

## Shoplifting Prevention and Detection

As most shoplifting offences are opportunistic crimes, the following steps can be taken to reduce theft:

- Acknowledge all of your customers and if possible keep customers in view at all times.
- Adequately light all selling areas.
- Always face your customers, especially when using the telephone.
- Always put merchandise away promptly.
- Always ensure keys are carried on the person or in a secure area and are not left on a counter or desk.
- Arrange store layouts for ease of supervising customers and stock.
- Count the day's takings in the privacy of an office and behind a locked door.
- Empty the cash drawer regularly to ensure the minimum amount of cash is present at any time.
- Ensure that price tickets are fixed securely to merchandise.
- Have a rapid and unobtrusive system to alert supervisors if there is any suspicious activity.
- Implement procedures to count the number of items being taken in and out of change rooms.
- Keep cash drawer closed at all times and do not leave it unattended.
- Move attractive and expensive merchandise away from exits or shop corners, etc. Place them in the middle of the merchandise area, raised areas or near the point of sale.
- Place the cash drawer in a position that cannot be reached by customers.
- Serve children as quickly as possible.
- Spend the maximum amount of time on the shop floor assisting customers, as opposed to being behind the counter.
- Never leave the shop front unattended.
- Try and ensure more than one staff member is working at a time.
- Use one way entrance and one way exit flow systems in self service units.
- Watch merchandise near the edges of the tables or counters.
- Watch out for customers who don't appear to be interested in purchasing items.
- Watch out for diversions.
- Watch out for overcrowding in general areas.
- Ensure that all employees are familiar with stock on display.



## Detection

As a shop owner or employee, always be aware of customer diversions and within reason, remain suspicious. To assist in the detection of shoplifters, all business owners and employees should take note of the following:

- Customers carrying merchandise around the shop with them. You can advise the customer that you can hold the items at the counter whilst they look around.
- Customers carrying large or concealing items i.e. newspapers and large bags.
- Customer dress. Take note of customers who wear jackets, overcoats etc. when weather conditions do not require such attire.
- Customers who appear nervous, agitated or are acting suspiciously. You can approach the customer to ask them if they require assistance and/or reposition stock in their immediate area.
- Customers who leave your store very quickly.
- Customers who place bags on the floor while looking at stock. Items can be easily dropped into a bag before the business owner/employee has a chance to notice.
- Customers who refuse to be waited on.
- Customers who remain in the store for lengthy periods of time.
- Customers who frequently return to a particular spot within the store.
- Customers who refuse to look you directly in the eye.
- Customers who stand around rest rooms, stockrooms or stairways.
- Be aware of persons who pose as tradesmen, particularly those in unauthorised areas.
- Be aware of unsupervised school children in the store during school hours.
- Be aware of groups of two or more customers. One customer may be conspiring to distract your attention while the other customer steals the items.
- Tricks that customers may try to pull include:
  - A couple fighting in the store whilst a third person steals the goods.
  - Customers purposely falling over.
  - Customers dropping money or merchandise.
  - Customers spilling the contents of their purse, and
  - Customers faking illness.

**If you do identify an offender, please use the offender description form provided in this package.**

