

ARMED ROBBERIES

BE PREPARED

Injuries inflicted by armed robbers are the leading cause of occupational deaths in the retail grocery industry, according to OSHA's website. Retail supermarkets are favorite targets of armed robbers for several reasons: the doors are open to the public, cash is accessible and robbers generally meet little resistance from store personnel.

Unfortunately, business owners and managers often fail to provide adequate training for employees at risk. In many settings, employees are told to simply cooperate with armed robbers – don't try to be a hero. This is good advice, but in order to thoroughly protect your employees and your assets from the dangers of armed robberies, you must show more initiative in educating and informing your employees on the dangers, how to avoid being a target and what to do in the event of an armed robbery.

Please review the suggestions that follow and share this information with your associates at all levels of the company. They are, in reality, putting their lives on the line each and every day and need to be "armed" with as much knowledge as possible should they ever encounter this situation.

HELPFUL FACTS

Obviously, an armed robbery can occur any time a store is occupied, but according to the Food Marketing Institute:

- Most armed robberies in supermarkets occur between 6 PM and midnight.
- Grocery stores are robbed more often on Mondays than any other day of the week.
- Armed robbers usually carry handguns.
- Most armed robberies occur at the checkstand, followed by the courtesy booth, then the safe/vault.
- Most armed robbers visit or "case" a business at least once before returning to commit a crime.



- Armed robbers study businesses to find targets that are more vulnerable than other nearby stores.
- Armed robbers select low-risk, high-reward targets.
- Most armed robbers have no intention of harming store personnel. Those who do, generally feel threatened or become frightened during the robbery.
- Poor cash handling procedures can significantly increase the dollar loss of a robbery.

DON'T BE A TARGET

Think of your business from a robber's perspective. If you see vulnerabilities in your business, an experienced thief will see them too.

- Install a closed circuit camera system with recording capability.
- Install a centrally monitored security system, with strategically located panic alarms.
- Consider the cost/benefit of using an armored car service.
- If your business is in a moderate to high crime area, hire a reputable third-party security service for protection.
- Avoid excessive cash buildup.
- If employees make deposits, they should make bank trips at different times of day, and vary the route over the course of a week.
- Request a police escort for bank trips made after dark.
- In a separate car, always have another employee follow the person making the deposit.
- Always have two or more associates open and close the store.

IN THE EVENT OF AN ARMED ROBBERY

In building a defense against armed robbery, much attention is given to protecting cash and minimizing dollar losses. But once an armed robber enters your store, the only priority is to protect human life and safety. No amount of money is worth the risk of injury or death to an employee or customer at the hands of an armed robber.

Employees should be trained – and re-trained – on the following:

- Never resist an armed robber. Do exactly what he tells you to do.
- React quickly and unemotionally to a robber's requests.

- Employees not directly involved with the robbery should concentrate on the robber's description, clothing, voice and method of getaway (but never run outside the store after the robber).
- Notice anything the robber touches.
- Trip the silent alarm as soon as possible, but only when it is safe to do so.
- Call the police as soon as the robber has left the store.
- Lock the doors after the robber has left to prevent re-entry.
- Ask customers who witnessed the robbery to stay until police arrive and write a statement of what they saw. Get names, addresses and phone numbers of all customer witnesses.
- When witnesses write their statements, do not allow them to compare notes.
- Show police anything the robber touched; they may want to dust for fingerprints.
- Following a robbery, instruct all associates not to discuss the incident with the news media.
- Following an armed robbery, any associates who are direct victims should be escorted to a quiet area away from the scene of the crime.
- Offer crisis counseling to associates who are victims of, or witnesses to, an armed robbery.

CONTACT

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