

Wisconsin Crime Prevention Practitioners Association

Tips to Prevent Shoplifting

Loss experts agree that a crucial way to prevent shoplifting is to have well-trained and alert employees who know how to spot a potential shoplifter. Employees need to watch for customers who:

- Avoid eye contact
- Appear nervous
- Wander the store without buying
- Leave the store and returns repeatedly
- Linger in a location that employees have a hard time monitoring
- Constantly keeps an eye on store employees and other customers

In addition to training your employees to spot shoplifters, general shoplifting prevention techniques include:

- Staying alert at all times.
- Greeting all customers
- Asking lingering customers if they need help
- Knowing where shoplifting is most likely to occur or what the hot items are; consider moving those items to an area with more staff surveillance
- Eliminate clutter and obstructions; create clear sight lines in aisles and reduce the height of display
- Providing good, even lighting throughout the store
- Placing goods away from the entrance/exit
- Using a log to share suspicions about shoplifters among employees
- Displaying signs that "Shoplifters will be prosecuted"
- Require proof of purchase for refunds

When shoplifting is suspected, it's crucial for your employees to know how to handle incidents.

- Never directly accuse anyone of stealing (call security instead).
- Give the person a chance to pay for the item they "forgot" to pay for by asking. "Are you ready to pay for that?" or "Can I ring you up?"
- Never try to physically stop a shoplifter. Call security.

Courtesy: International Council of Shopping Centers - Specialty Retail Report and Madison Police Department

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