

Tips for Securing Your Workplace & Preventing Crime



All organizations have plenty of reasons to secure their facilities and prevent crime, such as thefts, assaults, etc. Companies can lose millions of dollars due to theft by both outsiders and employees. In addition, employers have a duty to protect workers from violence at the hands of outsiders, including criminals. In fact, you could face liability under the OHS laws if an employee is the victim of a crime while at work.

Example: A female security guard was raped while working alone. The security company pleaded guilty to violating the *OHS Act* in the first prosecution in Alberta where a company was charged under the OHS laws after a worker working alone was the victim of a crime [*Garda Canada Security Corp.*, Calgary Herald, Feb. 23, 2011]. The court fined the company \$5,000 and ordered it to pay \$87,000 to a new program at SAIT Polytechnic for safety training of workers working alone [Govt. News Release, July 11, 2011].

So how do you secure your workplace to prevent crime? The [U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation](#) has released several quick guides on safety and security. Here are some [steps it suggests you take to address different kinds of security risks](#).

To keep criminals out:

- Cut back landscaping to keep your facility visible from the street.

- Install deadbolt locks on all entry doors.
- Make windows more difficult to open with locks and pins. Add protective film, which makes glass more difficult to break.
- Install a professionally monitored burglar alarm system.
- Install video cameras at entrances, loading docks, outbuildings or other areas attractive to burglars. Post signage that cameras are present.

To prevent vandalism:

- Install fencing and lighting to help protect equipment, vehicles and supplies stored outdoors.
- Repair damage to windows and doors before they become entries for criminals.
- Don't forget to protect outbuildings and other remote facilities.
- Install low-light security cameras and signage around your building perimeter to act as a deterrent and record video to help police identify vandals.

To prevent internal thefts:

- Consider running background checks on top job candidates.
- Keep minimal amounts of cash in your facility.
- Only provide keys to those employees needing them to perform their jobs.
- An access control system offers more protection and cards are easier to replace if lost or stolen.

And here are some general safety and security tips:

- Copper theft has become a big problem. Help protect your rooftop equipment and electrical boxes with extra fencing and locks.
- Only give alarm codes to those needing to open/close the building and make each code unique to the individual (e.g. janitor).

- When possible, keep your doors locked, and use a video intercom to see and talk with visitors before allowing them entry.
- Immediately remove keys or access cards from a person terminated from employment.
- Have a fire suppression system professionally installed, maintained and monitored.

For more on security issues in the workplace, see these OHS Insider resources:

- [Using video surveillance to protect workers working alone](#)
- A [model video surveillance policy](#)
- A [form](#) you can use to gather key information about a bomb threat called into your workplace
- [11 dos & don'ts for dealing with a workplace violence incident](#)
- Train workers on how to respond to [an active shooter](#).

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