

## ***Mind Your Own Business... (If you don't, burglars will!) Part 1:***

# Are You a Potential Accomplice?

How would you like to help a burglar break into your place of business and steal everything of value you have?

Sounds crazy? Don't be too sure. Quite a few business owners do just that...through they don't realize they're doing it.

If you're not doing everything you can to make it hard for a burglar to get in,,if you're not making it likely he'll get caught if he does get in...or if you're making your business too tempting a target, you might as well be the thief's accomplice.

Are you a potential accomplice? Here's one way to find out: stop by your business at night, when it's closed. Look at it with a burglar's eyes. Case the joint.

Start across the street. Are there shadows to hide you as you try to get in? would boxes stacked near the building provide cover? Is a delivery truck or company car parked near the side so you could use it as cover or as a ladder to get in a window or onto the roof?

Is there merchandise in the display window, where you could smash, grab and run? Can you see into the far corners of the display room, or could you work at your leisure, unseen by passersby?

Now take a walk around the building. Does a sidewalk grille lead to a basement loading entrance? Is there evidence of a burglar alarm—a door or window sticker or some visible wiring? Are hinges on the outside of the door, so you could remove them and lift the door out? What kind of lock is on the door? Is there a glass panel you could break to reach inside and unlock it? Check the door—is it even locker? (It's much easier to walk in than to break in.)\how about basement or ground floor windows—could you gain access through them? Could you pull a van into the back alley



to cart away your loot? How about a skylight or large vents as a way to get in or adjoining buildings?

You could find out all these things without even going into your business probably without making anyone suspicious. If you came back during business hours, you could do further checking on locks and the burglar alarm, see where the money is kept, find out when there's a lot of cash on hand and where valuable merchandise is displayed.

These are all things a would-be burglar looks for. And they are things that you, as a business owner, must be aware of too...unless you want to be his accomplice.

Security is an important part of business management security

just as important as inventory control and pricing, because it directly affects your balance sheet. A good security system may seem costly, but it's cheaper in the long run than risking being wiped out by a skilled burglar...and that can happen to a small business.



How much time and money you spend on security will depend on a lot of variables: whether you're in an area with a high crime rate, whether your merchandise is especially appealing for its resale value, the layout and size of your shop, and others. But regardless of how "safe" you think you are, you must spend some time and money on it; you can't afford to ignore it.

Crime Watch and the Pembroke Pines Police Department have certified Florida Crime Prevention Practitioners. They are trained to spot security gaps. Point them out to you. Suggest improvements. It's time well spent—both from their standpoint and from yours—to make a complete security inspection of your business. Then it's up to you to follow through.

# Are You a Potential Accomplice?

## **Security Checklist**

- L**ocks for doors should be the deadbolt type. Doors should be heavy and solid. Protect glass in doors and windows with grillwork or heavy-duty screen.
- O**penings other than doors and windows—skylights, ventilators, sidewalk grilles, and so on—also should be protected. Fences should be high, sturdy and topped with barbed wire.
- C**over is something you don't want burglars to have. Adequate lighting—both inside and outside—is a must. Don't stack boxes or leave a vehicle parked next to the building.
- K**eeep valuable items out of display windows at night. Hide them or lock them up in a safe.
- I**nsurance on your business is something you mustn't be without. How good your security is has a bearing on your premium.
- T**rip up a thief by installing an effective alarm system, leaving cash register drawer open and empty, anchoring safe firmly, recording serial numbers of large bills.
- U**nderstand the importance of checking alarm system, leaving cash register drawer open and empty, anchoring safe firmly, recording serial numbers of large bills.
- P**rotect your business and others by working to improve the effectiveness of crime prevention in your community. Join Merchant Crime Watch!