

Downtown Ashtabula: Safe and Secure



**Tips for Keeping Your
Business Free of Crime**

**A Joint Project of the
Ashtabula Police Department
and the Ashtabula Downtown
Development Association**

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www.downtownashtabula.com

DOWNTOWN: SAFE AND SECURE



A safe, secure downtown benefits the entire community. Merchants feel secure in locating there. Citizens feel safe in shopping there. Simply put, a safe and secure downtown contributes to prosperity and growth.

Simple steps can often make a big difference in preventing crime and promoting safety. This booklet offers tips on how local merchants can make their businesses less vulnerable to crime and safer for employees and customers. **Those who still have questions, or would like a security assessment, are invited to call the Ashtabula Police Department at 440-992-7168.**

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I. CRIME PREVENTION TIPS

1. Burglary

Burglary is defined as “The criminal offense of breaking and entering a building illegally for the purpose of committing a crime.” Ninety percent of burglary prevention is physical security. If your business is locked up, and unauthorized entry is made difficult, time consuming, noisy and visible, chances of a successful burglary are kept to a minimum. The burglar will pass up your business and look for an easier target.

Burglary Prevention Tips

Think like a criminal and go over your entire business in fine detail, looking for any means of entrance or criminal opportunity. Do this physically, and also with your building blueprints in order to discover any weaknesses.

- Make sure all outside entrances and inside security doors have deadbolt locks. If you use padlocks, they should be made of steel and kept locked at all times. Remember to remove serial numbers from your locks to prevent unauthorized keys from being made. Keys can be hard to control and easy to copy.
- All outside or security doors should be metal-lined and secured with metal security crossbars. Pin all exposed hinges to prevent removal.
- Windows should have secure locks and burglar-resistant glass. Consider installing metal grates on all your windows, except display windows. Good visibility should be maintained through windows, and all expensive items should be removed from window displays during closed hours.
- Lights must provide optimum visibility both inside and outside, and consideration should be given to installing vandal-proof lenses over lights.



The entire perimeter should be well lit, especially around doors and other entry points.

- Check parking lots for good lighting and unobstructed views.
- Keep your cash register in plain view from the outside of your business, so police can monitor it during the day or at night. Leave it open and empty after closing.
- Be sure your safe is fireproof and securely anchored. It should be kept in plain view. Leave it open when it's empty; use it to lock up valuables when you close. Remember to change the combination when an employee who has had access to it leaves your business.
- Before you invest in an alarm system, check with several companies and decide what level of security fits your needs. Learn how to use your system properly. Check the system daily, and run a test when closing.
- Keep detailed, up-to-date records. Store back-up copies off the premises. If you are ever victimized, you can assess losses more easily and provide useful information for law enforcement investigations.
- Mark equipment, registers, adding machines, calculators, computers, typewriters, with an identification number (for example, tax identification or license number).

2. Robbery

Robbery is defined as “The taking of money or goods in the possession of another, from his or her person or immediate presence, by force or intimidation.” Robbery doesn't occur as often as other crimes against businesses, but the potential for loss can be much greater from a single incident. Also, robbery involves force or threat of force and can result in serious injury or death. Most commercial robbery victims are not injured during the transaction as long as they don't resist.

Robbery Prevention Tips

- Be aware of suspicious activity in and around your business.
- Limit cash held at the business and publicize it. The less cash held on the premises, the less attractive it is as a target. Make more frequent safe and bank deposits. If you transport cash, do not establish a routine. Be aware of your surroundings, and of suspicious behavior around you. Vary your route to the bank.
- Keep money out of sight. Never count cash in view of customers and don't discuss earnings in public.
- Use a drop safe into which large bills and excess cash are dropped by employees and cannot be retrieved by them. Post signs alerting would-be robbers of this procedure.
- Keep your front doors and windows clear of signs and posters to allow good, two-way visibility. Keep the outside of your business well lit at night.
- Place cash registers in the front section of the store. This increases the chances of someone spotting a robbery in progress and reporting it to the police. Don't keep large bills under the cash drawer.
- Use video camera surveillance and make it well known. Make sure the camera's view is not obstructed. Be sure to keep video and security equipment in good working condition, and keep it turned on during business hours. Place cameras in locations that are useful. Provide information about your security systems to employees only on a "need-to-know" basis.
- Try to have at least two clerks working at opening and closing times. Be sure that the clerks' duties don't take them away from the cash register area for long periods of time.
- Before closing, check the office, back rooms and rest rooms to make sure no one is hiding inside.
- Keep side and back doors locked during business hours. Have employees use the main entrance, if possible.
- Greet every person who enters the business in a friendly manner. Personal contact can discourage a would-be criminal.
- Make sure your address is visible so emergency vehicles can easily find your business.
- If a robber confronts you or your employees, cooperate. Merchandise and cash can always be replaced, people can't!



During a Robbery

Instruct all employees that in the event of an armed robbery, no one is to take any action that will jeopardize his or her personal safety, or the safety of customers. Advise every staff member to keep the following suggestions in mind:

- Try to remain calm.
- Consider all firearms to be loaded.
- Follow all directions given by robber.
- Avoid any action that might excite the robber or cause him/her to be violent.
- Be alert to the direction and manner of escape.
- Get as much information as possible about the suspect(s) and any vehicle involved, including the plate number if at all possible.

3. Check Fraud



Check fraud is a criminal act which involves the unlawful use of checks to illegally acquire or borrow funds that do not exist within the account balance or account-holder's legal ownership. With the advancement of computer technology it is increasingly easy for criminals, either independently or in organized gangs, to manipulate checks in such a way as to deceive innocent victims expecting value in exchange for their money. Many fraudulent checks are visibly phony. By paying close attention to a check's appearance, you can often detect a possible bad check before accepting it as payment. When you see one or more of the following telltale signs, you may be looking at a phony check.

Check Fraud Detection Tips

Be on the lookout for:

- Forged signatures: legitimate blank checks with imitation of the payer's signature.
- Forged endorsements: often involves the use of a stolen check, which is then endorsed and cashed, or deposited by someone other than the payee.
- Counterfeit checks: fastest growing form of check fraud
- Altered checks: information on legitimate check, such as payee or check amount changed to benefit perpetrator.
- Check kiting: the process of depositing a check in one account into a second bank account without the sufficient funds to cover it.
- No perforation on check edges.
- Apparently altered writing or erasures.
- Water spots or alterations of check's color or graphic background. Numbered under 500 (new account).
- Post-dated.
- Glossy rather than dull finish of magnetic ink.
- Signature does not match imprinted name and ID.

Check Acceptance Precautions

- When accepting a check from a stranger, be sure and establish positive identification by means of an Ohio Driver's License or Ohio Identification Card.
- Do not accept checks showing any alterations.
- Do not accept checks written in pencil.
- Always check the signature on the check with the signature on the identification card-make sure they match.
- Always make sure the person signs the check in your presence.
- Refuse all checks signed with a rubber stamp.
- Do not accept checks from juveniles.
- Do not accept counter checks.
- Seek management approval of any checks that arouse suspicion.

4. Credit Card Fraud

Credit card fraud is a wide-ranging term for theft and fraud committed using a credit card or any similar payment mechanism as a fraudulent source of funds in a transaction. The purpose may be to obtain goods without paying, or to obtain unauthorized funds from an account. U.S. credit and debit card fraud is on the rise. According to one survey, nearly a third of American consumers have reported credit card fraud in the past five years (Source: www.npr.org)



Credit Card Fraud Prevention Tips

- Train employees to follow each credit card company's authorization procedures.
- Be skeptical of a customer with only one credit card and one piece of identification.
- Be aware of the customer who makes several small purchases by check or credit card that are under the amount for manager approval.
- Be extra cautious if the item being purchased is one that could be easily fenced for cash, (Examples include televisions, stereos, cameras, and other portable items.)
- If you are suspicious of the purchaser, make a note of appearance, companions, any vehicle used, and identification presented. Call your local police department.
- Look for "ghost" numbers or letters. Many times criminals will change the numbers and/or name on a stolen card. To do this they either melt the original name and numbers off or file them off. Both of these processes can leave faint imprints of the original characters.
- Examine the signature strip on the credit card. A criminal may cover the real card owner's signature with "White-Out" and sign it on the new strip.
- Check to see if the signature on the card compares favorably with the signature on the sales slip.

5. Shoplifting

Shoplifting refers to theft of merchandise from a store or business establishment. Businesses lose billions of dollars each year to shoplifting, and then often must pass this loss on to the customers through higher prices. Shoplifters develop and use methods that are the most suitable for the particular talents of the shoplifter and the type of merchandise being stolen. Among these are:

- **Palming:** Carries a small item in his/her hand; also can be aided by packages, gloves, newspaper, and other aids that are normally carried in the hand and that can be used to cover up the act.
- **Aids** such as umbrellas, knitting bags, diaper bags, purses, briefcases, paper bags.
- **Trying on for size:** Enters the dressing room to try on a garment; he/she places an outer garment over the stolen item and wears it out of the store.



Be wary of:

- Individuals who appear agitated or are in a hurry.
- Persons who frequent the restrooms, especially while carrying umbrellas, bags, etc.
- People wearing heavy outer garments out of season.
- Persons with unusual walks who tug their sleeves, adjust their socks, or keep rubbing the back of their necks.
- Customers who reach into display cases or walk behind the counter.
- Fussy customers who keep interchanging articles frequently.
- People who don't seem interested in the article they have asked to look at, or that they have in their hands.
- The disinterested roamer who claims to be waiting for a friend.
- Several people who are obviously together "swarming a department".
- People pushing baby strollers.

Shoplifting Prevention Tips

- Greet customers, acknowledge their presence as promptly as possible.
- Merchandise should be kept as far away from exits as possible to prevent grab-and-run situations.
- Sales people should never turn their backs on customers.
- Clothes-hanger hooks should be alternated to prevent grab and run theft.
- Loiterers and wanderers should be carefully watched.
- Each customer should receive a receipt for every purchase.
- Sections of the store should never be left unattended and fitting rooms should be monitored closely.
 - A procedure should be established that would alert management when a clerk suspects that a shoplifter is present.
 - Expensive merchandise should be locked in a showcase and should never be displayed at the store entrance. Limit the number of items employees remove at any one time for customers to examine.
 - Articles should not be stacked so high that they inhibit the view of the sales people.
 - Tables and aisles should be kept neat and orderly.
- Service should be prompt and efficient to deter shoplifting.
- Price marking equipment should not be left unattended.
- Train employees in how to reduce opportunities for shoplifting and how to apprehend shoplifters. Work with law enforcement to teach employees what actions may signal shoplifting.
- Use mirrors to eliminate "blind spots" in corners that might hide shoplifters.
- Design the exits of the business so all persons must pass by security personnel or store employees. You may want to use an electronic article surveillance system or other inventory control devices.
- The cash register should be locked, and monitored at all times. Place it near the front of the store, so employees can also monitor customers coming and going.



6. Vandalism

Vandalism refers to the willful or malicious destruction or defacement of public or private property. Annual vandalism damage estimates are in the billions, and businesses pass the costs of vandalism on to customers through higher prices. Most vandals are young people, from grade schoolers to teens to young adults.

Vandalism Prevention Tips

- Clean up vandalism as soon as it happens, replace signs, repair equipment, paint over graffiti. Once the graffiti is gone, use landscape designs (such as prickly shrubs or closely planted hedges), building materials (such as hard-to-mark surfaces), lighting, or fences to discourage vandals.
 - Work with law enforcement to set up a hotline to report vandalism.
 - If you see someone vandalizing a property, report it to the police. Remember, vandalism is a crime.
 - Protect your business by installing and using good lighting and locking gates. Eliminate places where someone might hide, such as trees, shrubbery, stairwells, and alleys.
- Have a community meeting on vandalism to discuss its victims, costs, and solutions. Include young people in all vandalism prevention efforts.



7. Employee Theft

Employee theft refers to “any stealing, use or misuse of their employer’s assets without permission to do so.” The National Retail Federation conducts a National Retail Security Survey annually. The most recent survey indicated that losses from employee theft totaled \$14.4 billion in 2009, representing the largest source -- 43 percent -- of total losses from retail theft. Ordinary shoplifting accounted for 35 percent of retailers' losses, or \$11.7 billion.

Employee Theft Prevention Tips

- Establish a written policy that outlines employee responsibilities, standards of honesty, and general security procedures and consequences for not following them. Make sure new employees read it, understand it, and sign it as a condition of employment.
- Follow strict hiring practices. Verify all information and contact all the references listed on an application. Consider running a credit check. Nowadays, some employers perform Google searches and check on-line court records.
- Keep accurate records on cash flow, inventory, equipment, and supplies. Have it checked regularly by someone other than the person responsible for maintaining it.
- Limit access to keys, the safe, computerized records, and alarm codes, and engrave "DO NOT DUPLICATE" on store keys. Change locks and access codes when an employee is terminated.
- If internal theft is discovered, take action quickly. Contact your local law enforcement agency and be sure to send a message to your employees that theft will not be tolerated.
- Reward employees for uncovering security problems and for doing a good job.



| II. SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY -- PERSONS | |
|---|--|
| Circumstances | Possible Crime |
| Going door to door in a residential area, especially if one or more persons go to the rear of the residence. | Burglary suspects or trespassers. |
| Waiting or loitering in front of a house or business, if business is closed or house is unoccupied. | Burglary suspects. |
| Forcing entrance, or entering your neighbor's house, when it is unoccupied. | Burglary, theft or trespassing. |
| Person running, especially if something of value is being carried. | Suspect fleeing the scene of a crime. |
| Person carrying property that is not wrapped, at an unusual hour. | Suspect fleeing the scene of a burglary or robbery. |
| excessive foot traffic to and from a certain residence occurring on a daily or regular basis. | Vice, drug, or fence operation. |
| Person screaming. | Rape, assault or domestic violence. |
| Person loitering around cars or going car to car peering into them, especially in parking lots or on streets. | Car thief or car burglar. |
| Persons loitering around schools, parks, or secluded areas. | Sex offenders. |
| Persons offering items for sale at a very low price. | Trying to sell stolen property. |
| Strangers loitering or driving through a neighborhood several times. | Burglary suspects. |
| "Delivery Man" with a wrong address or one who asks is someone else lives there. | Burglary suspects. |
| Unusual noises such as gunshots, screaming, or dogs barking continuously. | Burglary, assault, rape, domestic violence, etc. |
| A person exhibiting unusual mental or physical symptoms. | May be injured, under influence of drugs, or needs medical attention |

| III. SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY-- VEHICLES | |
|---|--|
| Circumstances | Possible Crime |
| Slow moving vehicle, without lights, or driving appears aimless; in any location including residential streets, schools, and playgrounds. | Burglar, drug pusher, or sex offender. |
| Parked or occupied vehicle with one or more persons, especially if observed at an unusual hour. | Lookouts for a burglary or robbery. |
| Vehicle being loaded with valuables if parked by a business or unoccupied residence. | Burglary or theft in progress. |
| Abandoned vehicle parked on block. | Stolen car. |
| Vehicle containing weapons. | Robbery suspect or vehicle; selling stolen items or drugs. |
| Someone being forced into a vehicle, especially females or juveniles. | Kidnapping, assault, or attempted rape. |
| Vehicle where a business transaction is being conducted, around school or parks, | Selling stolen items or drugs. |
| Person attempting to forcibly enter a locked vehicle, especially in a parking lot. | Theft of a car or its contents. |
| Persons removing mechanical parts or accessories from a vehicle. | Theft or vandalism. |
| Objects thrown from a vehicle. | Disposal of contraband. |

| IV. SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY -- PROPERTY | |
|--|---|
| Circumstances | Possible Crime |
| Going door to door in a residential area, especially if one or more persons go to the rear of the residence. | Burglary suspects or trespassers. |
| Waiting or loitering in front of a house or business, if closed or unoccupied. | Burglary suspects. |
| Property in homes, garages, or storage areas if collection is large, or items are in good but unused condition. | Stolen property. |
| Property offered for sale at very low price. | Stolen property. |
| Property in vehicles not normally found, especially if observed at an unusual hour, such as TV sets, stereos, guns, or auto parts. | Stolen property. |
| Property carried by person on foot; especially at unusual hour or place. Very suspicious if running with unwrapped property. | Property lost or stolen in a burglary or robbery. |
| Property being removed from or loaded into a vehicle or building at unusual hours. | Burglary or theft in progress. |
| Continuous repair operations at a non-business location. | Stolen property being altered. |
| Open or broken doors and windows at a closed business or unoccupied residence. | Burglary in progress, completed burglary, or vandalism. |
| Sound of breaking glass. | Burglary or vandalism. |

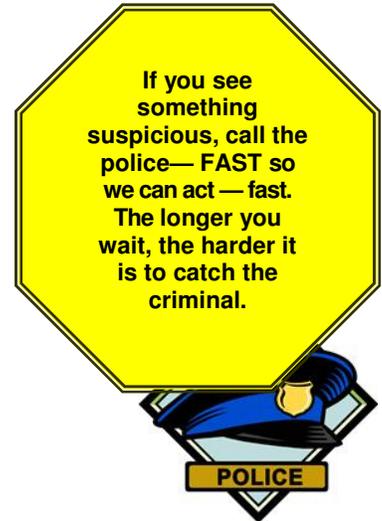
A Word About the Homeless...

- According to the National Law Center On Homelessness and Poverty, it is a myth that homeless people commit more violent crimes than housed people. The fact is that homeless people actually commit fewer violent crimes than housed people.
- Research shows that around a quarter of homeless people are mentally ill, and about 40% are alcohol or substance abusers, with around 15% suffering both disabilities.
- Rather than committing crimes, homeless persons are often the victims of crime. According to a 2010 report by the National Coalition for the Homeless: “In the past eleven years, the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) has documented over a thousand acts of violence against homeless individuals by housed perpetrators. These crimes are believed to be motivated by the perpetrators’ bias against homeless individuals or their ability to target homeless people with relative ease. Perpetrators of these attacks tend to be young men and teenaged boys.

V. Reporting Crime

If you are the victim of a retail crime...

- Call the police immediately.
- Tell the call taker as much as you can. No fact is too trivial. In many cases it is what victims and witnesses tell police about the criminal that results in an arrest. The police officers responding can use answers to as many of these questions as possible. Please remember that wrong information is worse than no information at all.
- What occurred?
- When did this occur?
- Where did this occur?
- How many suspects were there?
- What did they do?
- What did they say?
- What did they take?
- Which way did they go?
- Were there any other witnesses? What are their names, addresses, or phone numbers? Ask any witness to wait until the police arrive so they may give a description of the robber(s). If they can't stay, get their names, phone numbers and addresses
- Is there any other information which you feel is important?
- Can you describe the suspect(s)?
- Can you describe their vehicle(s)?
- Limit access to the area where the crime occurred in case evidence such as fingerprints might be obtained. Close the store, and lock the doors, if you have a key.



| IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Department | Phone Number |
| EMERGENCY | 911 |
| Non-Emergency | 440-992-7172 |
| Detective Bureau Commander | 440-992-7168 |
| Police Administration | 440-992-7156 |
| Police Records Bureau | 440-992-7144 |

VI. Being able to provide police with **AN ACCURATE DESCRIPTION OF A SUSPECT** is often times one of the most crucial things that a witness can do. A good suspect description will be invaluable information throughout any police investigation, helping police to capture the criminal initially to ultimately getting a conviction in court.

The most important features to identify are sex, race, height, weight, approximate age, hair color, eye color, clothing, and any scars, marks or tattoos. Work from top to bottom, making mental notes of all of the following items when viewing a suspect. Write down this information as soon as you can after an incident.

Height -----

Hair -----

Color, length, style, wig, cap, Color, glasses, anything unusual hat, markings on cap or hat, ski mask, baseball hat, how is it worn

Eyes -----

Color, glasses, anything unusual

Face -----

Nose, lips, teeth, ears, mustache, beard, goatee, sideburns, scars, marks

Clothing-----

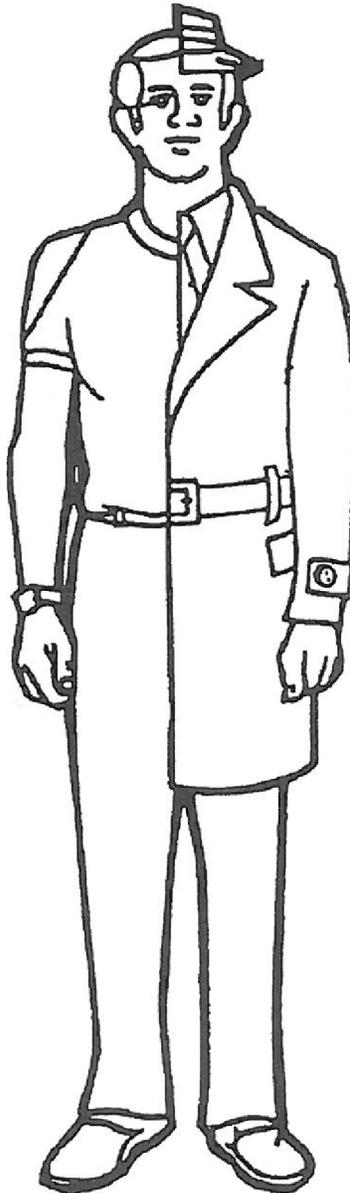
Coat, jacket, shirt, pants, dress, shorts, gloves, tie, scarf, vest, bandana

Race-----

Complexion, nationality, Ethnicity

Other-----

Anything else unusual, backpack or carrying anything, style of walk (gait or limp), any physical disabilities or scars, marks, or tattoos.



Sex -----

Voice -----

Language, accent, lisp, loud, soft, other speech characteristics

Weapon-----

Gun (revolver, automatic, pistol, rifle), knife, club, bat, crowbar

Weight -----

Age-----

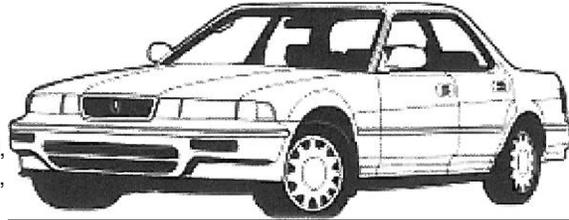
Shoes -----

Shoes, boots, style, color

VII. Being able to provide police with **AN ACCURATE VEHICLE DESCRIPTION** could make the difference between a crook getting away or being apprehended. A description like, "They're in a four door white car" just doesn't provide police with enough information to find the bad guys. Familiarize yourself with these descriptive characteristics and use them when identifying a suspect vehicle to police. Practice identifying cars when you are out and about. Most cars have the make and model printed somewhere near the trunk area. While you are driving to and from work, learn the different types and body styles of the cars you see so that you can be an expert witness when it counts.

Make_____

Chevy, Ford, Mercury, Dodge, GM, Plymouth, Saturn, Buick, Oldsmobile, Chrysler, Cadillac

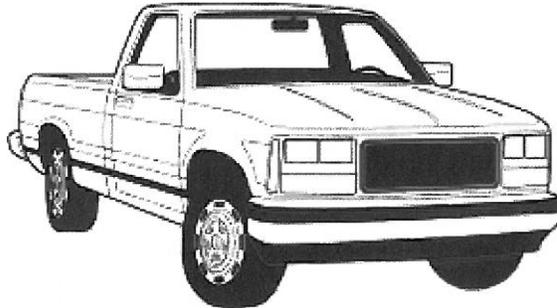


Honda, Kia, Nissan, Toyota, Isuzu, Mazda, Acura, Infiniti, Lexus BMW, Volkswagen, Volvo, Saab, Mercedes

Foreign or Domestic

Kind-----

Car Two door or four door, sports car, hatchback, convertible



Truck - Small pickup, large pickup, flat bed, boxed cargo truck, extended or king cab, dual rear wheels, pulling a trailer, camper

Motorcycle - Bullet bike, street bike, off-road, small or large, domestic or foreign

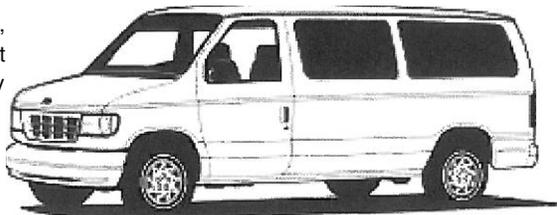
SUV - Hard top or convertible, off-road, rear spare tire, two door or four door, top rack

Van - Panel van, Custom van, rear and side windows, company van (company logo or writing on side)



Other-----

Any identifying bumper stickers, dents, scratches, broken windows, etc.? Was it damaged in any way? Was it modified in any way?



Occupants-----

Model-----

Year-----

State-----

Plate #-----

Color-----

VIII. Business Security Checklist

This form will help identify areas in your business that may create an opportunity for crime. Any item checked **NO** should be reviewed with an eye toward improvement.

| DOORS | YES | NO |
|---|------------|-----------|
| 1. Are locks at least 40" from glass? | | |
| 2. Do all exterior doors have cylinder-type deadbolt locks, heavy-duty bolts, or other secure device that can be operated from the inside only? | | |
| 3. Is strike plate secured properly? (3" screws recommended) | | |
| 4. Have entry door access codes been changed? | | |
| 5. Are the locks all in good working order? | | |
| 6. Do you keep the overhead door(s) closed and secured? | | |
| 7. If hinge pins are on outside, are they non-removable? | | |
| 8. Are visitors & guests visible from the inside? | | |
| 9. Are all exterior doors of metal or solid core construction? | | |
| 10. Does bolt extend sufficiently into Strike plate? (one full inch-minimum) | | |
| 11. Have all exterior locks been re-keyed since you moved in or changed employees. | | |

| EXTERIOR | YES | NO |
|---|------------|-----------|
| 1. Are address numbers visible from the street? | | |
| 2. Are the overhead door(s) well lighted? | | |
| 3. Are parking lots well lighted? | | |
| 4. Are all shrubs cut below window level? | | |
| 5. Is the front entry door(s) well lighted? | | |
| 6. Are ladders, scaffoldings, or other such equipment locked away to prevent second floor access? | | |
| 7. Are all trees cut above window level? | | |
| 8. Is the back entry door(s) well lighted? | | |

| WINDOWS | YES | NO |
|---|------------|-----------|
| 1. Do curtains or drapes fully cover windows? | | |
| 2. Are the windows kept locked whenever they are shut? | | |
| 3. Are the second floor windows as secure as the first floor windows? | | |
| 4. Are the windows pinned open for ventilation? | | |

| ADDITIONAL CHECKS | YES | NO |
|---|------------|-----------|
| 1. Do you engrave or mark your property? | | |
| 2. Do you keep a list of the serial numbers of your electronic equipment? | | |
| 3. Have you had a security survey done by your police department? | | |
| 4. Do you have a business inventory in a safe place? (Safety Deposit Box) | | |
| 5. Do you have current photos or videotapes of your assets and property? | | |
| 6. Do employees have a list of emergency numbers? | | |
| 7. Do you have a Fire Detection System? Is it tested yearly? | | |
| 8. Do you keep cash on the premise? | | |
| 9. Do you always lock company vehicles and take the keys out? | | |
| 10. Do you have an evacuation plan for your business? (Do you practice it?) | | |
| 11. Have passwords and call list phone numbers been updated? | | |

IX. Basic Crime Terms Glossary

Assault. An intentional threat by word or act to do violence to another person coupled with an apparent ability to carry out that threat with such threat causing a well founded fear in the other person. (i.e. Joe raised his fist and told Bill that he was going to punch him in the nose)

Battery. An intentional touching or striking of another person against their will causing intentional bodily harm to such other person (i.e. Joe punched Bill and gave him a bloody nose).

Burglary. Entering a house or a vehicle without permission or consent with the intent to commit a crime therein (i.e. Bill breaks into Joe's house and steals (theft) a TV). The criminal offense of breaking and entering a building illegally, for the purpose of committing a crime.

Check fraud. A criminal act which involves the unlawful use of checks to illegally acquire or borrow funds that do not exist within the account balance or account-holder's legal ownership

Credit card fraud. A wide-ranging term for theft and fraud committed using a credit card or any similar payment mechanism as a fraudulent source of funds in a transaction.

Criminal Mischief. This is more commonly called vandalism. Willfully and maliciously damaging any property of another (i.e. Joe punctures Bill's car tire with a screwdriver).

Employee Theft. Any stealing, use or misuse of their employer's assets, without permission to do so.

Felony. A criminal offense that is punishable by death or imprisonment in a state penitentiary for a period of more than one year.

Juvenile. A person under sixteen years of age.

Minor. A person under eighteen years of age.

Misdemeanor. Any criminal offense that is punishable by a term of imprisonment in a county jail for a period of not in excess of one year.

Probable Cause. Facts and/or evidence that would lead a reasonable and prudent person to believe that an individual has committed or is about to commit a crime.

Prowler. A person would be considered a prowler if they were in a place at a time or in a manner not usual to a law-abiding individual that causes concern for the safety of persons or property in that area (i.e. Joe is standing in the bushes in a dark area of a house that does not belong to him at 2am). Note: A peeper is a prowler who is looking at people through the windows of their homes.

Robbery. The taking of property from a person with the intent to deprive that person of the property and while taking the property force is used or the victim is put in fear (i.e. Joe confronts Bill and says give me your money or I'll stab you with this knife). The taking of money or goods is the possession of another, from his or her person or immediate presence, by force or intimidation.

Shoplifting. The theft of merchandise from a store or business establishment.

Theft. Knowingly taking or using the property of another with the intent to deprive such person of its use (i.e. Bill takes Joe's bike without his knowledge or permission).

Trespass. Entering or remaining on property to which notice not to do so was given by actual communication or by posting or fencing (i.e. Joe climbs over Bill's fence and swims in Bill's pool).

Vandalism refers to the willful or malicious destruction or defacement of public or private property.

X. What the Ashtabula Police Department Can Do for You

Security Assessment

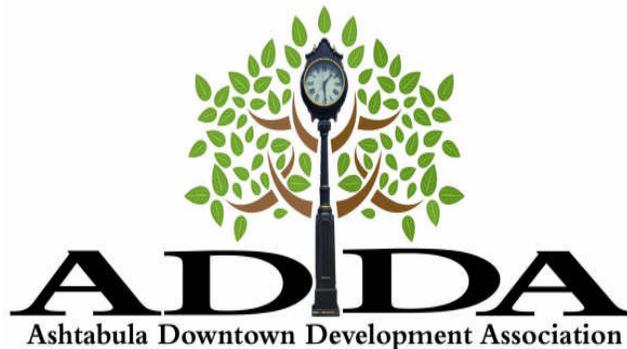
The Ashtabula Police Department offers free commercial security surveys to area businesses. A police officer can visit your business and evaluate its physical and procedural security measures.

The police officer will inform you how your particular business may be most susceptible to crime, and factors that may be making your business an attractive target to prospective criminals. He will complete the survey by offering specific suggestions on how you can lower the potential for your business and its employees to become crime victims.

All information discussed during the survey will be kept strictly confidential. Remember, most criminals are opportunists, and the goal of a security survey is to reduce the opportunity.

To schedule a security assessment, call an officer at 992-7168.

The mission of the Ashtabula Downtown Development Association is to lead, assist and support activities that enhance the quality of life of the downtown community.



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