



Belleville Police Service

FACT SHEET

# General Business Security

*The criminal opportunity associated with modern day business is great. This may result in criminals being attracted to your property or the cars parked there. In order to make your property safer, it is important to examine your property for obvious risk factors. Remember, the most secure property is a property that doesn't attract criminals.*

## BASIC RISK ASSESSMENT

### • EXTERIOR

- Are views of your property obscured or are there any adultsized hiding spots around your windows or doors?
- Are there a large number of vehicles parked in your parking lot?
- Are there any cars that are parked in poorly observed areas or are otherwise distant from the building?
- Is your property regularly trespassed?
- Are there "weapons of opportunity" such as loose river rock in parking lots or adjacent to windows and doors?

### • INTERIOR

- Is your office equipped with computers?
- Can strangers enter your building without talking to a receptionist or other employee?
- Do employees routinely ignore unescorted strangers beyond the reception area and/or do you have a large number of employees?

### • Previous criminal activity

- Has a crime occurred on your property within the past year?
- **Suspicious activity**
- Have you received any suspicious day-time visits from strangers?  
*If you answered yes to any of these questions, you should take steps to reduce your risk. If a break-in has occurred within the last six months, consult the Repeat Burglaries fact sheet.*

## WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Increase the chances for observation and look for "weapons of opportunity".

- Begin by standing across the street and looking at your property as if you were a criminal. Note the factors that limit or obstruct sightlines particularly around your building. Pay special attention to factors that can be easily changed, such as landscaping, and where it is a factor make plans to modify or reduce it. Next, take a look at the ease with which strangers can enter your property unobserved. Where this is occurring, direct the approach of visitors to observable areas using see-through fencing, gating or landscaping that doesn't affect views.

- Now walk towards your parking lot and assess the sight lines from your building's interior. Where these are distant or limited try to think of ways to improve the lines of sight. Now walk towards your building and look for objects that can be used to attack the perimeter of your building such as loose river rock, standing ashtrays or garbage containers. Get rid of these "weapons of opportunity" by removing them in the case of the river rock or securely tethering them with chains and padlock in the case of standing objects.
- Now walk into your building and assess the ease with which strangers can enter your office area without encountering a receptionist or other employee. Where this can be done easily consider the development of a reception space that restricts unmonitored or uncontrolled movement into your office area.
- Finally, don't forget to evaluate your lighting. This is best done during the evening hours when you can readily assess the areas of contrast and shadow particularly as they relate to entry points. Where there is need for additional lighting, consider the installation of wire screened, motion activated lights.

## **DEVELOP A PHYSICAL SECURITY STRATEGY FOR YOUR BUILDING**

While a normal response to the threat of burglary is to add security to the perimeter of the building, the sheer size of the building makes this an extremely difficult task to accomplish in a practical manner. In order to develop an effective physical security strategy, it is critical that the right combination and sequence of deter, detect and delay strategies be applied which may result in areas other than the perimeter of your building being selected for upgraded security.

Before you consider an alarm system or make any changes to the physical security of your building, we suggest you obtain a copy of the Securing Commercial Buildings fact sheet and develop an effective security strategy.

## **MANAGE VISITORS TO YOUR BUILDING AND IMPROVE PERSONAL SAFETY HABITS**

We generally assume that all visitors to the property have honest intentions but experience has shown that this is not the case. Burglars often develop an excuse to visit a business during day time hours to have a look around and thieves will target purses, wallets and lap top computers that are left behind when people are away from their desks. In order to discourage and prevent these types of crimes, employees must be encouraged to take note of suspicious activity and strangers and report their suspicions to police. The "Are You Next?" poster has been designed to serve this function. Ask Crime Prevention Services or your Community Liaison Officer for a copy of this poster. Employers can further discourage internal trespassing and theft by:

- issuing visitor badges that change colour when expired and encouraging employees to take notice of strangers and challenge any stranger without a valid pass; and,
- locking up small valuables and never store unattended valuables in plain sight or predictable, unlocked locations.

Remember, the management of strangers or visitors to your property is ultimately only as good as the people who work there.

## **MARK YOUR PROPERTY**

The "Mark Your Property" program, known as Operation Provident, is a free program that can deter thieves from ever becoming interested in your property or aid in the return of property in the event that it becomes lost. For more information on Operation Provident obtain a copy of the Mark Your Property fact sheet.

## **EMPLOYEE SCREENING**

An employee who is engaged in or associated with criminal activity can cause a tremendous amount of loss, financial damage and problems to a business, particularly if left unchecked. This has led more and more businesses to conduct a criminal records, credit and reference checks

As part of the employee screening process. For further information obtain a copy of the Internal Theft fact sheet.

## **CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK**

A criminal records check is your insurance that a person has been honest when answering any questions about a criminal record. While the Human Rights Act does not allow a business to discriminate against a person who has a criminal record, businesses that have made a criminal records search as a condition of employment generally find that persons with criminal records lose interest early on in the process.

Prospective employee's can request a criminal records check, by personally visiting Belleville Police located at 93 Dundas St. East.

Prospective employee's will be required to fill out a waiver form and pay an administrative fee. Businesses who are interested in further information about the Criminal Records Search Process can contact Belleville Police.

## **WHAT ABOUT REPEAT BURGLARIES?**

Businesses with a previously good break-in history, are often surprised to find that they may begin to experience a chronic break-in problem as burglars often strike more than once.

That's because most businesses fail to appreciate that after a first break-in, their risks have substantially increased as the burglar is now familiar with your property, has increased confidence and is expecting higher value, replacement equipment.

Treat a break-in the same way you would treat a serious medical condition such as a heart attack. Seek professional advice, take the appropriate corrective action and learn to actively manage your risks.