

## ***Mind Your Own Business... (If you don't, burglars will!) Part 2:***

# How to put burglars out of business

You can do a number of things to “put burglars out of business”—specifically, your business. They fall into four general categories: (1) making your business uninviting to a burglar; (2) making it hard for him to get inside; (3) making it hard for him to find or remove valuable items; and (4) making it likely he'll get caught if he does get in.

### **1. Making Your Business Uninviting**

Good lighting—both inside and outside—is probably the single most effective and inexpensive deterrent to burglary. Lighting destroys the cover of darkness burglars prefer to work in. Outside lights—the sodium vapor type is best—should cover all points of entry, alleys and passageways, especially those in the back. Inside lights are particularly important around the safe and cash register.

Valuable merchandise should be illuminated too—but try to keep it out of display windows at night. Arrange your stock so that a burglar working in a far corner of the shop could be seen by someone walking by. If you have a burglar alarm, make it obvious—put a decal on the door or window, or make it visible from outside. Don't provide other kinds of cover for a burglar—stacked boxes, a vehicle parked close to the building, ladders, and so on.

### **2. Making It Hard to Get Inside**

Exterior doors should be heavy and solid...not hollow. Wooden doors should be metal-lined to resist sawing and drilling. Glass panels should be protected against being kicked or knocked out. Side and back entrances should also have metal bars as wide as the inside of the door that can be dropped into place at closing time. Hinge pins on doors should be installed inside so that the doors cannot be removed by a thief.

A deadbolt lock is best for doors. There are two main types. One (single cylinder) requires a key to open from the outside but can be opened with a knob from the inside. It is effective if the door is strong and there's no

nearby glass that could be broken to get to the knob.



The other type (double cylinder) requires a key to open from both outside and inside. This is effective if the door is not so strong or there's breakable glass near it. But it also can be a fire hazard if it's kept locked during business hours. Make sure your local codes permit this type of lock before installing one.

Avoid spring latch locks that can be opened by using a knife blade, a thin piece of metal or a plastic strip.

Window security is just as important as door security. Break-resistant glass is best, especially for display windows. Rear and side windows should be protected by grillwork (iron bars) or by heavy-duty screen (No. 9 gauge interior wire guards), which is also useful on doors with glass panels. The grillwork or screen should be bolted through the building. Locks are useful on some types of windows; check with a good locksmith.

Don't overlook other ways a burglar might get inside your business—skylights, ventilators, sidewalk grilles, loading docks, old coal chute openings and others. Take steps to make these burglar-resistant also.

And don't forget that some thieves don't even have to break in: They walk in while you're open, and then hide in a rest room, closet or similar hiding place until after closing time. So check all potential hiding places before closing up.

If you store some of your stock outside, it should be well lighted and enclosed by a fence—high, sturdy and topped with barbed wire (otherwise it's too easy to climb over or poke a hole through).

### **3. Making It Hard to Find or Remove Valuable Items**

Safes and cash registers should be clearly visible from the street. Leave the cash register drawer open and empty after business hours. The safe should be a good quality and firmly anchored. Lock your check protector and blank checks in the safe.



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Avoid having large amounts of cash on the premises. Make bank deposits at varying times during the day and use different routes.

If good lighting doesn't scare off a burglar, it will make it harder for him to go undetected while he's working inside or outside the building. If possible, hide or lock in the safe high-value items (such as expensive rings or watches) that would be especially attractive to a thief.

a suspect and have enough evidence to convict him.

### **4. Making It Likely the Thief Will Get Caught**

Consider installing a burglar alarm system. They range from the simple, inexpensive kind that merely makes a noise in the building to the complex, expensive and silent type that's tied to a police station or security agency. What kind you need depends on several factors: how likely it is that a thief would be detected without one, how far you are from a police station, how the system's cost compares with the cost of goods to be protected.

Get a system that either monitors itself or can be easily checked to make sure it's in good operating condition. Shop carefully and buy from a reputable company. If you have a good alarm system, you'll probably get a discount on your business insurance premium.

In lieu of (or in addition to) an alarm system, you may want to hire a security guard or security service to patrol your business at night. If not, make sure someone (either you or one of your employees) is responsible for checking security of the business before closing time.

Record serial numbers of large denomination bills. Also, a small amount of marked "bait money" may help police trace a thief. Try to keep a good inventory of your stock, including serial numbers of valuable goods, theft-prone items and business equipment. This will help police trace stolen goods and help you in filing an insurance claim.



If you do become a burglary victim, cooperate with the police in every way you can—including pressing charges if they catch