

HOLD-UP PROCEDURES

Procedures for before, during and after Violence in the Course of a Crime:

An individual who has no legitimate relationship at the workplace usually commits workplace violence that occurs during the course of a crime. While he may feign being a customer as a pretext to enter the establishment, his primary motive is to commit a robbery or other criminal act.

Employees who are at greatest risk from this type of violence have face-to-face contact and exchange money with the public. They often work alone or in small numbers, and work late at night and early into the morning. Prime hours for such attacks are between 7 PM and 2 AM. This type of violence accounts for the majority of workplace homicides, and represents irregular occurrences in the daily life of any particular at-risk establishment.

Violence Prevention Assessment

Evaluate the physical layout of the facility. Check for and consider the following:

- External lighting to cover walkways and parking areas.
- Controlled access to all building entry points.
- Video surveillance cameras at critical points.
- Procedures for allowing access to the facility.
- Number/gender of employees on-site between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m.
- Cash transactions conducted with the public during working hours.
- Safe or lock-box on the premises for temporary cash deposits.
- Security history of the establishment and surrounding areas.
- Physical security measures and barriers.
- Security training for employees.
- Keeping as little amounts of cash on hand as possible.

- Making several bank deposits throughout the day at different times.

Steps To Be Taken When a Robbery Occurs

The secret to robbery prevention is to limit available cash and put all of the security measures out in the open so the potential robbers (even when disguised as former employees) can discover them. This way, the robbers can see in advance that your location is a poor target because of limited amounts of available cash and because the chances of getting caught are increased. Most businesses tend to hide their security fearing that the robbers will discover it and overcome the measure. Nothing can be further from the truth. This theory of deterrence has been validated many times from interviews with incarcerated robbers and by the dropping crime rate at former targets. It's simple math, good targets get robbed more frequently than poor targets. Criminals will still look you over but if you are doing it right the robbers will go down the street to find an easier and more lucrative target.

When a robbery does occur you must remain calm, alert and observant at all times. Panic will only heighten the danger. Comply with any demands in a polite and courteous manner. The perpetrator's instructions and commands are to be followed completely and without hesitation. The robber should be told about other employees or customers on the premises. Someone unexpectedly interrupting a robbery in progress presents a real danger. The silent alarm system should be activated in a manner that does not alert the intruders. Employees should make slow, deliberate movements: they are not to do anything sudden. Instruct them to tell the perpetrator in advance everything they are about to do and to keep their hands within site. They shouldn't stare directly into the robber's eyes; it will heighten his anxieties and general sense of paranoia. During the robbery, employees should open the cash register and back away, allowing unobstructed access to the money. Avoid confrontation and don't openly resist. They are to give him any cash or supplies on demand. There should be no resistance or attempt to deceive him concerning the amount or location of what he asks for. However, they should not volunteer any information.

Armed robbers are typically extremely nervous, jittery and feel the surging effects of adrenaline. There is also the possibility that they're under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or both. Any act of defiance will likely escalate into violence.

While the robbery is in progress, employees should make note of physical characteristics, distinguishing features, such as scars or tattoos. Was the intruder right handed or left-handed, have a lisp or accent? Also what type of weapon, revolver or an automatic, length of barrel.

Finally, do not follow the perpetrator. When he leaves, employees should attempt to see which direction he left and observe the make, model and color of his car and the license number.

After-The-Event Procedures

The police should be contacted as soon and discretely as possible by any means available. Before the police arrive, get the names and addresses of any witnesses to the crime. Request they remain until authorities arrive. Each person should immediately write down all the information he or she remembers without discussing it with anyone else.

When the intruders have left the building a member of staff should be sent out to greet the Police. This will immediately indicate that the business is safe to enter.

Don't be a hero; you may be putting other lives at risk!