

Reducing the Risk of Burglaries

The following information was compiled by SWBA from several public and private sources.

Business owners can reduce the risk of both attempted and actual burglaries

Following are procedures that work or help.

Secure the site. The closing and locking of windows and doors must be automatic. Good, working lighting is a must. Door frames must be sturdy. Metal plates on wooden doors prevent drilling or sawing to gain entrance. Preferably, the door mortise latch and any other locking mechanism will engage at multiple points. Deadbolts, the best type of lock, should have a 1” throw (engagement). Windows which open should have locking mechanisms which are difficult to reach when the glass is broken out.

Do not have ways to climb up to upper floor windows available. Trim landscaping to minimize hiding places while forced entry is being attempted. If back or side doors have glass panels and are not regular customer entry points, replace with solid doors. Glass doors with laminated glass are more difficult to break out than those with tempered glass.

If you have a safe, anchor it so that it cannot be removed. Leave cash drawers open. Use your bank depository daily, and do not keep more cash overnight than you can afford to lose.

Burglars have learned how to extract certain types of key cylinders. To prevent this, the cylinder surrounding the key port should have an “anti-spin ring”. These can be identified on your lock if there is a ring that extends beyond the face of the cylinder. For an example, see the lock on Woodstock Lock and Key at 4411 SE Woodstock. An anti-spin ring costs about \$59 installed.

Alarm the property and train all employees on its proper use.. While it is true that an alarm costs a monthly fee and the City charges a \$125 annual alarm fee, this is probably the most proactive defense, and may be well worth the cost. Owners have been known to just put alarm company stickers on glass doors/windows but not be connected. While the practice is not recommended, it is a better deterrent than no alarm. The best crooks

probably look for the City alarm permit, which is required to be displayed if there is an active alarm.

Alarms typically come with one or more sirens, and these may be inside or outside. Virtually all “time out” after 5 minutes. These both frighten away thieves and alert neighbors. Alarm systems also allow for smoke or heat monitors to transmit a signal in case of fire. Typical configurations allow for motion or sound detectors as another way to detect illegal entry.

Alarm pads usually have another feature – a panic button for police or fire. These do not require a call to the business, and could be useful in some situations.

A good alarm system has battery backup, so sirens sound even if the signal wires are cut. The signal wires are typically the phone lines (or, in some cases, the cable lines). It is recommended that these lines be run underground, within walls or in conduit so they are hard or impossible to cut. It is important to change the batteries as scheduled (typically every 5 years) and that the system be tested at least annually..

If even more security is called for, cameras are available at various cost and capability levels. Some systems keep a log of who enters a premises and when.

If you have an alarm system, it is important to provide access to a phone so that an accidental triggering can be resolved by the call center. In some instances, the phone is in a locked office and cannot be reached by an employee or custodian. Better yet, post the number of the call center, and call as soon as you realize that a mistake has been made. The call center must have several points of contact to increase the probability they can notify you of an alarm.

A competent alarm company can provide plans, costs and alternatives.

For more information on business crime prevention, go to www.portlandonline.com/oni/cp and hit “Crime Prevention Resources” and then “Crime Prevention Brochures and Flyers”. Three that are business related are “A Guide to Robbery Prevention”, “Crime Prevention Strategies for Businesses”, “Shoplift Prevention”, and “CPTED: Commercial Settings”.

