.
- ▶ Practice safe key control by issuing as few keys as possible. Rekey locks when keys are lost or former employees do not return keys. Don't label keys with the businesses name. If the keys are lost, they may fall into the wrong hands and allow access to your business.
- ▶ Skylights, duct entries, basement windows and doorway transoms should be reinforced as possible entry points into your business.
- ▶ Don't provide concealment opportunities around your business. Trim shrubbery and plants to allow easy surveillance. Boxes, crates and ladders can be used to scale up to windows or roof accesses, don't allow them to accumulate near or around your business.
- ▶ Upgrading glass windows to shatterproof security glass may be an investment that pays for itself. Security bars on side and rear access windows deny access where concealment is most prevalent.

Crime Prevention Inside

- ▶ Cash left in the business after closing should be minimal. Leave cash register doors blatantly open and empty. A closed and empty register can be damaged in an attempt to look inside.
- ▶ Window displays should be limited to inexpensive items to prevent the smash and grab theft of items such as computers, etc.
- ▶ Make a burglar work. Bolt display racks to the floor or wall and alternate the direction of hangers with clothing. Appliance cords can be tied together, bikes can be chained, and all display cabinets should be locked and secure.
- ▶ Office equipment can be hot commodities and targets for theft. Permanently anchor typewriters, adding machines, cash registers and computers to tables or desks. Keep an up-to-date inventory record of equipment that includes: make, model, and serial number. In the event these items are stolen or destroyed, this information will be needed to list as stolen in local and national computer databases and subsequent insurance claims.
- ▶ Window displays and store layouts should be arranged to allow the maximum allowable view from the outside. Passerbys or patrolling police should be able to see through uncluttered windows, and this may provide detection of intruders.
- ▶ Permanently anchor safes in a well-lit, open part of the business. Keep spare business keys and important documents in the safe.
- ▶ Always leave on an interior light that is visible from the street. In the event the light is off, it may arouse suspicion. It's recommended that lights left on after closing should be toward the rear of the store, providing an opportunity to silhouette intruders.
- ▶ At closing, check the building. Don't provide easy access to your business by locking somebody inside. Inspect all possible hiding spots: clothing racks, cabinets, restrooms, etc. Develop a routine in which at least two people are present at closing and the building is thoroughly checked.
- ▶ If you find someone inside your closed business, always assume he or she is there illegally. Arriving at your business and finding a "good Samaritan" checking inside your business should be treated with suspicion. Call the police immediately and ask the person to stay and give a statement to the responding officers. Note physical descriptions and mode and direction of travel if they leave.
- ▶ If you suspect that your business has been burglarized, call the police immediately. Do not try to enter the premises - the burglar may still be inside.
- ▶ Don't disturb any evidence. Consult with your local crime prevention officer to discuss how to best protect your business from another burglary.

Safes

- ▶ Standing safes should be well illuminated and visible from the outside of the building. The front (locking side) should be turned away from the windows. Standing safes should be firmly anchored to the floor. Remove any wheels. If the safe isn't visible from the outside, then make sure that the safe's bottom and back are not accessible, since these are the weakest areas of a safe.
- ▶ Use a "burglar resistant" safe for money and a records safe specifically for records. A burglar resistant safe is designed to deter entry and a records safe is designed to protect against fire damage. Both styles of quality safes should have an Underwriters Laboratory (UL) label stating their rating effectiveness. Floor mounted safes should be covered with a floor mat or rugs.
- ▶ Restrict the combination and change it after primary employee changes. Don't use phone numbers, addresses, or birth dates for combinations. Commit

all combinations to memory. Don't write them on the backs of calendars, appointment books, etc. Burglars know these tricks.

- ▶ Use safes for temporary storage of cash. Keeping large amounts of cash over night or through a weekend make you a likely target for burglary. Develop a routine of daily deposits to your bank. Check with your bank on options they provide for after hour deposits.

Firearms at Your Business

- ▶ Protective guns in your business is not advisable. Rarely are you afforded time to draw a weapon to prevent a robbery or injury. Moreover, your weapon could be taken away and used against you. During a burglary, an insecure weapon can be stolen and end up on the street to be used in other, possibly more violent, offenses.
- ▶ Remember, if a firearm is easily accessible to you, it is also accessible to a small child, or a thief during your absence.

Alarms

A good alarm system can deter and/or detect the average thief or burglars entering your business or home, and afford you peace of mind as well. Most reputable alarm companies will install and maintain a local alarm system, which will ring a bell at the premises. Some firms also specialize in central reporting systems, which silently signal the alarm company's headquarters for dispatching of police and perhaps alarm company agents.

Basic protection is simple, closed circuit loop system consisting of foil on exterior doors and windows. There is also a choice of additional interior protection with the use of photoelectric beams, ultrasonic, infrared and microwave systems and sound monitoring systems. It is considered best to keep the system simple to avoid false alarms.

Contracts

- ▶ Once the alarm company representative has made an appraisal of your security needs, ask him or her for a written proposal and a copy of the contract you will have to sign. Take some time to look it over and think about it. Never sign a contract which does not list the points of protection and does not itemize the equipment to be installed. Your sales representative may also say that a burglar and robbery alarm system can reduce your insurance premiums. This may well be true, but be sure you check this out with your own insurance agent.

Choosing your alarm system

- ▶ How do I know the right company to choose when considering the purchase of an alarm system? How much protection do I need? How much should I expect to pay? These are common questions asked by people considering an alarm system.

Tips for choosing an alarm company

- ▶ Ask for the company's State Alarm Dealer's license number.
- ▶ If a fire system is to be installed, also ask for the state contractor's license. This is a separate license in addition to the State Alarm Dealer's license. Make sure that the fire system controls and related equipment are State Fire Marshal approved.

Ask about insurance....

- ▶generally liability, workmen's compensation, operator's errors and omissions. You have every right to ask for certificates of insurance for these items. This protects YOU because if the company is not properly protected, any claim or losses can fall to you.
- ▶ Ask for the company's business license, which allows it to do business in your community.
- ▶ Ask for local referrals of other customers in your area that have had systems installed like the one being proposed to you.

continued