

ABi's series of 'Fact Sheets for Retailers' provide concise information on the key topic areas that impact on business success within the retail environment. Each fact sheet highlights the key issues and provides practical advice on the given topic.

If you would like any further advice on any issues relating to this fact sheet then please contact us. We will be delighted to help.

ABi Associates Limited is recognised by clients, businesses and agencies as one of the country's leading business development companies. We have over ten years of experience and expertise in providing business support to small businesses to succeed and grow.

Today's fast paced, competitive and chaotic consumer world provide a multitude of challenges for retailers. ABi offer a diverse range of unique, innovative and tailored business services to meet these challenges. These services include business diagnostics, training, sign posting, market planning, specialist consultancy and networking events. What ever your business challenge, we will show you a way of meeting it effectively.

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Protecting your business



There can only be a few lucky retailers who are not concerned about crime and crime prevention. The British Retail Consortium Crime Survey showed that the impact of crime and crime prevention cost the retail sector £2.13 billion in 2004. Customer theft is still a growing problem, verbal abuse of retail staff rose by 35% compared to 2003 and physical violence was also up 14% from 2003

Retail crime is not just shop theft: it includes graffiti, vandalism, abuse and threats, burglaries, robberies and violence. Crime saps companies of funds, places pressure on prices, demoralises staff and can have devastating consequences on physical and emotional well-being.

The ABi Fact Sheets can only highlight a few key issues. The Metropolitan Police web site has a range of useful resources providing more help for retailers. You can also contact your local Crime Prevention Officer for in-depth guidance.

Be alert

All retailers should maintain vigilance at all times and anything unusual, such as people loitering outside, should be noted and reported to management or the police.

Try to keep windows clear to allow good vision.

Put up a sign asking motor cyclists to remove helmets before entering premises and be suspicious of those not complying. You can put a height marker near the door to help description taking.

Vision and lighting

Maintain a high level of lighting inside and outside your premises. Be careful when putting up displays and signs, ensuring good vision inside premises and through windows. This can be tricky because most shops want to use windows for visual marketing.

Early acknowledgement

Visitors or customers should be made aware that a member of staff has seen them enter. Make eye contact with them.

Know your emergency procedures

You should set up shop procedures for recording crime, reporting to the police, using security equipment, locking and securing the shop, etc. Make sure all staff members know and understand the procedures.

Dangers of habit

While procedures are necessary, predictable routines should always be avoided (e.g. vary cash delivery/collection times and routes to and from your bank or business). If you need to hold large sums of cash, consider using professional cash handling services.

Reduce the risk

Reduce the quantity of cash held in tills by using deposit safes with time controls.

CCTV

CCTV systems are an important weapon in the modern fight against crime. Here are a few simple rules to ensure that CCTV is effective:

- Change tapes daily
- Use them no more than 12 times
- Keep tapes for at least a month
- Use good quality tapes and check them by playing them on a different machine
- Ensure that the picture is clear - it needs to be clear enough to identify people and vehicles
- Check that the time and date displays are correct
- Check that the picture is covering the right area
- Make sure there is enough light for the camera to give a proper picture

Raid-control

Raid-control is a new crime prevention initiative that helps to raise security standards in retail premises.

Raid-control includes:

- Robbery Awareness Training
- Cash Minimisation products
- Time Delayed Systems
- Image Capture Systems (Cameras)
- Indelible Staining and Note Marking Equipment

ShopWatch

ShopWatch is a scheme that unites the police, the retail industry and government to help make our shops and town centres safer.

Shop staff volunteer as ShopWatch Special Constables and carry out patrols during some of their working hours, acting as additional eyes and ears for the regular police. Their

presence seeks to actively deter theft and fraud and discourage anti-social behaviour, as well as offering additional reassurance for shoppers.

Even when off duty, they can still use the skills they've learned to provide an additional level of security.

If you are unfortunate enough to be a victim of crime, write some notes for yourself so that you can remember all the details when you report it to the police.

ABi produces a range of Fact Sheets for businesses. The 'Securing Business Premises' Fact Sheet provides additional information for independent retailers on this topic.