
Subterfuge

Shoplifters may use an accomplice to distract the merchant.

Shoplifted articles may also be handed off to an accomplice.

Price tag switching and fraudulent refunding are variations of shoplifting, which may be hard to detect.

The shoplifter may take merchandise directly from your shelves to the refund desk; or the shoplifter may steal the item from another store and return it to you.

Speed

Desperate vagrants, alcoholics, or juveniles often make no attempt to conceal merchandise, they "grab and run".

Self-assured professionals, while they may not run, will walk into your store, pick up an item and walk out, knowing that few people will react quickly enough to stop them.



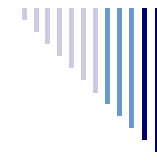
North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission

1201 Front Street, Suite 200
Raleigh, North Carolina 27609

Phone: 919-733-4564

Fax: 919-733-4625

Web-site: www.negccd.org



North Carolina Governor's
Crime Commission

Prevent Shoplifting





Remove the Opportunity

Employee awareness of customers – Customers should be personally greeted as they enter the store. An exchange of pleasantries serves to remove the shoplifter's cloak of anonymity, while increasing customer goodwill. Shoplifters avoid stores with friendly, attentive sales people.

Training – Special shoplifting prevention training for both old and new continuing employees will guarantee that all salespeople are aware of the shoplifting problem and know what steps to take should they see a shoplifter.

Prosecution– Adopt a clear, evenly enforced shoplifting policy. Post this policy to make sure that both staff and customers are aware of it.

Adequate sales staff – Hire enough sales clerks to guarantee effective coverage and personal attention to customers. Breaks and lunch hours should be staggered.

Store layout– Shelves and displays should be low for good visibility. Lighting should be adequate so that the sense of privacy is removed. High value and small item displays are ideally located near a cash register. Aisles, which can be viewed from the register, provide few opportunities to shoplifters.

A neat store – A messy store lets the shoplifter know that the store management is inattentive. Empty hangers should be removed, depleted displays refilled, discarded sales receipts picked up, price-marking materials kept off the floor, and fitting rooms kept clean.

Customer awareness - Enclosing pamphlets in shopping bags and posting shoplifting awareness signs are two good ways to enlist customer support for your anti-shoplifting efforts. Also, if a customer reports a shoplifter, a "Thank you" letter or call should follow up such action from the store management or owner.

There are many useful but sometimes-resisted procedures, which can dramatically reduce shoplifting losses:

Security bags – Tape or staple the receipt to the outside of the bag.

Signs – Identify displays of frequently shoplifted items. Such signs make the shoplifter feel that he is under observation.

Mirrors – By removing the sense of privacy in out-of-the-way corners, convex mirrors deter shoplifters.

Price tags – Disintegrating adhesive tags can limit price switching. An extra, concealed second tag is also a good idea.

Clothing hangers – Alternate the direction of hanger hooks to prevent grab and run losses from clothes near entrance/exit doors.

Shoplifting tools

Look for large empty purses, backpacks, empty boxes, a coat slung over one shoulder, bags from other stores, old wrinkled shopping bags, a newspaper under the arm, bulky over-clothing such as coats or sweaters when worn out of season.

Shoplifting methods, amateur or professional, can be broken down into three categories:

Concealment

Shoplifters most commonly conceal stolen merchandise on their person or in their clothing, inside shopping bags, purses hats, or umbrellas.

Another method of concealment is palming an item and keeping it in the hand until out of the store.

Small items are often stripped of their packaging price tags, and other identifiers to disguise the newness of the product and reduce bulk.

Shoplifters also hide items within another package that is then purchased.
