

Safe Work Procedures For Preventing & Dealing With Robberies



OHS laws require employers to implement programs to prevent workplace violence and harassment. Written safe work procedures are an essential element of such prevention programs. Here's a template Safe Work Procedure to help retail and other workers that deal directly with customers prevent robberies and manage the situation safely if they occur.

Safe Work Procedures for Dealing with Robberies

Follow these procedures and guidelines to minimize the risk of being robbed at work and safely handling any robberies that do occur:

Preventing a Robbery

- Stay active and alert at all times.
- Make the store or facility attractive to customers and unattractive to robbers.
- Keep the premises clean, tidy, and well-lit.
- Get away from the sales counter when there are no customers.
- Ensure the sales counter is clearly visible from outside the store or facility so that would-be robbers will realize that people outside will be able to see any

robbery that occurs.

- Identify potential escape routes in case a robbery were to occur.
- Know the location of phones and sources of assistance outside the premises.
- Be especially aware of what's going on in areas with poor lighting.
- Avoid looking directly at suspicious loiterers—prolonged eye-to-eye contact may be seen as a challenge and escalate the situation.
- Fill out a description sheet.
- If the loiterers don't leave, call the police and ask for a patrol check.
- Greet everyone who enters the store.
- Be friendly and briefly look directly into their eyes.
- If a customer looks suspicious, ask another nearby customer, "Are you together?" to get the nonsuspicious customer to turn around and look at the suspicious person, which may deter a robbery.
- Keep the cash register fund to a minimum—remove all \$50 and \$100 bills from the cash register as soon as you get them.
- Ensure there are signs posted advising "Minimum cash kept on premises".
- Ask customers for exact change or the smallest bills possible.
- Take extra precautions after dark and during slow periods when you're alone.
- Check to see that outside lights are on and working each night.
- If possible, operate only one register late at night through early morning.
- Open the empty unused register drawer and tip it up for display.
- If possible, run an "empty register" – just \$5 bills and change.

Making Bank Deposits

- Don't make deposits at night.
- Vary the time during the day in which you make deposits.
- Don't make deposits alone.
- Have a coworker accompany you when making deposits.
- Have the coworker face the other way and keep an eye out for trouble while you're making the deposit.

Safely Handling a Robbery

- Try to remain cool and calm.
- Don't be a hero—fighting back, arguing, threatening, or resisting the robbers in any way will only jeopardize the safety of you and your coworkers.
- Handle the robbery as if you're making a sale to a customer.
- Act quickly and without delay—the longer a robbery takes, the more nervous and dangerous the robber becomes.
- Listen carefully to what the robbers say.
- Obey the robbers' orders and give them all the cash and merchandise they want.
- Let the robbers know of any possible surprises that could cause them to panic or escalate the situation, such as that there's another worker in the back room.
- Tell the robbers and ask for their permission if you must reach for something or move in any way.
- Activate the alarm system only after the robbers leave, not while they're still in the store.
- Observe what the robbers look like and what they're wearing without staring or gazing on them too long.
- Note the robbers' exact heights against the height strip as they exit.
- Write down your observations and descriptions of the robbers immediately after they leave.
- Don't chase the robbers.

- Keep police numbers near the phone – 911 or your local emergency number.
- Call the police immediately after the robbers leave and tell them:
 - The direction robbers headed in when they left.
 - The time of the robbery.
 - What the robbers looked like.
 - About any weapon or vehicle the robbers used.
- Stay on the phone until the police tell you they have all the information they need.
- Preserve the crime scene exactly the way it was when the robbery occurred.
- Don't touch or handle any of the evidence.
- Ask any witnesses to wait for the police to arrive.
- Get the name, address and contact information of any witness who has to leave before the police get there.