

# Business Crime Handbook

*Prevent - Respond - Report*



Loudoun County Sheriff's Office  
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Sheriff Michael L. Chapman

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## LOUDOUN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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Dear Loudoun County Business Owner/Manager,

This Business Crime Handbook is intended to enhance my office's partnership with the Loudoun County Business community by providing some suggestions on how to handle various situations. This handbook contains practical methods for businesses to deal with common crimes and identifies resources available to further improve safety and security. It is not intended to supersede your business' policies or procedures; it is only intended to augment existing policies or to provide suggestions if there are no policies in place.

Being prepared to prevent a crime is the best way to deter an incident from occurring. However, it is also important to know how to respond to a criminal incident if it occurs. Reacting to a criminal incident in a safe and effective manner will help ensure that there are no injuries and that the incident is reported accurately. Reporting and prosecuting criminal activity helps deter crime from occurring within our county by demonstrating that crime will not be tolerated.

Please use this guide to help prevent crimes from occurring, responding to crimes that have occurred, and reporting business crimes to law enforcement in an accurate manner. Please go to [LCSO Citizen Feedback](#) and submit any questions or concerns you may have regarding this handbook.

Thank you,

Michael L. Chapman  
Sheriff, Loudoun County



## Introduction

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The purpose of this Business Crime handbook is to educate and inform Loudoun County business owners and managers on how to prepare for, respond to, and report common business crimes. This handbook also provides other resources which business owners and managers may find useful.

When a business crime occurs and it is not prosecuted or reported, the criminal may feel emboldened and are more likely to repeat that behavior. Criminal behaviors cost businesses money and deteriorate the quality of life in our community. It is in everyone's best interest to work on preventing business crimes from occurring, to be prepared to respond to a crime when occurs, and know what should be reported to law enforcement.

This handbook discusses common business crimes in an easy to read, one-page format. Each page includes a brief discussion of a specific crime and a few recommendations on how to prevent the crime from occurring or what to know and do before the crime happens. The next section offers suggestions on how to respond and what to do when a crime occurs. Finally, each section provides recommendations on how to report the crime and what to do after it occurred. Accompanying each crime is a discussion of the Virginia Code and the elements of the crime necessary for a successful prosecution.

Page 13 of this handbook contains useful information regarding commercial alarms and page 14 provides an explanation of trespass procedures with a trespass notification form. Also in this handbook, you will find a sample employee breakroom sign to remind employees to watch out for business crimes and an overnight window sign informing potential burglars that there is no cash on the premises when the business is closed. We have also included some useful websites to visit to learn more about how to prevent crimes from happening, what to do when a crime occurs, and what to do afterwards.

No matter how much prevention is done, crimes may still occur. We hope that this handbook is helpful in making businesses and our community safer.

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# Burglary

Commercial burglaries are often crimes of opportunity that occur after your business closes. If your business is well secured, unauthorized entry is made less likely and more difficult.

## **Prevent:** Before a Burglary

- Establish a closing routine to make sure to lock doors and set the alarm.
- Secure doors and windows with high quality locks.
- Keep a record of high value items (i.e. cash registers, safes, generators, etc.) and include: make, model, cost, serial number, color, and a picture of the item. Use the inventory form on page 21 of this handbook for accurate record keeping.
- For a camera to be useful, it needs to provide good quality images with high resolution and be in good working order. Surveillance video recordings should always be recorded from a separate secured area, inaccessible to criminals or employees without a security function.
- Post window signs stating that there is no cash stored overnight at the business.
- Post signs stating that the premises are protected with cameras and an alarm.
- Leave cash registers empty and open overnight so burglars can see that there is nothing to steal inside the business.
- Always leave an interior light on that is visible from outside.
- Ensure that there is adequate exterior lighting at the doors and windows.

## **Respond:** During a Burglary

- If your business has been burglarized, call or text **911** immediately and wait for law enforcement prior to entering the business. Do not touch anything.
- Do not enter the business as the suspect(s) may still be inside the business.
- Wait for law enforcement officers to check the business and ensure it is safe.

## **Report:** After a Burglary

- Provide law enforcement with a detailed list of items that were stolen or damaged.
- Provide law enforcement a list of possible suspects.
- Reevaluate security procedures.

**Virginia Code Section:** 18.2-91 (Burglary)

**Elements of the Crime:** 1.) Entering a building in the nighttime or breaking and entering a building in the daytime, 2.) for the purpose of committing a larceny.

**Penalty:** Felony (up to 20 years imprisonment) and/or fine of up to \$2500.

## Check Fraud

If your business accepts personal checks, establish a detailed check acceptance policy to help identify and avoid bad checks.

### **Prevent:** Before the Check Fraud incident

- Know your company's policy and procedures on how to handle this situation.
- Be aware that a criminal may attempt to hurry or distract the cashier.
- Educate employees and establish policies which include the following guidelines:
  - Checks should not be written for more than the purchase amount.
  - Checks should not be accepted that are unnumbered or non-personalized.
  - The customer's complete name and address must appear on the check.
  - The customer's identification must match the name and address on the check.
  - The date must be the current date.
  - Dollar amounts both written and numeric should match.
  - Signature should be made in employee's presence and match their ID card.

### **Respond:** During the Check Fraud incident

- Call or text **911** if the crime is in-progress and wait for law enforcement.
- Call the Sheriff's non-emergency number at 703-777-1021, if no longer in-progress.
- Hold the check and wait for law enforcement to arrive.
- Handle the check as little as possible to preserve any fingerprints on the check.
- Do not follow the person outside of the business if the suspect flees.

### **Report:** After the Check Fraud incident

- Report the incident to law enforcement and provide the check as evidence.
- If the suspect remains at the business, law enforcement will interview that person.
- Take a picture of the suspect and/or the suspect's vehicle, if safe to do so.
- If the suspect fled the scene, provide as much detailed information about the suspect as possible. Write down a description of the suspect (gender, age, height, weight, hair color/length, facial hair, clothing (hat, shirt, jacket, pants, and shoes), tattoos and voice).
- Write down a description of the vehicle (Tag number/state, color, style, dents or marks).
- To maintain the integrity of the law enforcement investigation, don't talk about the incident with others until law enforcement take your statement.
- Review the security camera video to see if there is a good picture of the suspect.
- Consider completing the trespass process to ban the suspect from the store.

**Virginia Code Section:** 18.2-181 (Issuing a Bad Check)

**Elements of the Crime:** 1.) Issuing or delivering a check, 2.) with intent to defraud and 3.) knowledge by the issuer that there are insufficient funds to cover the check.

**Penalty:** Felony if value is over \$1000 (1 to 5 years imprisonment) – Misdemeanor if below \$1000 (up to 1 year imprisonment and/or up to \$2500 fine).

## Counterfeit Currency

Counterfeiting currency is on the rise due to modern printing equipment which makes it easy to produce high quality imitations. The U.S. Secret Service has useful information regarding counterfeit currency at [www.secretservice.gov](http://www.secretservice.gov).

### **Prevent:** Before the Counterfeit Currency incident

- Know your company's policy and procedures on how to handle this situation.
- Be alert for counterfeit money, if it looks suspicious then compare it to a genuine bill.
- Keep a counterfeit detection pen near your cash register and know how to use it.
- Know what an authentic bill looks and feels like.
- Know that suspects attempt to "sandwich" a counterfeit bill between two real ones.

### **Respond:** During the Counterfeit Currency incident

- Have a co-worker call or text **911** if the crime is in-progress and try to delay the passer.
- Explain to the customer that you believe the bill is fraudulent and ask that they wait for law enforcement to arrive. Do not return the bill to the suspect (if safe to hold on to it).
- Remember, everyone's safety comes first and return the bill if you feel threatened.
- If the suspect becomes agitated, do not fight or argue. Remain calm and cooperative.
- Call the Sheriff's non-emergency number at 703-777-1021, if no longer in-progress.
- Handle the bill as little as possible to preserve any fingerprints on the bill.
- Do not follow the person outside of the business if the suspect flees.

### **Report:** After the Counterfeit Currency incident

- Always report a counterfeit currency incident to law enforcement.
- If the suspect remains at the business, law enforcement will interview that person.
- Take a picture of the suspect and/or the suspect's vehicle, if safe to do so.
- If the suspect fled the scene, provide as much detailed information about the suspect as possible. Write down a description of the suspect (gender, age, height, weight, hair color/length, facial hair, clothing (hat, shirt, jacket, pants, and shoes), tattoos and voice).
- Write down a description of the vehicle (Tag number/state, color, style, dents or marks).
- To maintain the integrity of the law enforcement investigation, don't talk about the incident with others until law enforcement take your statement.
- Write down a detailed account of what happened.
- Review the security camera video to see if there is a good picture of the suspect.
- Consider completing the trespass process to ban the suspect from the store.

**Virginia Code Section:** 18.2-173 (Possession of forged bank notes, bills)

**Elements of the Crime:** 1.) Possession of forged bank notes, 2.) knowing that they are forged, 3.) and the counterfeit note is intended to be used as true.

**Penalty:** Felony if the number of forged notes is 10 or more (1 to 5 years imprisonment and/or a fine up to \$2500) – Misdemeanor if possessing nine or fewer bills (fine of not more than \$500).

## Credit Card Fraud

Credit card fraud is a general term for theft and fraud committed using or involving a payment card, such as a credit card or debit card, as a fraudulent source of funds in a transaction. The purpose may be to obtain goods without paying or to obtain unauthorized funds.

### **Prevent:** Before the Credit Card Fraud incident

- Know your company's policy and procedures on how to handle this situation.
- Be alert for a customer who seems nervous, edgy, or impatient.
- Be aware that criminals will try to distract you or speed up the transaction.
- Fraudulent cards are often damaged so the magnetic strip cannot be swiped, instead the customer may insist the clerk manually key in the card number which bypasses the antifraud features of the magnetic strip – always swipe the card and if it can't be read then ask for another form of payment.
- Be aware of a customer who uses several cards because they keep getting rejected.

### **Respond:** During the Credit Card Fraud incident

- Ask to see the credit card, every time.
- Ensure that the name on the credit card matches their identification.
- If the transaction appears suspicious, ask for another form of payment.
- Call or text **911** if the crime is in-progress and wait for law enforcement.
- Call the Sheriff's non-emergency number at 703-777-1021, if no longer in-progress.
- Do not follow the person outside of the business if the suspect flees.

### **Report:** After the Credit Card Fraud incident

- Report the incident to law enforcement.
- If the suspect remains at the business, law enforcement will interview that person.
- Take a picture of the suspect and/or the suspect's vehicle, if safe to do so.
- If the suspect fled the scene, provide as much detailed information about the suspect as possible. Write down a description of the suspect (gender, age, height, weight, hair color/length, facial hair, clothing (hat, shirt, jacket, pants, and shoes), tattoos and voice).
- Write down a description of the vehicle (Tag number/state, color, style, dents or marks).
- To maintain the integrity of the law enforcement investigation, don't talk about the incident with others until law enforcement take your statement.
- Write down a detailed account of what happened.
- Review the security camera video to see if there is a good picture of the suspect.
- Complete the trespass process to ban the suspect from the store.

**Virginia Code Section:** 18.2-195 (Credit Card Fraud)

**Elements of the Crime:** 1.) Obtaining anything of value, 2.) by falsely representing that one is the holder of a card or credit card number and, 3.) with the intent to defraud.

**Penalty:** Felony if value of fraud is over \$1000 (1 to 5 years imprisonment) – Misdemeanor if below \$1000 (up to 1 year imprisonment and/or up to \$2500 fine).



## Embezzlement

The variety of ways in which an employee can steal from a company is limited only by the imagination. Some of the more common methods include the taking of merchandise, supplies, or cash, and making non-registered sales or expense account fraud. There are some very effective measures you can take to prevent internal theft, but the most important step is to set a good example. Inspire honesty with your employees by following your own company's policy.

### **Prevent:** Before an embezzlement incident

- Know your company's policy and procedures on how to handle this situation.
- Establish good hiring procedures and conduct pre-employment background checks, especially for those employees who will be handling cash or have access to financial data. For more information about background checks, visit the [Small Business Administration's website](#).
- Create an employee code of ethics and conduct. Make it part of new employee orientation and review it annually with all employees. Establish and enforce clear policies about employee theft, substance abuse, security procedures, and reporting crime. For ideas on how to develop an employee policy manual, it may be helpful to visit the [Small Business Administration's website](#).
- Maintain strong internal controls over the movement of cash and goods within your business. Identify high risk areas for your business and audit violations on a periodic basis. Reconcile bank statements, cash, and sales reports frequently, and treat unusual transactions with suspicion. Keep an accurate inventory system and check it regularly.
- Security cameras help to deter robbery and burglary, but can also help detect employee theft. Monitor business activity and income patterns over time to see if income drops during a particular shift or situation.
- Take notice to a high volume of returns by a single employee.
- Conduct frequent inventories of merchandise and equipment. See page 21 of this handbook.
- Consider having an employee who does not handle everyday financial transactions to check or audit the records routinely.

### **Respond:** Discovery of the embezzlement incident

- Call or text **911** if the crime is in-progress and wait for law enforcement.
- Call the Sheriff's non-emergency number at 703-777-1021, if no longer in-progress.
- Gather the evidence and decide if you want to prosecute the suspect.

### **Report:** After the embezzlement incident

- Notify law enforcement and report the crime providing detailed information.
- Review and update internal hiring and security procedures.

**Virginia Code Section:** 18.2-111 (Embezzlement)

**Elements of the Crime:** 1.) Any person employed or entrusted by another, 2.) who wrongfully or fraudulently use, dispose, conceal or steal, 3.) money or other property received for another.

**Penalty:** Felony if value is \$1000 or more (1 to 20 years imprisonment) and misdemeanor if value is less than \$1000 (up to 1 year imprisonment and/or up to \$2500 fine).

## Larceny

Larceny is the theft of property with the intent to permanently deprive the owner of said property.

### **Prevent:** Before a Larceny

- Know your company's policy and procedures on how to handle this situation.
- Greet everyone who enters your business, thieves try to remain unnoticed.
- Maintain a roster of key holders and people with access to equipment.
- Keep a record of high value items, including; make, model, cost, serial number, color, identifying marks, and a picture of the item. See page 21 (Inventory Form).
- Secure high value items with a high quality lock.
- Keep the storage area clear of clutter and well lit.
- Consider installing a security camera. However, for a camera to be useful, it needs to provide good quality images with high resolution and be in good working order. Surveillance video recordings should always be recorded from a separate secured area, inaccessible to criminals or employees without a security function.
- Conduct frequent inventories of merchandise and equipment.

### **Respond:** Discovery of a Larceny

- Call or text **911** if the crime is in-progress and wait for law enforcement.
- Call the Sheriff's non-emergency number at 703-777-1021, if no longer in-progress.
- Do not follow the person outside of the business if the suspect flees.
- Preserve the crime scene and do not touch anything.
- Prepare a list of items stolen and/or damaged without disturbing the scene.

### **Report:** After a Larceny incident

- Provide law enforcement with a detailed list of items that were stolen or damaged.
- If the suspect remains at the business, law enforcement will interview that person.
- Take a picture of the suspect and/or the suspect's vehicle, if safe to do so.
- If the suspect fled the scene, provide as much detailed information about the suspect as possible. Write down a description of the suspect (gender, age, height, weight, hair color/length, facial hair, clothing (hat, shirt, jacket, pants, and shoes), tattoos and voice).
- Write down a description of the vehicle (Tag number/state, color, style, dents or marks).
- To maintain the integrity of the law enforcement investigation, don't talk about the incident with others until law enforcement take your statement.
- Review the security camera video to see if there is a good picture of the suspect.
- Complete the trespass process to ban the suspect from the store.
- Consider making an on-line report at [LCSO On-Line Report](#)
- Reevaluate security procedures.

**Virginia Code Section:** 18.2-95 (Grand Larceny)

**Elements of the Crime:** Stealing item(s) with value over \$1000.

**Penalty:** Felony (1 to 20 years imprisonment).

**Virginia Code Section:** 18.2-96 (Petit Larceny)

**Elements of the Crime:** Stealing item(s) with value under \$1000.

**Penalty:** Misdemeanor (up to 1 year imprisonment and/or up to \$2500 fine).

## Robbery

Robbery is a frightening and potentially dangerous situation. Keep in mind that money and property can be replaced; they are not worth risking your life to protect. You can dissuade potential robbers by minimizing temptation and maximizing their chances of being caught.

### **Prevention:** Before a Robbery

- Know your company's policy and procedures on how to handle this situation.
- Greet everyone who enters your business, thieves try to remain unnoticed.
- Place a surveillance camera behind the cash register facing the front counter and at the entry and exit doors.
- For a camera to be useful, it needs to provide good quality images with high resolution and be in good working order. Surveillance video recordings should always be recorded from a separate secured area, inaccessible to criminals or employees without a security function.
- Keep a clean, well-lit business, inside and out.

### **Respond:** During a Robbery

- Do as instructed. Stay calm and don't resist.
- Don't make any sudden moves and keep your hands in sight.
- Get a look at the robber but don't stare.
- Notice the robber's voice, unique mannerisms, and any unique smells or odors.
- If safe to do so, get a description of the robber's vehicle and direction of travel.
- Call or text **911** and wait for law enforcement.
- Do not follow the suspect outside of the business.

### **Report:** After a Robbery

- Close the business and lock the doors and wait for law enforcement.
- Preserve evidence (don't touch anything the robber may have touched).
- Take a picture of the suspect and/or the suspect's vehicle, if safe to do so.
- Write down a description of the suspect (gender, age, height, weight, hair color/length, facial hair, clothing (hat, shirt, jacket, pants, and shoes), tattoos and voice).
- Write down a description of the vehicle (Tag number/state, color, style, dents or marks).
- To maintain the integrity of the law enforcement investigation, don't talk about the incident with others until law enforcement take your statement.
- Write down a detailed account of what happened.
- Review the security camera video to see if there is a good picture of the suspect.
- Only step outside the store when law enforcement arrive and contact you.

**Virginia Code Section:** 18.2-58 (Robbery) - *Mason v. Commonwealth*, 200 Va. 253 (1958)

**Elements of the Crime:** 1.) Taking the property of another, 2.) from the victim, 3.) against his will, 4.) by violence or intimidation and 5.) with the intent to steal.

**Penalty:** Felony (1 year to life imprisonment).

## Shoplifting

All retailers are susceptible to shoplifting, no matter how big or small the business. Shoplifters often take advantage of busy stores during peak hours when employees are more likely to be distracted. Hiding merchandise is the most common method. Items are concealed in clothing, handbags, or inside purchased merchandise. Many shoplifters switch price tags with a less expensive items then use the self-payment checkout lane. It may be helpful to visit the National Association of Shoplifting Prevention's website at: [www.shopliftingprevention.org/](http://www.shopliftingprevention.org/).

### **Prevent:** Before the Shoplifting incident

- Know your company's policy and procedures on how to handle this situation.
- Greet everyone who enters your business, thieves try to remain unnoticed.
- Conduct frequent inventories of merchandise and equipment.
- Look inside boxes and other items to ensure they do not contain hidden merchandise.
- Watch shoppers who seem nervous or pick up random items with no interest.
- Watch for shoppers who alter or switch price tags.
- For a camera to be useful, it needs to provide good quality images with high resolution and be in good working order. Surveillance video recordings should always be recorded from a separate secured area, inaccessible to criminals or employees without a security function.
- Notice shoppers who appear nervous or are unseasonably dressed.

### **Respond:** During the Shoplifting incident

- Call or text **911** if the crime is in-progress and wait for law enforcement.
- Call the Sheriff's non-emergency number at 703-777-1021, if no longer in-progress.
- Do not follow the person outside of the business if the suspect flees.

### **Report:** After the Shoplifting incident

- If the suspect remains on scene, do not frisk or search the suspect's belongings.
- Report the incident to law enforcement and tell them that you want to prosecute.
- Take a picture of the suspect and/or the suspect's vehicle, if safe to do so.
- Write down a description of the suspect (gender, age, height, weight, hair color/length, facial hair, clothing (hat, shirt, jacket, pants, and shoes), tattoos and voice).
- Write down a description of the vehicle (Tag number/state, color, style, dents or marks).
- Consider making an on-line report at [LCSO On-Line Report](#)
- To maintain the integrity of the law enforcement investigation, don't talk about the incident with others until law enforcement take your statement.
- Review the security camera video to see if there is a good picture of the suspect.
- Complete the trespass process to ban the suspect from the store.

**Virginia Code Section:** 18.2-103 (Shoplifting)

**Elements of the Crime:** 1.) Without authority, 2.) converting merchandise to ones' own without having paid the full price, 3.) defrauding the owner or concealing the merchandise or altering the price tag or transferring the item to another container or aiding/assisting another shoplift.

**Penalty:** Felony if the total value is over \$1000 (1 to 20 years imprisonment) – Misdemeanor if the value of the item(s) is below \$1000 (up to 1 year imprisonment and/or up to \$2500 fine).

## Vandalism / Destruction of Property

Vandalism includes graffiti, defacement, and other forms of property damage. These are not only crimes against individual merchants, but against the entire community.

### **Prevent:** Before the Vandalism incident

- Know your company's policy and procedures on how to handle this situation.
- Greet everyone who enters your business, criminals try to remain unnoticed.
- Be alert to vandalism and be prepared to report it.
- Keep the area inside the business and around the outside of the business clean.
- Look for graffiti and destruction of property.

### **Respond:** During the Vandalism incident

- Call or text **911** if the crime is in-progress and wait for law enforcement.
- Call the Sheriff's non-emergency number at 703-777-1021, if no longer in-progress.
- Do not follow the person outside of the business if the suspect flees.
- Report all vandalism activities to law enforcement.
- Allow law enforcement to photograph the scene in order to further the investigation.

### **Report:** After the Vandalism incident

- Report the incident to law enforcement and tell them that you want to prosecute, doing so may enable you to ask the court for restitution of the costs to repair the damage.
- Take a picture of the suspect and/or the suspect's vehicle, if safe to do so.
- Write down a description of the suspect (gender, age, height, weight, hair color/length, facial hair, clothing (hat, shirt, jacket, pants, and shoes), tattoos and voice).
- Write down a description of the vehicle (Tag number/state, color, style, dents or marks).
- Consider making an on-line report at [LCSO On-Line Report](#)
- To maintain the integrity of the law enforcement investigation, don't talk about the incident with others until law enforcement take your statement.
- Review the security camera video to see if there is a good picture of the suspect.
- Complete the trespass process to ban the suspect from the store.
- Consider painting over graffiti and repairing the damage, after law enforcement investigates.

**Virginia Code Section:** 18.2-137 (Destruction of property)

**Elements of the Crime:** Unlawfully destroy, deface, damage, or remove without the intent to steal property which is not his own.

**Penalty:** Felony if the value of the property is \$1000 or more (1 – 5 years imprisonment and/or \$2500 fine). The charge would be a misdemeanor if the value of the property is less than \$1000 (up to 1 year imprisonment and/or up to \$2500 fine), the court may also order restitution to the victim for the cost of the damage.

## Workplace Violence

The term “workplace violence” covers a broad spectrum of behaviors. It includes aggressive behaviors that disrupt the flow of work and cause employees to be concerned for their personal safety, such as bullying, stalking, threats, and assaults. Workplace violence can be caused by any employee and may escalate from a verbal incident to physical violence. A good resource for information about workplace violence can be found at the Department of Labor’s OSHA site: <https://www.osha.gov/workplace-violence>.

### **Prevent:** Before the Workplace Violence incident

- Know your company’s policy and procedures on how to handle this situation. If a policy does not exist, then develop a plan or policy on how to deal with workplace violence and review it with your employees.
- Be aware of potentially violent behaviors, which may include: increased use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs, unexplained increase in absenteeism, depression, withdrawal, increased mood swings, explosive outbursts of anger or rage without provocation, comments about “putting things in order”, increased talk about problems at home, empathy with individuals who have committed violence, an increase in unsolicited comments about firearms or other dangerous weapons and violent crimes.
- Know that the situation may become an active threat and be prepared to run-hide-fight.

### **Respond:** During the Workplace Violence incident

- If a person’s behavior escalates and causes you to feel threatened or unsafe, then separate yourself from the person and tell your supervisor and call or text **911**.
- Try to keep a physical barrier, such as a desk or chair, between you and the aggressor.
- Be aware of your exits and keep them accessible.
- If you choose to leave the area, stay aware of your surroundings and the location of the aggressor; depending on the circumstances you may need to run.
- Avoid physical contact and if possible keep a barrier between you and the aggressor as you move to a safe area.

### **Report:** After the Workplace Violence incident

- Report of the incident providing a detailed account to either your supervisor or law enforcement, depending on the circumstances.
- Consider issuing a trespass notification.
- If threatened with bodily harm, consider filing an assault charge.

**Virginia Code Section:** 18.2-57 (Assault) - See *Harper v. Commonwealth*, 196 Va. 723 (1955)

**Elements of the Crime:** 1.) Attempt or threaten, 2.) with unlawful force, 3.) to inflict bodily harm to another, 4.) when accompanied by the apparent present ability to give effect to the threat if not prevented.

**Penalty:** Misdemeanor (up to 1 year imprisonment and/or up to \$2500 fine).

## Active Threat

An active threat is a person who is actively engaged in a random or systematic violence with an overriding intent of mass murder or mass casualty. Active threat incidents often use firearms, however they may involve edged weapons, chemicals, explosives or other materials. The attack may have a specific target or it may be completely random. Active threat situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly. The Department of Homeland Security have useful information available to prepare for an active threat situation. You may review the “Run, Hide, Fight” training video with employees, located at the [LCISO YouTube](https://www.fbi.gov/resources/active-shooter-safety-resources) page and obtain other Active Threat resources at <https://www.fbi.gov/resources/active-shooter-safety-resources>.

### **RUN**

- Leave your belongings behind and help others escape, if possible.
- Call or text **911** when you are safe.

### **HIDE**

- If evacuation is not possible, shelter in place. Find a place to hide where the active threat is less likely to find you. Your hiding place should be out of the active threat’s view.
- To prevent the active threat from entering your hiding place, lock the door and barricade it with furniture, silence your phone, hide behind heavy furniture, and remain quiet.
- Call or text **911** to alert law enforcement of the active threat’s location. If you call and cannot speak, then leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen.
- Wait for law enforcement instructions before evacuating from your location and provide first aid to others in place with you.

### **FIGHT**

- As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the threat by acting as aggressively as possible against him/her, throwing items and improvised weapons in his/her direction, yelling, and attacking him/her.
- Consider using points of ambush to your advantage; such as attacking from behind a corner or door. Commit to your actions as though your life depends on it.

### **INFORMATION TO PROVIDE TO THE 911 DISPATCHER**

- Location of the suspects.
- Location and severity of any known victims.
- Number and description of the suspects.
- Number and types of weapons held by the suspects.

### **HOW TO RESPOND WHEN LAW ENFORCEMENT ARRIVES**

- Law enforcement’s initial purpose is to engage the active threat as soon as possible and will proceed directly to the area where they believe the suspect(s) are located.
- The first officers to arrive will not stop to help injured people, medical support follows at a time later based on the availability of resources and the status of the threat(s).
- Put down anything in your hands. Immediately raise your hands and spread your fingers.
- Officers may shout commands and order you to lay on the ground for safety.
- Remain as calm as possible and answer questions when asked by law enforcement.
- Avoid making quick movements towards the officers, such as holding them for safety.
- Do not leave the area until law enforcement have released you from the scene.



## Business Alarms

Commercial security alarm systems are an important aspect of practicing sound crime prevention tactics. Burglary is a big business. Good locking, lighting, and alarm systems play a crucial role in protecting the business' assets. Learn more about commercial alarms by visiting the False Alarm Reduction Association website at [www.alarmuser.org](http://www.alarmuser.org). The Loudoun County Sheriff's Crime Prevention Unit can assist with security assessments and alarm selection.

### Maintaining the system

- Faulty equipment is a major cause of unnecessary alarms. Simple routine maintenance is crucial to ensure the system's reliability. Check with your alarm installer or manufacturer to learn what maintenance schedule you should follow.
- One or two checks per year by an alarm system specialist may be all that is needed to guarantee proper operation.

### Train all users

- Every system operator must be familiar with the system and properly trained in its use. All authorized users must know the code and should be notified immediately when management changes it. They must know how to quickly notify the alarm monitoring company of an accidental activation.

### Develop a routine in arming the system

- Before arming your system, be sure all doors and windows are closed and locked. Be sure no one is left on the premises. If someone will be remaining inside, make them aware that the alarm is being turned on and provide all users with an alarm operator's checklist.

### Prevent false alarms

- Provide your alarm company with phone numbers for business managers and key personnel. Keep the emergency contacts phone numbers up-to-date.
- Ensure that the authorized personnel know the password to cancel a law enforcement response if the alarm was accidental.

### Fines for false alarms

- For more information about commercial alarms fines and fees, please visit the [Sheriff's Office False Alarm Reduction Unit](#).

## Trespass Procedures

The business manager or owner has the authority to prohibit anyone from remaining on the business property. Reasons for issuing a trespass notification include: shoplifting, causing a disturbance, interfering with customers or business, or any other reason a business manager or owner deems appropriate.

In order for a law enforcement officer to arrest an individual for trespassing, the individual must be on the property and a trespass notification must have been presented to the individual in one of the following ways:

- Issue the trespass notification in person, or
- Mail a written trespass notification by certified mail, or
- Make an oral request by the business owner or manager for the individual to leave and the individual refuses in the presence of a law enforcement officer, or
- Serve a written trespass notice in the presence of a law enforcement officer.

Maintain a copy of the trespass notice and the certified mail receipt for law enforcement and prosecution purposes. Please note that a successful prosecution for trespassing requires the in-court testimony of the trespass notice issuer.

For more information regarding trespass notification procedures, please go the Sheriff's Website at [LCSO TRESPASS INFORMATION](#)

**Virginia Code Section:** 18.2-119 (Trespass after having been forbidden to do so)

**Elements of the Crime:** 1.) Any person who goes upon or remains upon the lands, building, or premises of another 2.) after having been forbidden to do so, 3.) either orally or in writing by the owner, lessee, custodian, or agent of such person 4.) or after having been forbidden to do so by a sign posted by such person, 5.) is trespassing.

**Penalty:** Misdemeanor (up to 1 year imprisonment and/or up to \$2500 fine).

# TRESPASS NOTIFICATION

TO: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
STREET ADDRESS

\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY/STATE/ZIP

You are hereby notified that your presence on or in the property located at:

\_\_\_\_\_  
BUSINESS NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
STREET ADDRESS

\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY/STATE/ZIP

is no longer desired and will not be tolerated. You are to refrain from entering therein or thereon for any reason whatsoever.

You are further notified that upon violation of this notice, you may be subject to immediate arrest. A trespass warrant will be sworn for your arrest and prosecution.

Signed on this, the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF PROPERTY OWNER/LESSEE/BUSINESS MANAGER

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINTED NAME

*Trespass Notification Form*

# Think “Crime Prevention”

- **Good customer service** is the best way to deter crime because criminals don't want to be noticed.
- **Greet each customer** and ask if they need help.
- Watch for suspicious behavior or people unseasonably dressed.
- Be alert for **credit card fraud**: Do not manually enter the card number and always compare name on card with identification.
- Watch for **shoplifters**: Criminals concealing merchandise in bags, clothes, or strollers as well as price tag switching and hiding merchandise inside other merchandise.
- Inspect for **counterfeit** currency: Feel the texture of the paper and look for abnormalities. Use a counterfeit currency pen.
- **Vandalism**: Report it, photograph it, and then repair it.
- Be alert for **check fraud**: Always compare name on the check with identification provided.
- **Trust your instincts**: if you think something is wrong then there probably is an issue. Look for anomalies or inconsistencies.
- **Be a good witness** and notice:
  - GENDER      • FACIAL HAIR      • SHIRT      • VEHICLE COLOR
  - AGE      • HAIR COLOR      • PANTS      • VEHICLE STYLE
  - HEIGHT      • HAIR STYLE      • JACKET      • VEH MAKE/MODEL
  - WEIGHT      • HAIR LENGTH      • SHOES      • VEH LICENSE PLATE #
- **Do not argue or fight with a robber** – Cooperate with the robber and be a good witness.
- Report **employee theft**.

*Employee Breakroom Crime Prevention Sign*

# *Piense en la “Prevención del Delito”*

- Un buen servicio al cliente es la mejor manera de disuadir la delincuencia porque los delincuentes no quieren ser detectados.
- Salude a cada cliente y pregunte si precisa ayuda.
- Esté vigilante de todo comportamiento sospechoso o gente vestida con ropa fuera de temporada.
- Manténgase alerta del fraude con tarjeta de crédito: No ingrese a mano el número de la tarjeta y siempre compare el nombre de la tarjeta con una identificación.
- Esté vigilante de rateros: Delincuentes que ocultan mercancías en sacos, ropa o cochecitos de bebé como también el intercambio de etiquetas de precios y ocultan mercancías dentro de otra mercancía.
- Observe si los billetes son falsos: Sienta la textura del papel y busque anormalidades. Utilice el bolígrafo detector de billetes falsos.
- Vandalismo: Denúncielo, fotografíelo, y luego repárelo.
- Manténgase alerta del fraude con cheques: Siempre compare el nombre del cheque con la identificación presentada.
- Confíe en sus instintos: Si usted piensa que algo está mal es probable que exista un problema. Busque anormalidades o inconsistencias.
- Sea un buen testigo y observe:

- GÉNERO	- VELLO FACIAL	- CAMISA	- COLOR DEL VEHÍCULO
- EDAD	- COLOR DEL CABELLO	- PANTALONES	- ESTILO DEL VEHÍCULO
- ESTATURA	- ESTILO DEL CABELLO	- CHAQUETA	- MARCA/MODELO DEL VEHÍCULO
- PESO	- LARGO DEL CABELLO	- ZAPATOS	- Nro. DE PLACA DEL VEHÍCULO
- No discuta ni pelee con un ladrón – Coopere con el ladrón y sea un buen testigo.
- Denuncie el hurto por empleados.

*Employee Breakroom Crime Prevention Sign*

## Overnight Window Sign

Burglars normally break into businesses at night in order to steal money. Many are deterred if the business does not keep cash in the business overnight. Posting a sign on the business window informing burglars that there is no cash on the premises is an effective way to deter the crime. Below is an example of a sign to post on the window when the business is closed.

---



**NO CASH  
ON THE  
PREMISES  
OVERNIGHT**

*Overnight Window Sign*

# Suspect Description Worksheet

SEX: \_\_\_\_\_ RACE: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ HEIGHT: \_\_\_\_\_ WEIGHT: \_\_\_\_\_ BUILD: \_\_\_\_\_

HAIR COLOR:

HAIR LENGTH/STYLE:

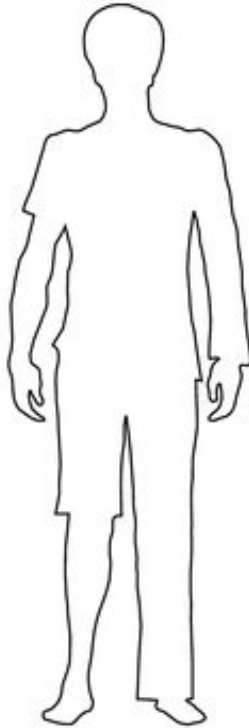
EYE COLOR:

FACIAL HAIR:

TATTOOS/SCARS/MARKS:

GLASSES:

VOICE/ACCENT:



HAT COLOR/STYLE:

COAT COLOR/STYLE:

SHIRT COLOR/STYLE:

PANTS COLOR/STYLE:

DRESS OR SKIRT COLOR:

SHOES COLOR/STYLE:

JEWELRY:

WHAT DID THE SUSPECT SAY? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

OTHER OBSERVATIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

WITNESS/VICTIM NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

# Vehicle Description Worksheet

TYPE OF VEHICLE:



SEDAN



PICK-UP



SUV



VAN



OTHER

COLOR: \_\_\_\_\_ TAG STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TAG NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ STYLE: \_\_\_\_\_

MAKE: \_\_\_\_\_ MODEL: \_\_\_\_\_ NUMBER OF DOORS: \_\_\_\_\_ NUMBER OF OCCUPANTS: \_\_\_\_\_

DENTS/STICKERS/MARKINGS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

DIRECTION OF TRAVEL: \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER OBSERVATIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

WITNESS/VICTIM NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_



# Inventory Form

ITEM TYPE	MAKE/BRAND	MODEL	SERIAL #	VALUE	COLOR	MARKINGS

## Crime Prevention Resources

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office  
[www.sheriff.loudoun.gov](http://www.sheriff.loudoun.gov)

Federal Trade Commission  
[www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov)

Federal Bureau of Investigation  
[www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov)

Small Business Administration  
[www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)

False Alarm Reduction Association  
[www.alarmuser.org](http://www.alarmuser.org)

U.S. Secret Service  
[www.secretservice.gov](http://www.secretservice.gov)

Domestic Security Alliance Council  
[www.dsac.gov](http://www.dsac.gov)

Department of Homeland Security  
[www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov)

Active Threat Resources  
<https://www.fbi.gov/resources/active-shooter-safety-resources>

Occupational Safety and Health Administration  
[www.osha.gov/workplace-violence](http://www.osha.gov/workplace-violence)

Run-Hide-Fight (surviving an active threat incident video)  
[LCSO YouTube Page](#)

U.S. Department of Justice  
[www.usdoj.gov](http://www.usdoj.gov)

U.S. Treasury Department  
[www.treasury.gov](http://www.treasury.gov)

Task Force on Market Integrity and Consumer Fraud  
[www.justice.gov/fraudtaskforce](http://www.justice.gov/fraudtaskforce)

Community Oriented Policing Services  
<https://cops.usdoj.gov>

National Association for Shoplifting Prevention  
[www.shopliftingprevention.org/](http://www.shopliftingprevention.org/)

False Alarm Information  
[LCSO Alarm Information](#)

Trespass Information  
[LCSO Trespass Notification](#)