



Albany Police Department

"Partnering with Businesses to Help Build Resiliency"

LOCAL BUSINESS GUIDE

Welcome to Your Local Business Guide

Crime—burglary, robbery, vandalism, shoplifting, employee theft, and fraud—costs businesses billions of dollars each year. Crime can be particularly devastating to small businesses.

The Albany Police Department has ways to help small businesses reduce and prevent crime by working with owners to improve security and procedures.

Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

The mission of the Albany Police Department is to provide the highest quality police services through efficient and professional policing.

Vision

We work in partnership with our community to maintain a foundation of trust and cooperation to enhance safety and quality of life.

Values

Service- We are committed to protecting our community and responding to the needs of its citizens

Professionalism- We value our integrity, honesty, and compassion, and we embrace accountability, continuous learning and personal improvement.

Pride- We are driven by a desire to strive for excellence, and focus on results.

Teamwork- We pledge cooperation, flexibility, open mindedness, and respect for one another.

Dedication- We are committed to our mission, our community, our profession and ourselves.



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Laying a Foundation for Prevention

Crimes against businesses are usually crimes of opportunity. Failure to take good security precautions can invite crime into a business.

Take a hard look at your business—its physical layout, employees, hiring practices, and overall security. Assess its vulnerability to all kinds of crime, from burglary to embezzlement. Some basic prevention principles include:

- Provide training for all employees—including cleaning staff -- so they are familiar with security procedures and know your expectations.
- Use good locks, safes, and alarm systems. If you have questions, seek the help of law enforcement. Keep detailed, up-to-date documents. Store back-up copies of your documents off the premises. If you are ever victimized, you can assess losses more easily and provide useful information for law enforcement investigations.
- Establish and enforce clear policies about employee theft, employee substance abuse, crime reporting, opening and closing the business, and other security procedures.
- Mark equipment—registers, adding machines, calculators, computers, - with an identification number. Keep a record of all identification numbers off the premises with other important records.



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Burglary Prevention

- Make sure all outside entrances and inside security doors have deadbolt locks. If you use padlocks, they should be made of high quality and kept locked at all times.
- All outside or security doors should be metal-lined. Pin all exposed hinges to prevent removal.
- Windows should have secure locks and burglar-resistant glass.
- Remove all expensive items from window displays at night and make sure you can see easily into your business after closing.
- Light the inside and outside of your business, especially around doors, windows, skylights, or other entry points. Consider installing covers over exterior lights and power sources to deter tampering. Eliminate places where someone might hide, such as trees, shrubbery, stairwells, and alleys.
- Check the parking lot for good lighting and unobstructed views.
- Keep your cash register in plain view from the outside of your business, so it can be monitored by police during the day or at night. Leave it open and empty after closing.
- Be sure your safe is fireproof and securely anchored. 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. Closed circuit television is a popular form of security for businesses of all sizes. Learn how to use your system properly and check the system regularly to ensure it is working correctly.



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Robbery Prevention

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.

- Greet every person who enters the business in a friendly manner. Personal contact can discourage a would-be criminal.
- Keep windows clear of displays or signs and make sure your business is well lit. Check the layout of your store, eliminating any passers-by blind spots that may limit visibility to see a robbery in progress.
- Provide information about your security systems to employees only on a "need-to-know" basis.
- Instruct your employees to report any suspicious activity or person immediately and write down the information for future reference.
- Place cash registers in the front section of the store. This can increase the chances of someone spotting a robbery in progress and reporting it to the police.
- Keep small amounts of cash in the register to reduce losses. 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.
- Make bank deposits often and during business hours. Don't establish a pattern, take different routes at different times during the day.
- Make sure your street address is visible so emergency vehicles can easily find your business.
- If you or your employees are confronted by a robber, cooperate. Merchandise and cash can always be replaced—people can't!



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Credit Card Fraud

- 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.
- If you are suspicious of the purchaser, make a note of appearance, companions, any vehicle used, and identification presented. Keep information to give to the police if purchase is later confirmed as fraudulent.
- 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.



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Check Fraud

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 signs, you may be looking at a phony check. Protect yourself against possible losses by requiring management approval of the check or asking for an alternative form of payment.

- No perforation on check edges, apparently altered writing or erasures, water spots or alterations of check's color or graphic background.
- Post-dated
- Glossy rather than dull finish of magnetic ink
- Signature does not match imprinted name and ID



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Shoplifting Prevention

- Businesses lose billions of dollars each year to shoplifting, and then often must pass this loss on to the customers through higher prices.
- Train employees in how to reduce opportunities for shoplifting and how to observe and report shoplifters.
- Keep the store neat and orderly. Use mirrors to eliminate "blind spots" in corners that might hide shoplifters. Merchandise should be kept away from store exits to prevent grab-and-run situations.
- Keep displays full and orderly, so employees can see at a glance if something is missing. Keep expensive merchandise in locked cases. Limit the number of items employees remove at any one time for customers to examine.
- 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 inaccessible to customers, locked, and monitored at all times. Place it near the front of the store, so employees can also monitor customers coming and going.
- Keep dressing rooms locked and limit the number of items taken in.



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Vandalism Prevention

- Annual damage estimates are in the billions, and businesses may pass the costs of vandalism on to customers through higher prices. 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.
- 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.



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Employee Theft Prevention

- Employee theft accounts for a large amount of business losses.
- 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.
- 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.



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