

# BUSINESS SECURITY



Today, businesses both big and small are often the target of criminals looking to take advantage of weaker security practices. In order to reduce the likelihood of your business being victimized, it is important to make your property safe and secure. Start by examining it for obvious risk factors, and make the necessary and recommended changes. Ultimately, criminals will be deterred from your property if they believe the risk of being caught is too high.

## BASIC RISK ASSESSMENT

### Exterior

- Are the views of your property obscured from the street?
- Are there any hiding spots around your windows or doors?
- Do you or your customers park in poorly observed areas or in lots far away?
- Is your property regularly trespassed?
- Are there "weapons of opportunity" in the landscaping? (ie. Loose river rocks)

### Interior

- Is your office equipped with computers?
- Can strangers enter your building without talking to a receptionist or employee?
- Do employees routinely ignore unescorted strangers beyond the reception area?

### Previous Criminal/Suspicious Activity

- Has a crime occurred on your property within the past year?
- Have you received any suspicious visits from strangers?

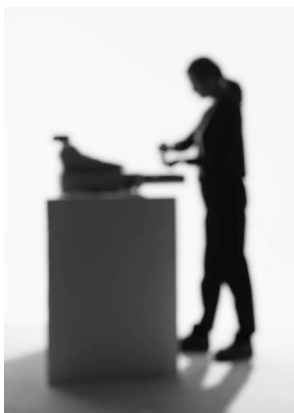
***If you answered yes to any of these questions, you should take steps to improve your security.***

## NEXT STEPS

- Increase business visibility from the street.
- Increase parking visibility from your business.
- Direct the approach of visitors to observable areas using see-through fencing, gating or landscaping that doesn't affect views.
- Decrease "weapons of opportunity." (ie. Remove rocks or chain items down)
- Ensure all entering customers are visible by either a receptionist or employee. (Restrict unmonitored movement in your office area.)
- Evaluate lighting in the evening hours for areas of shadow and contrast, particularly in relation to entry points. Consider wire-screened, motion activated lights for dark areas.



## EMPLOYEE SCREENING



An employee who is engaged in or associated with criminal activity can cause a tremendous amount of loss, financial damage and other problems to a business. This is why it is important to conduct criminal records, credit and reference checks on all employees. While the Human Rights Act does not allow a business to discriminate against a person who has a criminal record, businesses that have made a criminal records check a condition of employment generally find that persons with criminal records lose interest early on in the process.

## CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECKS

Prospective employees can request a criminal records check by personally visiting the Hamilton Police Service Headquarters located at **155 King William Street, Hamilton** from Monday to Friday, **8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.** An administration fee applies.

## MANAGING VISITORS

Burglars often develop an excuse to visit a business during day time hours to have a look around, and thieves will target purses, wallets and lap top computers that are left unattended. In order to discourage and prevent these types of crimes, employees must be encouraged to take note of suspicious activity and strangers and report it to police.

Employees can further discourage internal trespassing and theft by:

- Issuing visitor badges (some are designed to change colour when expired)
- Encouraging employees to take notice of strangers and challenge any stranger without a valid pass; and,
- Locking up valuables and never leave unattended valuables in plain sight or predictable insecure locations.

## REPEAT BREAK-INS

Businesses often fail to appreciate that after a first break-in, their risks have substantially increased as the burglar is now familiar with your property, has increased confidence, and is expecting higher value replacement equipment that can be stolen.

Treat a break-in the same way you would treat a serious medical condition, such as a heart attack. Seek professional advice, take the appropriate corrective action and learn to actively manage your risks.



## SECURITY AUDITS

Hamilton Police Service Crime Prevention Branch provides **FREE Business/Commercial Security Audits**.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies are effective when applied to building or store interiors. Studies have shown that the application of CPTED techniques may reportedly decrease security problems by up to 50% and increase sales by as much as 33%. Hamilton Police Service Crime Prevention Officers can conduct a thorough assessment of your business environment.

For further information on this service please contact the  
**Crime Prevention Office at 905-546-4900**

*. Content of this fact sheet is provided courtesy of Peel Regional Police Service*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS SUBJECT OR OTHER CRIME PREVENTION TOPICS PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT [WWW.HAMILTONPOLICE.ON.CA](http://WWW.HAMILTONPOLICE.ON.CA) OR PLEASE CONTACT:**

### HAMILTON POLICE SERVICE – CRIME PREVENTION

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