



# BUSINESS WATCH

**IN YOUR COMMUNITY**



**HUMBOLDT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

826 4th St. Eureka, CA 95501 | (707) 445-7251



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# REPORTING CRIME

How to make a call to the Sheriff's Office

## HOW TO REPORT A CRIME

The Sheriff's Office offers an emergency line, non-emergency line, and an anonymous tip line to serve Humboldt County residents. It is impossible to give exact directions on when to call 9-1-1 or the non-emergency number because there can be special circumstances that are unique to your situation.

Use this document as a guide when calling for service.

### EMERGENCY LINE 9-1-1

Call 9-1-1 for all life-threatening emergencies

- Fire
- Robbery
- Rape – call immediately or have someone call for you
- Someone forcibly trying to enter your home
- Missing child
- House broken in to but you don't know if they are still there
- Gunfire followed by screams or sounds of bullets impacting building(s)
- Someone being assaulted (including you)
- Child being abused at that moment
- Animal being abused at that moment
- Stolen car that has just been stolen
- Vehicle accident more than a fender bender

### ANONYMOUS TIP LINE (707) 268-2539

### NON-EMERGENCY LINE (707) 445-7251

- Home burglary
- Vehicle break-in
- Stolen property
- Suspicious person in neighborhood
- Apparent drug deal happening
- Vandalism
- Stolen car (not current)
- Graffiti
- Drug activity in neighborhood (short term stay and increased foot or vehicle traffic)
- Victim of assault
- Illegal camping (on property or in vehicle)
- Suspected child neglect or abuse
- Barking dogs
- Aggressive panhandling (blocking access or egress)
- Loud parties
- Suspected animal abuse or neglect
- Mail theft
- Any type of fraud (email, phone or mail)
- Identity theft
- All general inquiries to the Sheriff's Office
- Suspected elder abuse

## HOW TO MAKE A 9-1-1 CALL FROM A CELL PHONE

Most people now call 9-1-1 from cell phones. While landlines can show dispatchers where your location is immediately, cell phones do not. The most important thing to do when you make a 9-1-1 call from a cell phone is to give your location first. Calling 9-1-1 can be stressful and intimidating. Follow these tips when calling 9-1-1:

- Stay as calm as possible
- If you are on a cell phone, give your location first. This is the most important information for the dispatcher in case the call is cut off.
- Be prepared to give your name, phone number and address or location of where you are, and a detailed description of the incident or vehicle being reported.
- Wait for the dispatcher to ask questions and then answer clearly and calmly.

## REPORTING PUBLIC NUISANCE ISSUES

Keep a log of incidents you observe in your community or report to the Sheriff's Office (see *Public Nuisance Log worksheet at end of packet*). By recording these incidents, you have a record to back up what is happening in your community. This log can be used by law enforcement during follow up investigations.

## ONLINE REPORTING

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office has re-vamped its online crime reporting system. With the new system, you can now report non-emergency crimes in which you or your business is the victim. The Sheriff's Office also now offers an online crime tip reporting system in which you can submit crime tips to our Problem Oriented Policing program.

To learn more and make a report, visit: [humboldt.gov/1380/Online-Reporting](http://humboldt.gov/1380/Online-Reporting).



# BUSINESS CHECKLIST

## IS YOUR BUSINESS PROTECTED AGAINST THEFT?

Be proactive against theft. Follow this check list to ensure your business is less vulnerable to shoplifting, burglary, and theft.

- Install motion sensor lights (including top of roof if necessary).
- Install dead bolts that go in to stud and not just the frame on all doors.
- Install bars on windows in back of business.
- Install cameras mounted near dumpsters or where people congregate (mount very high).
- Keep dumpsters locked at all times.
- Do not keep dumpsters under windows or second story decks.
- Check roof entry possibilities and make sure they are secure.
- Ensure ladders or pallets are not left out for people to climb on to gain entry.
- Ensure plywood or other items are not next to buildings to provide shelter or hiding spots.
- Leave a couple of lights on in store at night.
- Leave cash register and safe open if empty at the end of the day.
- Check alarm system often and always turn on when leaving.
- Keep the phone number of local law enforcement dispatch taped on the front counter and entered in your cell phone.
- Keep emergency phone numbers (cell and landline) of neighboring businesses taped on counter and listed in cell phone.
- Regularly train staff regarding robbery, fraud, shoplifting, and burglary.
- Plan layout of business to discourage unwanted customers to shoplift.
- Place stickers in windows to identify Downtown/ Business Watch.
- Meet with business owners on your block or area quarterly to discuss problems and solutions.
- Train staff to never leave anything in their cars (ANYTHING) so that there is no attraction to parking areas.
- Never leave the back door open for other staff who are coming to work.
- Call law enforcement whenever there is a problem.



# ROBBERY MANAGEMENT

## Business Strategies

### WHAT TO DO DURING A ROBBERY

- Remain calm.
- Keep in mind that reaching for a weapon or any fast, sudden movements may lead the robber to violence.
- Remember, if another employee suddenly walks into the middle of a robbery in progress and startles the robber, it could lead to violence. Discuss this potential situation with your employees and develop a policy and procedure for handling situations like this, based on good common sense and the sound judgment of your employees.
- Observe carefully. Study the robber's face and clothing, note any other distinguishing features, observe the direction of escape, record the license, make, and color of any vehicle used in the robbery, etc.
- Don't chase or follow the robber out of your place of business.

### WHAT TO DO AFTER A ROBBERY

- Lock your business.
- Ask any witnesses to stay until the deputies arrive.
- Call 9-1-1 and remain on the phone.
- Call your business owner, manager, or other designated person.
- Don't touch anything the robber may have touched.
- As soon as reasonably possible, ask any person who witnessed the robbery to write down a detailed description of the robber, weapon, property taken, and, if applicable, the robber's vehicle and its license plate number.



In the event of a robbery, an employee's number one goal should be to get the robber out as soon as possible and survive the robbery without injury.



# BURGLARY PREVENTION

## Business Strategies

### IS YOUR BUSINESS SAFE FROM BURGLARY?

This guide aims to help you identify areas of criminal vulnerability and implement appropriate security measures at a reasonable cost to your business.

For your burglary prevention program to be effective, active participation, interest, and concern is needed by your employees as well.

#### GENERAL PREVENTION CHECK LIST

- KEY CONTROL** Are office/ store keys, master keys, safe keys and vehicle keys lying about? Do you know to whom your keys have been issued or entrusted? If you cannot answer these questions, your security risk factor is very high.
  - Keep a record of all keys issued
  - Master keys and extra duplicates should be locked away for safekeeping
  - Have all keys stamped with the words "Do Not Duplicate."
- FAMILIARIZE YOUR EMPLOYEES WITH YOUR SECURITY SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES.** Efficient, alert, well-informed and understanding employees are necessary to help you protect your business.
- KEEP HIGH COST MERCHANDISE AWAY FROM CASH REGISTER.** Small, expensive items should be kept in locked display cases.
- REMIND CUSTOMERS AND EMPLOYEES TO ALWAYS LOCK THEIR UNATTENDED VEHICLES AND TO LOCK VALUABLES IN THE TRUNK.** Valuables left in plain sight attract thieves.
- THE ADDRESS AND NAME OF YOUR BUSINESS SHOULD BE VISIBLE FROM THE STREET.** This will allow witnesses and Deputies to better identify your business in the case of an emergency.
- DENY BURGLARS DISCREET ACCESS AND A PLACE TO HIDE.** Secure ladders, pallets, boxes, and crates away from your building; keep grass, shrubs, and other objects trimmed and debris cleared away from your property.
- STORE PROPERTY THAT MUST BE KEPT OUTSIDE THE MAIN BUILDING IN A LOCKED STORAGE SHED.** This protects your property from vandalism and theft.
- MAINTAIN AN INVENTORY OF ALL OFFICE EQUIPMENT.** Include the make, model, and serial number of each item. Keep this inventory in a safe place, and keep it current by adding the identification numbers of all new equipment. Engrave your business name on all office equipment, and secure removable equipment.

## LIGHTING CHECK LIST

Burglars prefer darkness. At night, properly placed lighting will deter burglars.

- MAINTAIN INTERIOR LIGHTING at a level that allows clear visibility into buildings to allow for law enforcement and civilian surveillance
- ILLUMINATE YOUR ENTIRE PROPERTY from dusk to dawn to eliminate dark areas that intruders and criminals prefer
  - Lighting should also illuminate the roof of your building
  - Be sure that lights do not shine into the eyes of people passing on the street, motorists or Deputies on patrol
- USE LIGHTING FIXTURES WITH A PHOTOELECTRIC CELL OR TIMER to ensure that lighting will be on when you need it
- LOCATE LIGHT FIXTURES AT THE BEST HEIGHT AND LOCATION TO MAXIMIZE ILLUMINATION, avoid blind spots and reduce shadows
- INSTALL VANDAL-RESISTANT COVERS OVER BULBS and locate fixtures outside to prevent easy access and to reduce the chance of intentional breakage
- INSPECT YOUR LIGHTS REGULARLY. Replace burned-out or broken lights immediately.



## DOORS AND WINDOWS CHECK LIST

- INSTALL MYLAR WINDOW COVERINGS which are inexpensive deterrents
- INVEST IN HEAVY-DUTY BURGLAR RESISTANT GLASS, especially for first floor windows
- INSTALL LOCKING PINS, BOLTS, LOCKS OR SWING LATCHES on all sliding glass windows and single or double-hung sash windows to prevent opening from the building's
- ALL OUTSIDE HINGES SHOULD HAVE NON-REMOVABLE HINGE PINS
- INSTALL LOCKS ON OUTSIDE FUSE BOXES
- INSTALL CONVEX AND WALL MIRRORS

## DID YOU KNOW...

Some of the simplest security measures can be the first things to deter burglars.



## DID YOU KNOW...

In the event of a burglary, the chances of apprehending the burglar are greatly increased if the scene is left completely intact.

### SAFES CHECK LIST

- USE A “MONEY” SAFE FOR CURRENCY AND A “RECORDS” SAFE FOR DOCUMENTS when a safe is used for your business.
- ANCHOR YOUR SAFES FIRMLY TO THE FLOOR
- STANDING SAFES SHOULD BE ILLUMINATED and visible from outside the building. The combination side should be turned away from windows
- LOCATE LIGHT FIXTURES AT THE BEST HEIGHT AND LOCATION TO MAXIMIZE ILLUMINATION, avoid blind spots and reduce shadows
- LIMIT THE NUMBER OF PERSONS HAVING ACCESS TO KEYS AND COMBINATIONS. Change locks and combinations when principal employees are discharged or leave your employment.



### TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT CHECK LIST

In addition to their potential for theft, unsecured tools or equipment may be used by a thief to knock down doors, open a safe or gain entry to your locked office or cabinets

- SECURE TOOLS AND PORTABLE EQUIPMENT IN LOCKED DRAWERS OR CABINETS at the close of each business day and large equipment should also be secured
- INSTALL LOCKS TO SECURE LARGE OFFICE EQUIPMENT IN PLACE
- SECURE BLANK CHECKS, CHECK PROTECTORS, CREDIT CARD MACHINES and similar property in your safe at the end of each business day
- STORE VALUABLE MERCHANDISE IN A LOCKED ROOM OR SAFE WHEN THE BUSINESS IS CLOSED

### EMPLOYEE TRAINING CHECK LIST

- LEAVE THE SCENE INTACT. Microscopic evidence may be vital and should be protected. Instruct all employees and co-workers to leave the scene completely undisturbed, if possible. Avoid using the burglar's entry and exit points;
- CALL THE HUMBOLDT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE IMMEDIATELY
- PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING ALL MISSING ITEMS, including the prerecorded list of serial numbers to sheriff's deputies

## ALARMS CHECK LIST

The basic purpose of an alarm device is to deter an intruder from entering your business or to alert law enforcement of an illegal entry and to assist in the rapid apprehension on the suspect. There are two basic types of intruder detection alarms - ringing and silent

- INVEST IN AUDIO, MOTION, AND/OR PHOTOELECTRIC DETECTORS
- HAVE A FAIL-SAFE BATTERY BACKUP SYSTEM, A FIRE-SENSING CAPABILITY, AND A TESTING FEATURE ON ALL DETECTORS
- BE SURE THE ALARM DEVICE THOROUGHLY COVERS THE INTENDED AREA OF PROTECTION.



# SHOPLIFTING PREVENTION

## Business Strategies

### ARE YOUR EMPLOYEES TRAINED TO PREVENT SHOPLIFTING?

It's easier and safer to prevent shoplifting than it is to deal with a shoplifter or the consequence of the monetary loss. Train your employees to be courteous and alert to shoplifters. A thief who thinks that he or she is being watched is less likely to steal.

#### KNOW THE SIGNS OF SHOPLIFTING

Watch for someone who:

- Seems nervous
- Avoids eye contact
- Wanders around the store without buying anything
- Leaves the store and returns to your business repeatedly in a short period of time
- Stays in an area of your business where he or she is hard to see
- Keeps watching you or is constantly looking around.

#### SIMPLE MEASURES TO DISCOURAGE SHOPLIFTING



- Display signs announcing that all shoplifters will be prosecuted and this business will cooperate with the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office
- Keep items away from exits – a counter near an exit is an easy target for “grab and run” thieves
- Stay alert at all times
- Be friendly and polite to all customers
- Ask customers if they need help
- Keep your business neat, clean and orderly
- Know where shoplifting is most likely to occur inside your business.

## WHAT TO DO WHEN SHOPLIFTING OCCURS

- Give the person a chance to pay or put back the item. Be sure to know what was taken and where the customer hid it. Then politely ask the person a question, such as “are you ready to pay?” or “would you like a bag for that item?”
- Never accuse anyone of stealing
- Never try to physically stop a shoplifter
- Never lock the door to keep a shoplifter from leaving
- Never chase a shoplifter out of your place of business
- Remain at least an arm’s length away from the shoplifter
- Trust your instincts – don’t continue to confront a shoplifter if you start to feel frightened or uneasy. **Your personal safety is always more important than merchandise.**



# FRAUD PROTECTION

## Credit Card and Check Cashing Precautions



Examine each check closely and do not accept checks with any alterations.



Ask for photo identification with every purchase unless you know the person.

Do not accept checks for more than the actual purchase.



Only accept payroll of government checks, or if you know the person.



Do not accept postdated checks.



Do not accept two-or-more party checks.

## REPORT FRAUD

If you suspect fraudulent activity at your business, report the incident right away to your local law enforcement.

Have a policy that if the check is more than \$50 (or whatever you want it to be) that the employee has to say, "This check is over \$50 so I have to go get my supervisor's approval."







# CAR PROWL PREVENTION

Theft from vehicles, also known as car prowling, is the unlawful taking of motor vehicle contents or parts. Car prowls are crimes of opportunity. An offender makes a decision to break into a vehicle based on a perception that there are items of value in the vehicle, which makes the potential payoff worth the risk. Car prowling is consistently one of the top three reported crimes in most cities and towns during the last five years.

## HOW CAR PROWLINGS OCCUR

A car prowling can be completed in a minute or less, and a significant number of these crimes occur between the hours of 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. Methods of entry include: entering in to the vehicle through an unlocked door, breaking a window, or using a wedge to gain access. The offender often wears a backpack or duffel bag to transport the items.

Although there is no profile of a typical car prowler, a large number of offenders break in to vehicles to support drug addictions. Offenders, in their peak, can break in to 15 to 20 vehicles per day at the height of their addiction. A repeat offender at the Humboldt County Correctional Facility told his counselor that it was the public's fault since they leave things in their cars.

Items frequently stolen include GPS systems, laptops, electronic devices, garage door openers, CDs, mail, bills, documents with personal information, purses, wallets, luggage, gym bags, money, cell phones, insurance cards, vehicle registration, shopping bags, sleeping bags, instruments, sports equipment or jackets. The car prowls can be a gateway to identity theft, burglaries at your address and vehicle theft.

## CAR PROWL PREVENTION TIPS

- 1 KEEP IT CLEAN**  
Keep the interior of your vehicle "showroom" clean. Never leave valuables in plain view. Offenders often break in to vehicles for items such as gym bags because they assume there are electronic devices or other items inside.
- 2 HIDE ACCESSORIES**  
Hide chargers and accessories that indicate a GPS, mobile phone or other devices that support electronics.
- 3 REMOVE KEYS**  
Remove garage door openers, key cards, and house or work keys from your car.
- 4 PARK IN THE LIGHT**  
Park your car in a well-lit area. Trim back trees and bushes that block the view of your vehicle from your house.
- 5 LOCK IT**  
Always lock your vehicle, even if you are home.



