



SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR ROBBERY RISK

As a general rule, unless a retailer has personally experienced a store robbery, the current thinking seems to be 'it won't happen to me' – until it does.

This is said without criticism – and it must be remembered that many retailers believe they have good security systems already in place – but it can appear that the main focus for retailers is the drive for sales and putting the customer first. Some retailers are prepared to take a loss as long as it doesn't exceed their budget for shrinkage.

SECURITY SELF-ASSESSMENT

However you choose to face your security issues, it's not going to hurt you to take five minutes to complete this security self-assessment – originally designed for high-risk retail robbery targets. It is hoped you may become more aware of potential risks to you, your staff and your customers. Retailers are encouraged to take note of any risk areas identified and to take action and/or adopt practices to reduce the risk.

Complete the survey by circling the answer. For example:

Is cash kept on the premises overnight? Yes No

We suggest you keep a copy of this survey handy to use as a tool when discussing safety and security issues at staff meetings.

IS YOUR BUSINESS A TARGET?

Some premises may be more attractive as targets than others because of the type of premises; the offenders' perception of the amount of cash on the premises in relation to the type of business, ease of escape, and reduced likelihood of detection – all are weighed up. Many robberies are committed at night. The questions below will help determine how risky your business is as a target.

Is cash kept on the premises overnight?	Yes	No	
Is your business open at night after 7.00 p.m?	Yes	No	
Is your business on a street corner?	Yes	No	
Is your business on an arterial road?	Yes	No	
Has your business been robbed in the last 4 years?	Yes	No	
Do you sell Lotto on your premises?	Yes	No	
Do you sell liquor on your premises?	Yes	No	
How many customer-entry doors do you have?	1	2	More than 2

CAN YOU REDUCE THE RISK?

1. Lighting

Making the shop highly visible – both internally and externally by using bright lights – increases the chances of identifying any offender and of a robbery being observed and witnessed by people walking past the premises. In the robber's mind, it increases the chance of detection and makes him feel more vulnerable.

Is the internal lighting in your premises bright enough to be seen from the street?	Yes	No	Not always
Do all indoor lights work?	Yes	No	Not always
Do you have a bright external light outside the shop door?	Yes	No	

2. Clear lines of sight

An open and uncluttered shop environment providing a clear, well-lit view of the doorway, counter and register is a strong deterrent to robbers as it increases the likelihood of the robbery being observed by persons both inside and outside the premises. Windows clear of obstructions and posters provide natural surveillance for people inside and outside the building and make the premises more intimidating to rob.

Are your shop windows clear of posters and signs which would allow people walking outside to clearly see what is happening inside?	Yes	No	
Is your cash register and counter in clear view of the street or footpath?	Yes	No	
Are your windows blocked by high stock displays and stands of stock?	Yes	No	Not always
Are your windows painted over?	Yes	No	
Can you see the shop entry door from the cash register and counter?	Yes	No	
Do you have a clear view of the street or footpath through your windows?	Yes	No	
Do display stands and shop layout prevent you from being able to observe all of the shop trading floor?	Yes	No	
Are there blind spots in your shop that you can't observe from the counter?	Yes	No	
Do you have mirrors installed so that you can observe blind spots?	Yes	No	
Do you have shrubs and bushes outside your premises that obstruct views through your windows – or which people could hide behind?	Yes	No	

3. Cash management

Reducing the amount of cash that could be obtained in a robbery makes your premises an unattractive target for robbers. Having tight cash control procedures also reduces robbers' quick access to cash, reduces the opportunity for a robbery to occur, and limits the gains to be obtained. The risk to the offender will outweigh the cash gains to be made.

Do you count cash and balance cash in public view?	Yes	No	Sometimes
Do you have a safe on the premises that you can store cash in during the day?	Yes	No	
Is the safe in public view?	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Do you regularly clear surplus cash from the tills during the day?	Yes	No	
Do you have a sign at your front door advising that minimal cash is kept on the premises?	Yes	No	
When you clear your till at the end of each day's trading, do you check all the entry doors are locked first?	Yes	No	
When you clear your till of cash at the end of the day's trading, can you be observed doing so from outside the premises?	Yes	No	
Do you ever discuss your cash takings in public?	Yes	No	
Can the contents of the till drawer be seen by the customer from the counter?	Yes	No	
Do you have a policy of limiting the amount of cash a customer can withdraw on Eftpos so that cash-holding levels in the till are reduced?	Yes	No	

4. Access controls

All robbers want to have an element of surprise and will prey on any visible security weaknesses in the building. They can conceal themselves on premises and wait until there are no customers before emerging to commit a robbery. They may not always use the front door.

Robbers may look for alternative means of escape such as a back door – securing these possible escape routes is a further deterrent to robbery.

Do you have an electronic warning device or bell that activates when people enter or exit through the front door to the shop?	Yes	No	
Are your rear exit doors always locked during trading hours?	Yes	No	Not applicable
Can storerooms and back rooms be accessed by customers from the shop floor?	Yes	No	Not applicable

5. Counters

Customers do not belong behind counters. Deep and wide counters with raised floors behind them make it difficult for offenders to assault staff. Where access is required from behind the counter to the shop floor, a counter flap or gate to separate the counter can act as a barrier and delay to an offender wanting to get behind the counter.

Does your counter provide a safe distance between the customer and staff?	Yes	No
Can a customer easily get behind the counter?	Yes	No
Is the floor behind the counter raised?	Yes	No

6. Staff working alone

Many robberies are committed at night when there are fewer staff likely to be on the premises. Premises that only have one person present may be more vulnerable to robbery because the offender can exert greater control and will feel he is unlikely to meet any resistance.

Do you have a 'no working alone' policy?	Yes	No	
Do you and your family live on the premises?	Yes	No	
How many persons are present when the shop is closed at the end of trading?	1	2	More than 2

7. Closed-circuit TV cameras (CCTV) and recorder

CCTV systems can also deter a robbery. Most robbers will be less inclined to target premises that have visible CCTV systems because of fear of recognition and discovery. The deterrent value of CCTV will be significantly enhanced by good lighting, clear lines of sight, good access controls, and good cash management controls.

Do you have a CCTV camera system on your premises?	Yes	No	
Is the CCTV recorded?	Yes	No	Not applicable
Do you have a camera focused on your front door to record who enters and leaves?	Yes	No	Not applicable
Do you have a camera that records the counter and till?	Yes	No	Not applicable
Do you have a camera that records what happens at the back door?	Yes	No	Not applicable
Do you have clearly visible signage that advises customers there is CCTV in the shop and all images are recorded?	Yes	No	Not applicable

8. Robbery response

For safety reasons, it is essential that retailers and their staff know what to do in the event of a robbery. The way in which a victim responds to a robbery could increase the risk of injury, but following safe procedures will reduce that risk.

Have you been trained in the safe procedures to adopt in the event of a robbery?	Yes	No
Has your staff been trained in the safe procedures to adopt in the event of a robbery?	Yes	No
Do you have emergency numbers listed near your phone?	Yes	No
Do you have people 'height markers' on the customer entry/exit door?	Yes	No

9. Cash conveyance

Some robbers will target the cash at its weakest point in conveyance. This could be when cash is being taken to the bank and when there is a predictable routine. Some simple precautions can reduce this risk.

Do you bank cash takings daily?	Yes	No	
Do you or staff take the cash to the bank?	Yes	No	
Is the cash carried in an inconspicuous bag?	Yes	No	Not applicable
Do you bank at random times?	Yes	No	Not applicable
Do you vary the route you take to the bank?	Yes	No	Not applicable
Do you or staff carry a mobile phone when taking cash to the bank?	Yes	No	Not applicable
Do you tell someone when you are going to do the banking and what time to expect you back?	Yes	No	Not applicable
Do you take the cash to the bank in a car?	Yes	No	On foot

10. Repeat victimisation

If you have previously been the victim of robbery on your premises then it is likely that the robbery was committed because of weaknesses in your security – and the opportunity that your shop environment provided. Repeat victimisation is not uncommon at premises which fail to improve security, processes, and shop environment to deter and prevent further robberies.

If you have been the victim of a previous robbery at your premises, have you consequently improved your security, processes and shop environment?	Yes	No	Some
---	-----	----	------

Please keep this store security self-assessment and refer to it from time to time. Our police service reports New Zealand's crime patterns are shifting and, with the increased use of recreational drugs such as 'P', NZRetail believes that no one really knows if or when they may be targeted. ■

Thanks to **Dave Norton**, the loss prevention manager for Foodstuffs SI Ltd., for supplying this security self-assessment form to NZRetail.