



## CITY OF MERCER ISLAND, WASHINGTON

Mercer Island Police / Emergency Management Department / Crime Prevention  
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### TIPS TO PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS FROM ROBBERY

*Learn about theft deterrents, how to prepare your staff, and how to alert authorities.*

Armed robbery is less common than burglary, but it is still a possible, more dangerous threat to you, your employees, and your customers. Robbers tend to choose targets that have cash readily available and loose security procedures. Even with the best precautions, robberies still occur.

#### HOW CAN BUSINESS OWNERS PROTECT AGAINST ARMED ROBBERY:

- **Employee training.** Don't assume your employees will know what to do in a high-stress situation. Be sure they know what to do in the event of a robbery. Training is an investment you make in your employees that might save a life.
- **Money handling.** Find ways to reduce the amount at risk during a robbery. Meaning, consider prohibiting transactions involving large bills during high-risk hours. Post this information in public view as it might deter a would-be robber. High-risk hours for a robbery are nighttime, low-customer traffic hours, and when most nearby businesses are closed.
- **Cash deposits.** Cash deposits to reduce the amount of money on hand can be done several times a day, but it should be done at least once daily. Also, vary the time of day you make deposits or use an armored car service. Between deposits, limit the amount of cash in the register. Keep excess bills as well as all large bills in a deposit safe. If able, bolt your deposit safe to the floor in another room.
- **Hold-up alarms and panic buttons.** These types of alarm systems are designed to notify the authorities that a robbery is occurring or that one has occurred. Train employees to use the system. Regularly maintain and test your system to ensure its functioning properly.
- **Closed circuit TV or video systems.** Video surveillance is good to have for two reasons: it acts as a criminal deterrent as well as a means of identifying suspects, should criminals breach or damage your property. Sometimes just seeing a camera in the corner is enough to change a thief's mind.
- **Access control.** A door buzzer is a relatively inexpensive way to increase your business's security without interfering with the flow of traffic. Combined with an intercom system and reinforced door, a buzzer can provide additional safety.
- **Use well-placed lights.** More lighting around your business helps [reduce the chances of a break in](#) by illuminating potential hiding spots.

#### WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE BEING ROBBED:

- Remember your safety is more important than money or inventory.
- Don't stare directly at the robber and keep your hands in sight.
- Cooperate with the robber, but do not talk or volunteer more information than they ask for.
- Don't make any sudden moves.
- Call 911 as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Don't chase the robber, leave that to the police.
- Lock your business after the robbery and ask any witnesses to stay until officers arrive.
- As soon as possible, record a physical description of the robber, how they left the premises (direction, car model, license number), and type of weapon used.
- Do not touch anything the robber may have touched as fingerprints may have been left behind.

For further information please contact:

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