

# Armed Robbery Awareness





An armed robbery on your business would be a tragic event and could have a significant impact on the health, safety and welfare of you, your staff and customers.

This brochure aims to reduce the risk, or at least minimise the impact, both human and financial, of armed robbery on small businesses and to maximise the chances of prosecution of armed robbery offenders. You will find information on the principles of workplace design and a range of workplace practices that can be used to minimise the impact and incidence of armed robbery/hold-ups.

Armed robberies are often unpredictable and can place your staff in dangerous situations. Whether the armed robbery on your business is random or has been carefully planned, the offender's motivation is the same – to steal valuables.

As a business owner, you should be aware of the actions you can take to improve your safety and security as well as what to do when an armed robbery occurs.







## Design of business premises

- Provide a clear, well-lit view of the premises from both inside and outside
- Remove clutter (including advertising material, displays) from windows and around the 'point of sale' or cash register area
- Locate the point of sale in the most visible location, so it can be seen from both inside and outside
- Use counters that are wide and high enough to maximise distance between staff and customers
- Store rooms, rear access points, doors and windows should be kept secured at all times.
- Mirrors can be used to monitor blind spots although they should be positioned to prevent observation of cash handling procedures
- Install height markers on the inside of your doors, as this will help you judge the height of offenders
- Install good interior lighting and a clear window frontage to help identify potential offenders
- Pay attention to rear access points to avoid dark concealment spots
- Maintain landscaping so that ground cover is no higher than one metre and hanging foliage is no lower than two metres.



## Staff

- Ensure staff members are aware of security and armed robbery procedures and know what to do in that situation. This drill should be regularly practised
- Have more than one staff member involved in opening and closing the business
- When leaving the workplace consider departing in groups
- Staff should be alert to suspicious behaviour and know who to report it to, such as a supervisor or other employees. They should also check for suspicious behaviour before closing and leaving the business
- Ensure all keys and staff passes are returned when a staff member terminates their employment.
- If a staff member leaves under difficult circumstances, consider changing all cash handling and security procedures.







## Cash handling and storage

- Open the cash drawer only when it's in use and lock it at all other times
- Limit the amount of cash held on the premises and publicise this fact with a sign saying minimal or no cash kept on premises
- Minimise cash levels by frequently clearing cash registers
- If possible, have a secure area for handling and counting cash which is out of sight of the general public and access ways.
- Ideally, use professional security companies to collect cash and transport it to the bank. If you do need to transfer money to the bank yourself:
  - Do so at irregular times and vary the route
  - Try to use more than one person
  - Conceal bank bags
  - Do not wear a uniform or company ID
  - Do not display cash in public
- Handle, count and move cash around your business as little and as discreetly as possible.



## Security

Specific equipment and technology may greatly improve the security of your business. Seek specialist security advice and consider the following:

- Closed circuit television security systems may act as a deterrent and are critical to identifying offenders. Systems should be tailored to individual business needs and consideration given to:
  - Camera quality and placement
  - Camera set-up including lighting and focus
  - Recording systems (image quality, continuity and 28 day storage)
- Install a monitored alarm system
- Install a safe which is secured to a sturdy fixture and consider features such as:
  - Torch and drill resistant
  - Post-feed
  - Time delay mechanism
  - Dye bomb device
  - Bait money
- Regularly empty cash from registers into the safe
- Limit the number of safe keys and/or number of people with the combination
- Consider sensors or electronic beepers at the business entrance to alert staff to customers



- Make extensive use of signs and stickers to promote security measures such as:
  - Staff cannot open safe
  - Premises under constant video surveillance
- If your business is high risk, you may require security staff to monitor the premises
- Never publicly discuss your security arrangements, even with friends, and instruct your staff to do the same.

## What to do in the event of an armed robbery

It is critical for businesses to have armed robbery procedures and for staff to be familiar with them.

During an armed robbery, it is important to stay calm. The overall aim is to try to ensure the offender leaves the premises as soon as possible, without injuring or harming anyone. You and your staff should learn the acronym 'CODE A' prior to any incident, so you are prepared if you are the victim of an armed robbery.

**Calm** Try to remain calm. Stay away from the personal space of the offender.

**Obey** Obey instructions. Avoid making any sudden or unexpected movements.

**Description** Note the features of the offenders, including clothing, scars, tattoos, height, hair colour, accent and speech and any weapons used.

**Evidence** Remember what is touched by the offender and do not touch it yourself.

**Alarm** Activate the alarm and call police on Triple Zero (000) when it is safe.

## After a hold-up

- Call police as soon as you can and provide your name, address and premises details, description of the offender/s and vehicle, and their direction of travel
- Close the premises to the public and isolate the areas where the offender/s confronted staff
- Ask witnesses to remain to assist police
- Avoid conferring with other witnesses about the offence and provide versions independently
- Complete offender description forms
- If contacted by the media, speak to police first. Incorrect statements could jeopardise the investigation or court proceedings. Avoid discussing the amount of property stolen.
- Consider counselling and support for staff

For more information contact your local District Crime Prevention Officer, or the Officer in Charge of your nearest police station, or visit [www.police.qld.gov.au](http://www.police.qld.gov.au)



# CODE-A

• **Calm** • **Obey** • **Description** • **Evidence** • **Alarm** •