



City of Eugene ❖ Eugene Police Department

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Preventing Robbery

Robbery is the taking of money or property by force or threat of force. While your business can't fully prevent armed robbery, a few simple steps can make it more difficult and less profitable.

This topic provides tips on the following:

- how to prevent robberies
- what to do during a robbery
- how to be a good witness
- what to do after a robbery.

It also provides a list of robbery risk factors.

Robbery Prevention Tips

- Don't work alone, if possible. (However, don't expect two workers to be a match or a deterrent for a robber with a knife or gun.)
- Keep cash on hand low with frequent withdrawals, a cash controller, a drop box, or a safe. Advertise outside that you keep a minimal amount of cash in the register and that you will not accept large bills.
- Use a safe that the clerk cannot open alone or that requires two keys. Post that fact conspicuously, including on the safe itself.
- Make bank trips unpredictable; travel in pairs.
- Don't prepare deposits openly or carry deposits in visible bank bags.
- Use security cameras, mirrors and alarms. They won't deter all potential robbers, but will often help with apprehension and prosecution.
- Paid armed security may or may not make a difference in terms of robbery.
- Limit entrances/exits.
- Place height markers on doorway.
- Conduct background checks on potential employees, to avoid the possibility of violence, internal theft or eventual robbery.
- Listen to your gut -- if you see suspicious subjects, call police at (541) 682-5121 or in an emergency 9-1-1.

What to Do During a Robbery:

- Follow company procedures.
- Keep as cool and calm as possible.
- Don't appear to be stalling.
- Make no sudden movements. If you have to move, explain why.
- Cooperate fully with the robber's demands. Do exactly as ordered (i.e., if he demands all your tens, give him only tens.)
- De-escalate the situation as much as possible -- don't upset the robber.
- Assume he's scared, desperate, intoxicated and mentally unstable.
- Set off alarms/cameras only if/when possible & safe.
- A demand note is good evidence. Try to slide it out of the robber's reach where he might forget about it.
- Allow robber time to leave.

How to Be a Good Witness

- During the robbery, try to be a good witness, but do nothing to jeopardize your safety (staring, making notes, following outside, etc.) Get the best description you can from the top down.
- Did you notice any scars, marks or tattoos?
- Did you notice any accents?
- How did he walk?
- Did you notice eye color
- Where did he put the gun?
- Where did he put the the money?
- Did he have accomplices?
- Did he leave on foot or in a vehicle?
- What sort of vehicle (don't expose yourself to harm to do this)
- Direction of travel?

What to Do After the Robbery

- Set off alarms/cameras if they haven't engaged yet.
- Call 9-1-1 and follow the call taker's instructions.
- Administer first aid as needed.
- Have someone lock the doors & isolate all areas where the robber made contact.
- Preserve evidence/fingerprints.(i.e. avoid handling demand note if retained.)
- Keep witnesses at location or obtain I.D. information for contact later.
- Keep witnesses apart to avoid influencing each other's recollections.

Robbery Risk Factors

Any of these conditions that are true for your business represent risk factors that need to be addressed:

- Register likely contains over \$50.
- Business is in isolated location.
- Business operates during wee hours, when few people are around.
- Business accepts large bills/makes change after dark.
- Cash is transferred according to an obvious and predictable routine.
- Business exterior is poorly lit.
- Business interior is poorly lit.
- Exterior lighting blinds neighbors/passersby.
- Cash register is easily accessible.
- Posters and displays block view into the store.
- Posters and displays block employee's view of the parking lot.
- Solid walls block view from the store into the drive-up area.
- Telephone booth in sight of cash register.
- Cash drawer within reach of customers.
- Single courier used for cash transfers.
- Business lacks a telephone.
- The only telephone is in the back room.
- No apparent alarm system.
- Blind spots near cash register.
- Business doors open two ways.
- Safe is unlocked or easy to open.
- Clerk has been seen opening the safe; knows combination.
- Blind spots in the parking lot to hide behind.
- Easy access to major thoroughfares for getaways.
- Business is unkempt/mismanaged; clerks don't care, are poorly trained and poorly paid.
- Job applicants are not carefully screened.
- Back doors are left unlocked for deliveries.
- Some store areas are beyond the clerk's view.

For more information

Call (541) 682-8186 or e-mail the Eugene Police Crime Prevention Specialist at policeprevention@ci.eugene.or.us