

An Garda Síochána Crime Prevention Information Sheet



Seasonal Safety Advice Preventing Customer Theft



Theft From Shops

This information leaflet outlines some facts about shoplifting and advises on ways to prevent customer theft.

An Garda Síochána, through its Theft from Shop Strategy encourages retailers to adopt and promote shoplifting crime prevention measures.

According to the Central Statistics Office, 2014 Quarter 2, Recorded Crime Report, Theft from Shop offences rose 0.5% to 20,254.

A detailed analysis of thefts from shops by An Garda Síochána Analysis Service found:

- Groceries, Clothing, Cosmetics or Alcohol account for 8 out of 10 thefts
- In December, Clothes and Cosmetic thefts are at their peak, conversely Alcohol and Grocery thefts are at their lowest
- While grocery theft remains the highest volume theft type, it is decreasing
- Cosmetics theft has risen with one in five thefts from shop involving the theft of cosmetics
- Service Station Drive Offs, Tool Thefts and Alcohol thefts have also risen

The Irish Small and Medium Enterprise Association I.S.M.E., report that the direct shoplifting cost to retailers in 2014 will be in excess of €230m, of which €1m will occur at Christmas alone. It is estimated that shoplifting alone adds up to 3% to the price of products.

Times Offences Are Committed

Throughout the year, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays are the most common days for thefts from shop.

Thefts peak between 2pm and 6pm with almost half occurring during this period.

Alcohol Theft

A study of the theft from shop incidents suggests that the alcohol thefts are fairly consistent across the autumn and winter period.

Grocery Theft

Analysis of grocery thefts found a more distributed period of offending around Christmas:

“December and January: 51% of offences occur on Tuesday to Sunday between 1400 and 1859.
“November and February: 60% of offences occur on Tuesday to Sunday between 1400 and 1859.

Cosmetics Theft

Broadly similar for December and other months of the year.

There were a relatively higher proportion of thefts between 1300 and 1759 hours on Sundays and Mondays over December (17%) than in October and January (13%).

Clothing Theft

A study of the theft from shop incidents suggests that the clothing thefts are fairly consistent across the autumn and winter period.

Christmas Week

Overall, in the seven days before Christmas more thefts occur on Wednesdays and Thursdays (32%) than in earlier December (26%).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS OR OTHER CRIME PREVENTION ISSUES,
PLEASE CONTACT

your local GARDÁ CRIME PREVENTION OFFICER

or

visit the Garda website at www.garda.ie

Preventing Customer Theft

Types of Shoplifter:

Opportunist: Could be anyone, unattended goods taken / little risk of getting caught

Persistent: Regular thief, mixing purchased goods with stolen goods, could be a frequent customer

Young people: Usually engage in thefts in groups or through peer pressure

Substance Abusers: Target high value goods to fund drug habits

Professional: Target high value goods, take large quantities & nearly always work in groups. If well known could be disguised

Security Tips

Store Design: Design the store lay out so customers must pass the register area and staff to exit the store. Never leave the register unlocked or unattended. Do not display merchandise near the store exits. Avoid multiple entrances and exits

Tidy Up: Keep the store neat and orderly. Full displays and straightened shelves allow employees to see at a glance if something is missing.

View All: Use mirrors to eliminate blind spots in corners that might hide shoplifters. Maintain adequate lighting in all areas of the store. Keep fixtures and displays low for better visibility.

Under Lock and Key: Place small and or expensive items in locked cabinets or behind the counter. Toilets and dressing rooms should be watched at all times. Keep dressing rooms locked and limit the number of items taken in by each customer. Use alarms on unlocked exits and close or block off unused checkout aisles.

Signage: Signs and posters reinforcing security messages should be used. 'Private Areas' should be clearly marked.

Security: Use security equipment such as closed circuit television, security tags and two-way mirrors. Uniformed security guards are also powerful visual deterrents to the shoplifter.

Staffing: Schedule an adequate number of employees to work at one time and provide security training including part time staff.

Greetings: Greet every customer that enters the store. This lets the customer know you are aware of their presence. Make yourself available to all customers and never leave the store unattended.

Helping Hand: Approach the suspicious person and ask if he/she is finding everything okay. Mention that you'll be near by should he/she need your help. Make the shoplifter feel watched.

Receipts: Give each customer a receipt for every purchase. Require receipts for refunds for cash. Bin any discarded receipts immediately.

Stay Focused: Don't allow customers to distract the cashier while another person is being checked out.

Store Security Code: If you notice suspicious activities, alert other employees immediately. Many stores have a security code to alert staff of possible shoplifters.

Tag Swap: Cashiers should watch price tags and be on the lookout for price switching. Ask for a price check if something seems out of place.

Hidden Items: Shoe boxes, pocket books, baskets with lids and any other product easily opened should be inspected by cashiers to be sure it does not contain other merchandise.

Sealed Shut: Every bag should be stapled closed, with the sale receipt attached.

Business Watch: Set up or join a business watch scheme. Working together businesses can prevent theft from shops through attention and consultation

The advice contained in this information sheet is not intended to be exhaustive or absolute. Nothing contained in this publication should be interpreted as mandatory, obligatory or designed to conflict with any statutory regulations.

Useful Numbers :

Garda Confidential Number : 1800 666 111

Crime Stoppers; 1800 25 00 25

Crime Call: 1800 40 50 60

Crime Victims Helpline: 116 006

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