Applying the ‘ten principles of crime prevention’ to retail crime

METROPOLITAN POLICE



How can you reduce crime in your store but retain that essential customer experience? This document details the ***ten principles of crime prevention*** and shows how they can be applied to the retail sector by providing a number of actions to consider. The list is by no means exhaustive, and some actions overlap across various principles. Use this as a guide to help review security in your business. For crime prevention measures to be successfully implemented, they need to be achievable, realistic and cost effective. These will vary from business to business and also between premises. Use the three columns on the right to record whether the suggested actions are suitable for your business.

Further crime prevention advice can be found online at **www.met.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention** or by emailing the Metropolitan Police Service Business Crime Hub on **businesscrime.mailbox@met.police.uk**

Principle of crime prevention	Action to consider	Achievable?	Realistic?	Cost effective?
Target hardening Making targets more resistant to attack or difficult to remove or damage. *Here we are looking at protecting your most vulnerable and targeted stock. The measure taken will depend on the type and size of item that you are looking to protect.*	• Security tagging in retail is now common place and can deter thieves. Tags sound an alarm if they pass detector gates without being removed or de-activated.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• High risk items could be displayed behind security screens or in locked cabinets.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Mobile phones and other electronic devices can be tethered to display stands with security cables. This means customers can still try them, but can't remove them.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Display lock devices can be used to prevent customers removing items off racks/ shelving without staff assistance.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Although our focus here is about protecting your stock in the retail environment, you should give careful consideration to your online security too - think about your supply chain and delivery processes and don't allow them to be the weak link. We've created the Little series of books and videos to explain some of the most common scams and give advice on how to avoid falling victim to them. **www.met.police.uk/littlemedia**	Y N	Y N	Y N

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Target removal Permanent or temporary removal of vulnerable property. *If you can't protect your stock on the shop floor, think about moving it to another area of the store. You may have to do this in collaboration with your commercial/ marketing team, but if you have a crime issue have this conversation to see if you can identify some solutions.*	• Consider moving the targeted stock away from the front entrance or access points to prevent opportunist offending.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Minimise the stock level on display. Surplus stock should be stored securely in areas where the public cannot access.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Consider using 'dummy display items' for the most targeted items.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Think about moving targeted stock behind the till or other areas in the store which have better security. You could do this for a trial period to assess any impact on sales.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Also consider removing high value stock from the shop floor or window displays when your store is closed to help prevent burglary.	Y N	Y N	Y N
Remove the means Promoting good housekeeping practices to ensure that material capable of being used to help the criminal commit crime is not left lying around with easy access. *Don't make it easy for any opportunistic criminals.*	• Don't leave anything out that could be used to gain entry or damage your store or stock. Pay particular attention to service yards/ delivery areas.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Keep keys for display cabinets etc secure.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• If your store provides baskets/bags for shoppers, the design should allow staff to see in them. Alternatively, consider sealing bags at the till to indicate that the items inside have been purchased.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Consider bag checks on entry to prevent offenders using foil lined bags etc.	Y N	Y N	Y N

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Reducing the payoff Employing means to reduce the value of loss if a crime is committed. *Make sure criminals don't benefit from their crimes.*	• Consider reducing the quantity of high value/ targeted stock on display.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Demonstration items can be clearly marked with your company details, and other items could be security marked with property marking solutions. This can help deter theft, but also aid recovery should an item be stolen.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Consider using display items, or disabling some functionality of products so their value is limited.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Most shoe shops only display one shoe out of a pair to prevent theft. This tactic could be replicated for other product types.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• The use of dummy products in place of high value stock prevents any benefit to a thief.	Y N	Y N	Y N
Access control Restricting access to sites, buildings or parts of sites or buildings. *This needs to be considered for when your business is open and closed.*	• Instruct your staff to 'meet and greet' customers when they enter the store and engage with them once they are inside. Aside from demonstrating excellent customer service, this tactic can deter shoplifters.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• During the Covid pandemic stores have regulated customer numbers by deploying security outside of the store. Traffic light systems and staff fob controlled / remote access control have also been used by some businesses. Consider retaining some of these access control elements post-Covid to counter a crime issues.	Y N	Y N	Y N

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	• Make sure that access to any service or staff-only areas are controlled and monitored.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Consider reducing the number of entry and exit points in use if you are experiencing high levels of theft. This could be during specific hours of opening e.g. when less staff are on duty. Any changes will need to take into account fire safety regulations.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Make sure you keep the doors accessing public and private areas secure. If you use key codes make sure they are frequently updated to prevent access by the public and/or ex-employees.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Consideration should also be given to control measures at your exit points too. One way systems, and making sure customers have to pass a till-point will help prevent opportunistic crime. They can also help strengthen a prosecution case against offenders who deliberately go against these.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• If there is a rear area to your store and it is attracting crime, could this area be gated or secured to limit access? Remember planning and fire safety regulations may apply.	Y N	Y N	Y N

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Surveillance **Natural** – sight lines maintained **Formal** – using technology and staff **Informal** – encouraging others to be vigilant *Good surveillance will help prevent and detect crime.*	• This isn't solely CCTV: your staff are 'the eyes and ears of the shop floor' and can play an essential role in preventing offending in your business.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Encourage staff to make eye contact and engage in conversation with customers. Most thieves thrive on their anonymity, so could be deterred.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Place 'the most targeted stock' in the area with the best surveillance - think about the high use routes that staff take between different areas of your store. Alternatively, encourage your staff to walk 'the most targeted areas' on their route around the store.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Ensure that you have a CCTV system installed by either a NSI or SSAIB member company, and comply with data protection regulations. It should be well maintained and staff need to know how to operate it. It should also be of sufficient quality to capture a good facial image of an offender. As well as high risk areas in your store, it should cover entry/exit points and exterior areas that are not routinely visited. For CCTV advice view **www.nsi.org.uk/** or **www.ssaib.org/**	Y N	Y N	Y N

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	• Some CCTV systems can be monitored remotely and provide a vocal capacity so staff can interact with a criminal from a safe distance.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Consider the use of body worn video devices. Some businesses have seen significant reductions in crime, and assaults on staff in particular, since introducing them.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• An elevated office or till area can maximise sight lines and provide staff with a much better view across the shop floor.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Make sure that areas targeted by criminals are not screened by merchandise and shelving.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Work collaboratively with neighbouring businesses and partnership forums like BCRPs to help prevent and detect crime. Think of these partners as additional 'eyes and ears' who could help protect your business and customers.	Y N	Y N	Y N

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Environmental design Using changes in the environment of a building, a site, an estate or town, to reduce crime opportunities.	• Make sure your store is clean and tidy. Creating a sense of ownership will help deter crime. This applies to both the public and private areas.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• The area outside your business is also important. Report issues with fly-tipping or broken street lights to the relevant authority, and clean up any rubbish or cigarettes as this could signal to a criminal that a lack of regulation exists inside your business too. This also applies to any parking areas.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Ensure appropriate lighting is in place and in working order. We recommend dusk till dawn security lighting.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Ensure that the design of your store is as spacious as it can be to maximise the surveillance opportunities mentioned above.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Internal areas should also be clutter free.	Y N	Y N	Y N

Principle of crime prevention	Action to consider	Achievable?	Realistic?	Cost effective?
Rule setting Introducing legislation, bylaws, codes of conduct, to attain acceptable social behaviour. *Tell customers what they can and can't do, and introduce appropriate policies and procedures for staff.*	• Consider displaying signs stating 'shoplifters will be prosecuted' and that 'violence and aggression against staff will not be tolerated and will be reported to Police'.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• If you operate CCTV in your store you must display clear signage to this affect.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Every member of staff can play their part to help prevent crime. Policies and procedures to explain how your staff engage with customers, go about their daily business and maintain their own safety are really important.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Give extra thought to lone workers, and staff opening/ closing the business when alone.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Consider specific rules for visitors and delivery drivers.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• If you have to convey cash to the bank do ensure you vary the times and routes and stick to populated areas.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Changing rooms are frequently targeted by shoplifters so ensure these areas are regulated by your staff. Consider displaying signs advising customers that there is a limit on the number of items that can be taken into a changing room and make sure your staff reinforce this verbally.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• If you have an area being affected with crime - pickpocketing for instance - consider company branded signage that will resonate with the customer e.g. 'keep it zipped' etc.	Y N	Y N	Y N

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Increase the chance of being caught Management and use of security and technology, use of plain clothes security staff. *Think prevention first, but sometimes crimes will happen - ensure your systems and staff are best placed to help prosecute offenders.*	• Strong staff presence on the shop floor is important.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Security guards and plain clothed store detectives can be used to complement shop staff where required.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Use good quality CCTV and alarm systems.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Remote monitoring of CCTV can mean that better evidence is secured as staff are not directly involved in an incident and affected by adrenaline.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Make sure staff receive appropriate training and follow the policies and procedures that have been introduced.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Upgrading security to delay an offender, meaning they have to spend more time to gain access or commit an offence, will increase the chance of them being caught.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Consider using security-accredited intruder spray systems to reduce visibility and forensically trace offenders to a crime.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Report crime so the police have an accurate picture of what is occurring. Work with the police and partners to share information and intelligence and build the evidence base against prolific offenders so they are dealt with appropriately.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Consider how new technology can help prevent and detect crime. As retail evolves, so does crime; so make sure you are ready to tackle it.	Y N	Y N	Y N

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Deflecting offenders Diverting offenders and potential offender from committing crime. Working with other agencies to influence standards, thinking and attitudes.	• Explore why the offenders that are targeting your business are committing crime. It could be drug or alcohol dependency or societal causes such as poverty: can you link in and work with local charities or agencies to explore and tackle the root cause?	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• This could be as part of a preventative plan, or purely post incident.	Y N	Y N	Y N
	• Is there anything else your business could do to support local and sporting initiatives with partner and charitable agencies?	Y N	Y N	Y N