

HOW TO



Top-shelf crime prevention measures for your bar.

CRIME PREVENTION CHECKLIST

BY BRIAN ANDERSON

With odd hours of operation and so many people moving in and out of the building,

bars are an attractive target for criminal activity.

Unfortunately, certain targets and habits can increase an establishment's vulnerability to crime. Owners can and should implement a variety of safety measures that reduce liabilities and mitigate the chance of crime in or around the building.

Enact Smart Money Management

Even though debit and credit card payments are popular payment choices, bars still ring up a fair number of cash transactions. The accumulation of cash during operating hours makes your bar an easy target, so keep it safe by assessing these vulnerabilities.

Cash on-hand. Invest in a drop safe and keep cash in the registers to a minimum. Employees should make frequent deposits to the drop safe throughout the day to minimize the amount of cash available at any given time. This is an especially good practice during evening and late-night hours when robberies tend to be much more frequent.

Moving Money. Transferring money to the bank can make your business susceptible to theft attempts. Make trips at varied times and through alternate routes of travel to avoid a predictable pattern. If criminals uncover a schedule, it makes it easier for them to attempt a heist on your hard-earned profits.

Safe Standards. The number of people who have access to the safe should be limited as much as possible to minimize the risk of disappearing dollars. When an employee terminates or is terminated, the combination to the safe needs to be changed immediately so that there isn't a chance they can return to the building and steal money or divulge the combination to other people.

Additional rules of thumb include ensuring that the safe combination is

not written anywhere in the proximity of the safe, and being sure the combination is always scrambled upon closure.

Evaluate Your Environmental Design

Deter crooks from targeting your establishment by bolstering external crime prevention efforts. Consider addressing the following elements.

Landscaping. Foliage offers the perfect places for criminals to hide until there's a clear opportunity to make a move. Plant growth that is more than three feet high near doors offers the perfect cover, so keep shrubs and trees well-trimmed.



Implement safety measures to reduce liabilities and crime.



Lighting. Illuminate potential hiding hazards with motion detection lighting systems and/or bright exterior lighting that is on a timer system.

A well-lit facade will make for an unattractive building for criminals to try and burglarize.

Well-lit parking lots can also make employees and guests feel safer when leaving for the night. (Also, see more about the "buddy system," below.)

Trash Containers. Exterior dumpsters should be located in a locked enclosure to minimize the likelihood of people hiding in the trash receptacle.

Surveillance. Security cameras should focus on the parking lot, back door, and other vulnerable exterior locations. Their presence can deter crime — but provide helpful information to the authorities if the unthinkable happens.

Roof Access. Exterior ladders on the side of the building need to be secured so they don't provide access to the roof.

Invest in Internal Video Monitoring Video surveillance isn't just for the outdoors. Installing cameras inside is another piece of the security puzzle to help deter suspicious activity.

Install the Right Cameras.

Different camera systems boast distinct benefits, making them ideal for specific situations. For example, dome cameras house a small camera inside a dome-shaped enclosure and are typically installed in areas that get dirty. A bullet camera is small, narrow, and includes an infrared illuminator, which is ideal for low-light areas. Make sure you understand the available camera options and which will work best for your bar's setting. Remember: Best practice for saving video is to record at least 30 days' worth of footage, so make sure your surveillance selection can accommodate that.

Place the Eye in the Sky. Cameras should be placed in all cash-handling areas (e.g., near cash registers and the back office), at entrances and exits, and in storage areas, work/prep areas, and break rooms, so staff and customers are aware they are being recorded.

Prepare Staff. Appropriate employees need to be trained in the use of the video system, including activating it, reviewing the footage, and saving copies of incident video to a thumb drive, DVD, or other media.

Review Building Security

While seemingly straightforward, double-check the following safety components to ensure your bar is set up for security success.

Alarm Systems. Activate a centrally monitored alarm system. Off-site alarm

Pro Tip

The accumulation of cash during operating hours makes bars an easy target. Invest in a drop safe, vary trips to the bank, and limit access to your safe.



companies notify key staff and law enforcement quickly if someone attempts to breach the building. Conduct routine maintenance of the alarm system to ensure it works if a break-in is attempted, and make sure

that key staff members have received special training on its activation and disabling procedures.

Keys. Only distribute exterior door keys to employees who must have access. Keys should be marked "Do Not Duplicate" so employees won't be able to get copies made at the local hardware store.

Doors. The rear door leading to the trash containers should have a buzzer to request reentry or for delivery drivers to drop off provisions. Additionally, there should be a peephole to visually verify who is requesting entry. Back doors should never be propped open because it may seem like an invitation for someone to walk right in.

Reinforce In-House Protocol Simple procedures can help keep employees safe while on the clock. Review and implement these suggested protocols to ensure your bar's ongoing security.

Train regularly. Continual safety training is a must. It will keep new and veteran employees in the know about the steps to follow to prevent criminal activity—and the actions to follow in case an incident occurs.

Schedule smartly. Single employees are seen as more vulnerable targets for a robbery, so no one should ever be alone in the building. There should always be a "buddy system" in place

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Double check doors, keys, and alarm systems to ensure security.



during opening and closing procedures to check for security-related problems and ensure employees get to their vehicle or ride safely at the end of the day.

Closing protocol. Staff should follow a detailed checklist to ensure the building is as secure as possible while finishing nightly responsibilities, including locking all doors once customers have left, checking bathrooms for "stay behinds," and not allowing anyone back in the building after hours.

Small Details Make a Big Difference Crime can happen anytime and anywhere, but a few preventive measures can mitigate the likelihood of criminal activity at your bar. When you put security first, both you and your employees will feel more at ease while on the job. †

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