



THE VPD COMMERCIAL CRIME PREVENTION QUARTERLY

"We mean business"

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BUSINESS LINKS

Crime Reduction Canada
www.crimereductioncanada.com/commercial_security.html

BC Crime Prevention Association
www.bccpa.org/

The Burton Report – keeping crime away from business
<http://burtonreport.ca/>

Retail Council of Canada
www.retailcouncil.org/advocacy/bc/



photo credit: Spencer Roberston

WELCOME TO THE 2ND EDITION of the Commercial Crime Prevention Quarterly newsletter. During the summer months there was a slight increase in commercial break and enters in some areas of Vancouver, although rates are still lower than previous years. Fall is a good time to review your crime prevention efforts and ensure staff are trained in methods of preventing and deterring crime, as well as what to do if a crime occurs. This edition of the Commercial Crime Prevention Quarterly addresses some of the issues around shoplifting and will introduce

you to Crime Prevention through Environmental Design. Keeping up to date with current trends and passing on that knowledge to your staff through training will go a long way in keeping your business and staff safe and secure.

Please contact me for more information on any business related crime prevention topic.

Constable Anne Longley
 Business Liaison Officer
 Community & Public Affairs
 (604) 717-2777
anne.longley@vpd.ca

To Catch a Thief... or not?

DO YOU KNOW WHAT your rights are if you catch someone shoplifting or committing a criminal offence in your store? Two recent cases in Eastern Canada have brought this issue to the forefront in the media and emphasize the importance of understanding your rights.

Section 494 (2) of the Criminal Code states that “Anyone who is the owner or a person in lawful possession of property, or a person authorized by the owner...may arrest without warrant a person whom he finds committing a criminal offence on or in relation to

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that property.” It continues on to impose a duty upon a civilian making an arrest that they must “deliver that person forthwith to the police,” which means as soon as is reasonable under the circumstances. The most important thing to remember are the two words “finds committing.”

In the first case, a man known to be a habitual shoplifter was seen on a surveillance camera shoplifting some plants from a store, but he wasn’t caught at the time. When he returned to the store an hour later, the store owner and two employees confronted him, tied him up and locked him in a van until police arrived. Not only was the man charged with theft (which he pled guilty to), but additionally the store owner and two employees were charged with assault and forcible confinement. Their Charter argument is that the Criminal Code definition is too restrictive because it only allows citizen’s arrests to be lawful while the crime is being committed – not after the fact.

However, it isn’t only the timing of the arrest that is important, but also the amount of force used when

making an arrest. The Criminal Code states that use of force must be proportionate to the offence committed. In another case where a shopkeeper struck an alleged shoplifter with a baseball bat and the man subsequently slipped into a coma and died, the store owner was charged with manslaughter. Citizens can only use a reasonable amount of force either to protect their property or to make an arrest of someone found committing a criminal offence on their property. Anything beyond that could be considered excessive force.

No doubt these store owners were frustrated with the amount of shoplifting taking place in their store, but by not understanding their rights and taking matters into their own hands, they are now the ones facing jail time.

There are many alternatives to combat shoplifting that do not put personal safety in jeopardy and should be implemented as crime prevention measures. Below are some of the best tips:

- Have customers greeted as they enter the store – this is good customer relations and also lets

the customer know that they’ve been seen by staff and that staff are paying attention.

- Design your store so that customers should pass by security personnel or employees, and keep merchandise away from the doors to prevent “grab-and-runs.”
- Keep your store and the display shelves neat and organized so that it’s easier for staff to notice if items are missing.
- Eliminate blind spots by placing mirrors in the store, and consider using electronic article surveillance systems or cameras to monitor your store and merchandise.
- Be aware of distraction-type thefts where one person will distract the cashier to facilitate a second suspect stealing merchandise or cash.
- Keep the cash register inaccessible to customers and monitor it at all times.

Report shoplifting to the police by calling the Vancouver Police Department non-emergency number at 604-717-3321 or 9-1-1 if the suspect is still in the store or is fighting with staff.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED how you can better protect your property and deter crime by using the natural environment and physical design? This is the essence of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED). Although CPTED principles are best adopted at the design stage of a building or neighbourhood space, you can still improve your safety and reduce crime by thinking about and implementing the following four principles:

1. NATURAL SURVEILLANCE

"See and be seen" is the overall goal when it comes to CPTED and natural surveillance. A person is less likely to commit a crime if they think someone might be watching them. How visible is your property from the street and can other people see you and who is around your business? Do you have adequate lighting at night time so that suspicious people will be less likely to hang around?

2. NATURAL ACCESS CONTROL

Natural Access Control is the use of walkways, fences, lighting, signage and landscaping to clearly guide people and vehicles to and from your entrances. The goal with this CPTED principle is not necessarily to keep intruders out, but to direct the flow of people in, while decreasing the opportunity for crime. Tidy walkways with well-kept landscaping and good lighting will go a long way to help draw people in to your business.

3. TERRITORIAL REINFORCEMENT

This principle uses physical designs such as pavement treatments, landscaping and signage to develop a sense of ownership over the space. Potential trespassers perceive this "sphere of control" and may go elsewhere to a more public space or "no-man's land."

4. MAINTENANCE

If you've heard about the "Broken Window Theory," then you're

familiar with this CPTED principle. This theory suggests that if one broken window or nuisance is allowed to exist, it will lead to others and ultimately to the decline of an entire neighbourhood. Neglected and poorly maintained properties can be breeding grounds for criminal activity because they give the impression that nobody owns the space and nobody cares about it. What can you do to fix the neglected spaces in your immediate area, such as graffiti, garbage or "broken windows"?

For additional information on CPTED principles, please go to the following links:

<http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/pubs/ccaps-spcca/safecomm-seccollect-eng.htm>

<http://www.crimewise.com/library/cpted.html>

<http://www.cptedhandbook.com/>

If you would like help in applying CPTED principles to your business or property, contact:

Constable Anne Longley
Business Liaison Officer
604-717-2777

DID YOU KNOW?

- That the VPD website has crime prevention tips for businesses? Find them at: www.vancouver.ca/police/crime-prevention/for-businesses/index.html.
- That a one-day training course called Project Griffin is available at no cost to security personnel and others who may come across criminal activity? For details, click on: www.vancouver.ca/police/community-policing/project-griffin.html.

Meet Constable Jeff Campbell

Neighbourhood Police Officer for the Granville Street community



CONSTABLE JEFF CAMPBELL joined the Vancouver Police Department in 2002 after immigrating to Canada from Northern Ireland where he also served as a police officer.

In his eight years with the VPD, Jeff has worked most of his time in the downtown area of Vancouver, so he is well-suited to being the Neighbourhood Police Officer at the Granville Downtown South Community Policing Centre. He enjoys working with residents and businesses to address specific community problems with a view to resolving the issues. Jeff is an active participant in Operation Cooperation, the Neighbourhood Integrated Services Team, the Vancouver Hotel Security Association and the Safer Parking Program. He is always interested in new crime prevention ideas, so please contact Jeff to let him know of any new ideas you come across.

SAFER PARKING PROGRAM

IN FEBRUARY 2008, Constable Jeff Campbell of the Granville Downtown South Community Policing Centre introduced the Safer Parking Program to the downtown area. The purpose of the Vancouver Safer Parking Program is to:

- Reduce crime and the fear of crime within parking facilities
- Provide guidance to owners, operators and developers of parking facilities on how to establish and maintain a safe and secure environment
- Raise awareness to the general public that the owner has taken action to reduce crime and the fear of crime in their parking facility
- Provide a design framework for architects and developers of new parking facilities

In order for a parking lot to be granted a Safer Parking award status, the volume of crime statistics for the lot is examined along with the physical appearance and the management and security practices.

Once the lot has been granted the award, the operator is entitled to use the “Safer Parking Program” award logo. The benefit of this is that customers are more likely to park in the lot knowing that measures are in place to help deter criminal activity. To date, there are 34 participating parking lots in the City of Vancouver, with the majority located in the downtown core and business district.

The parking lots must comply with six basic requirements to receive Safer Parking award status:

- Good general lighting especially at entrances and pay stations

- Clean and tidy facility with no graffiti or evidence of urine or feces
- Bright walls painted in (preferably) white gloss anti-graffiti paint
- Bays clearly marked and stalls numbered (preferred)
- Clear signage
- Good management policies

Canadian Direct Insurance is the major sponsor of the Safer Parking Program, with Fleishman Hillard International Communications handling the communication and media outreach.

For more information on the Safer Parking Program, please contact:

Constable Jeff Campbell
604-717-2920

Granville Downtown South C.P.C.
1263 Granville Street
info@granvillecpc.ca