



How to Stop Crime at YOUR Business

Make the Crime Seem Harder

People usually don't commit crimes that seem too hard. If you can make criminals think it will be too difficult to "do business with you," they will probably pass you by. There are four general things you can do to increase perceived effort.

- 1) Obstruct Offenders with Physical Barriers - Use safes, locks, screens, high counters, and so on.
- 2) Control Access to Places Where Offenders Don't Belong - Examples include fences, access keypads and phones, and reception areas.
- 3) Deflect Offenders Away from People who Might be Victims - Rather than having all bars close at once in a downtown area, it is better to stagger the closing times so there aren't a large number of drunk people in one area at the same time.
- 4) Control the Tools of Crime - Some bars ask patrons to check their knives and helmets at the door (to prevent serious fights). Banks often ask patrons to remove helmet and sunglasses.

Make the Crime Seem Riskier

People will usually only commit crimes if they think they will get away with it. You can reduce your chances of being a victim if you can make people think they will probably be caught.

- 1) **Watch Your Entrances and Exits** - Detect those who aren't following the rules about who is allowed in, such as a child trying to get into an R-rated movie. Also, detect objects that aren't supposed to leave a certain area, such as items not paid for at a store.
- 2) **Use Security Personnel** - These are people whose main function is to deter possible offenders, such as security guards, store detectives, and floor walkers.
- 3) **Get Your Employees to Pay Attention** - Many employees' jobs involve some monitoring of an area, although this is not their main duty. Examples are parking lot attendants, store clerks, and hotel doormen.
- 4) **Natural Surveillance from Passers-By** - Non-employees often see things when they are going about their everyday business. People walking by convenience stores and looking in the windows is an example. Keep aisles wide and area uncluttered.

Make the Crime Seem Unrewarding

Most people will only commit a crime if it seems worth their while. If you can make it seem like there will be few benefits for someone trying to rob you or steal from you, they will probably leave you alone.

- 1) **Remove Whatever is Attractive to Criminals** - A neat example comes from the days of the California Gold Rush. After a number of stagecoach robberies, one mine began casting the silver in large 400-pound blocks. These were too heavy for robbers to carry away.
- 2) **Mark Your Property** - "Operation Identification," where people engrave their unique number on valuables (e.g., office equipment), is one such example.
- 3) **Reduce Whatever is Tempting to Criminals** - Examples are expensive items that can be easily grabbed or smooth walls that invite graffiti.
- 4) **Deny Criminals the Pleasure of Using Whatever They Take from You** - An example is attaching ink tags to garments.

Take Away People's Excuses to Commit the Crime

Many ordinary people commit less-serious crimes, even though they really know they shouldn't. They come up with reasons, such as "This store charges too much anyway," or "I always work overtime and don't get paid enough," or "This store is so big, they won't miss this one pair of pants."

The following set of crime prevention techniques involves increasing the pressure on people to do what they know is right in the first place.

- 1) Set Rules or Procedures that Explain Acceptable Conduct - For example, implementing a refund policy at a retail store can reduce the amount of refund fraud.
 - 2) Remind People that the Offense is Wrong - Signs in New York City's Port Authority bus terminal read "Smoking here is illegal, selfish, and rude."
 - 3) Limit Access to Things that Reduce People's Abilities to Think - The best example of this is alcohol.
 - 4) Make it Easy for People to "Do the Right Thing." - Put a cash register right by the door, or put a garbage can just outside your small grocery so people won't litter so much.
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