

ARMED ROBBERY to your business – especially robbery to small retail operations and fast food stores – has become so widespread that it threatens every city and town regardless of size or population. You're a target...probably an easy target.

This brochure explains a few basic security measures you can take to make your business less inviting to the armed robber.

You will also learn what you and your employees should do during the robbery and after it has occurred. Even with using good prevention techniques, armed robbery can still occur, but knowing the right things to do can (1) help reduce your losses, (2) keep employees and customers safe, and (3) help in the apprehension of the robber.

TO PREVENT ARMED ROBBERY Become "Security Conscious" right now! Do not wait to be robbed before you initiate these measures.

1. **Use at least two people to open and close your business.** Enter and leave via the front door, only after doing a drive-by check of the entire property. One person should remain outside (or inside upon closing) until the other gives the all-clear signal.
2. **Keep cash on premises at a minimum and never count it in the public view.** Install a drop safe or make non-routine but frequent bank deposits. Daylight deposits using two people, with money concealed in non-bank bags, are the safest. Every cash drawer should contain bait money to be given to the robber. The serial numbers of these bills should be recorded and kept on file in a safe place.
3. **Secure your cash handling and business operations.** Place cash registers at a safe distance from the door and at least an arms reach away from customers. Lock all drawers

and safes when not in use. The same precautions exist for your office area. Restrict this area to employees only and keep the door closed and locked. Good key control to these areas is important. If business keys are lost or stolen, change the locks immediately.

4. **Fight crime with high visibility and good lighting.** Never block the view into your business. Signs may attract customers but also hide the robber. Your cashier area should be well lighted and in clear view from the outside. Keep displays low enough to permit your employees to see the entire store. If necessary, convex mirrors can be used to see around corners and into hard-to-view areas. Keep all entrances, exits, and parking areas well lighted.
5. **Be aware of any suspicious customers or vehicles.** Robbers usually "case" their target before the actual robbery. Someone who arrives early, loiters during the day, tries to keep you open late, or generally acts nervous needs to be closely watched. Never let a customer talk you into opening early or staying late. Jot down a brief description of the suspicious persons and their vehicle and, if necessary, call law enforcement to be safe. Keep law enforcement phone numbers on hand for both suspicious persons and actually robbery occurrences.
6. **Practice good employee hiring techniques.** Apprehended robbers have many times turned out to be past employees. A complete, thorough application, photocopy of a driver's license and social security card, and a photograph should be maintained on each employee. This will discourage the dishonest applicant and help police identify a past employee who has come back to rob you. Knowing such a file exists can discourage the past employee from becoming a potential robber.

7. **Install an alarm.** Hold-up alarms come in a variety of types and prices. They serve two purposes. First, to alert police that a robbery is in progress; and second, they serve as a deterrent to robbery when you make it known that an alarm system is in use at your business. All employees and management should be trained to use the alarm system. Management should be responsible for maintaining the system and keeping it in good working order.

ACTIONS TO TAKE DURING THE ROBBERY

Take no action which would jeopardize your personal safety! If the robber tells you he is armed, believe him. If the robber displays a gun, consider it to be real and loaded!

1. **Cooperate fully with the robber.** Give the robber exactly what he asks for, no more, no less. If you have to open drawers, or make any moves, explain these moves to him. Example: "I am opening this drawer because this is where the large bills are kept." Do all actions slowly; sudden moves may panic the robber.
2. **Give the robber any bait or decoy money in your drawer.** All drawers should contain bait money that has all serial numbers recorded or contains a dye-pack. Give the robber this money because it is one of the best ways to trace the robber to the crime.
3. **Activate your alarm system.** This needs to be done as soon as possible, but only if it can be done in a safe manner. The button should be in a location that makes the movement a natural one, as if you are opening the cash drawer.
4. **Try to alert other employees.** Your business should have a pre-arranged hand or word signals that will alert other employees that a robbery is taking place, without being detected by the robber. These "alerted" employees can then call for help sooner and increase the chances that the robber will be apprehended.

5. **Carefully observe the robber.** Observe the robber and repeat his description to yourself. Start at the top and work down, remembering the characteristics listed on the Suspect ID Chart. Locate height markers at all exit doors and record the robber's height as he leaves.

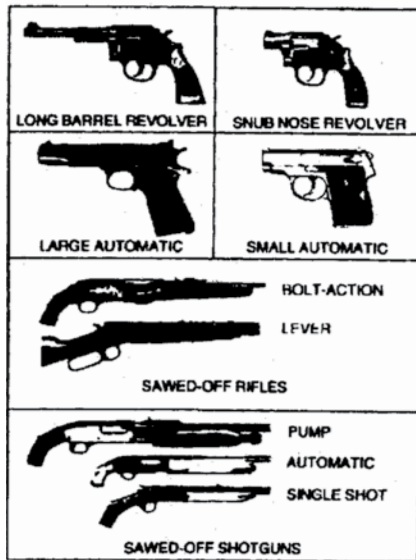
SUSPECT IDENTIFICATION CHART



6. **Observe and identify any weapon displayed by the robber(s).** Look at the weapon but do not stare or lock your gaze on it. This will only make you and the robber nervous and cloud your judgement on the physical characteristics of the robber.

First identify the type of weapon, then look at its characteristics. Was the weapon a knife? If so, how long was it? What color? What type of handle? Was the weapon a handgun, a revolver, or an automatic? If so, what color? Was the weapon a long gun – rifle or shotgun? What was the color? Was the barrel full-length or sawed-off? How many barrels did it have?

COMMON WEAPON TYPES



7. **Look for accomplices, vehicles, and direction of travel.** Many robberies are committed by more than one person. The accomplices may be inside the store or in a vehicle outside. If you are signaled by a fellow employee, do not look at the robber, but look for accomplices instead, making note as to their characteristics and actions. Watch where they go and try to note the following information about any vehicle they may use: color, make, model, old/new, license plate/tag (state, year, color), unusual characteristics or body damage.

WHAT TO DO AFTER THE ROBBERY

Your complete cooperation with law enforcement can aid in the identification and apprehension of the robber. Remember, apprehension leads to prevention.

1. **Notify the police as soon as the robbers leave your premises.** The first call you make, as soon as it is safe to do so, should be to the Sheriff's Office via 9-1-1. Tell the 9-1-1 operator that a robbery has just occurred to your business, and stay on the line until the operator releases you. Remain calm and answer all questions as completely as possible.
2. **Protect the crime scene.** Lock all doors and stop business transactions. Calmly tell customers that a robbery has occurred and ask them to stay to speak to the police. If they wish to leave, get identification from them to give to the police. Do not let anyone near the area the robber occupied. Fingerprints and evidence can be destroyed by curious employees and customers.
3. **Record your observations of the crime and description of the robber(s).** Have everyone involved write down their observations of the crime and robber(s). DO NOT discuss the crime, but write down what you remember. Suspect ID charts should be passed out to everyone involved.



For more information on Robbery Prevention and Awareness or Business Watch Programs, call:

407-254-7380

Orange County
Sheriff's Office
Crime Prevention Unit



**Robbery
Prevention &
Awareness for
Your Business**