

CRIME PREVENTION

WORKING TOGETHER TO PREVENT CRIME

NEWSLETTER

Identity Theft: Protecting Yourself Offline & Online

Thieves are constantly looking for ways to obtain personal and financial information. If they are able to attain your personal information, they may use it to impersonate you to commit numerous forms of fraud such as taking over your financial accounts, applying for loans, and creating a synthetic identity. It is vital to educate yourself about the risks and tips to protect yourself both offline and online.

Protect Yourself Offline

Clear your mailbox every night – Mail theft is a common method that thieves use to gain access to personal information. Bank statements and invoices sent over mail have your personal and financial information that are valuable to thieves.

Shred your paper information – When disposing documents containing personal or financial information, be sure to shred them. An identity thief can easily pick through your garbage or recycling if it is not shredded.

Review your financial statements and credit reports – Develop a habit of checking your bank statements and credit reports regularly to ensure every transaction is accurate. You can check your credit reports at two main credit bureaus in Canada: Equifax and TransUnion. Report any mistakes that you see and keep your address current with all government agencies.

Choose your tax preparer carefully – If you are looking for someone to help complete your taxes, look for someone you trust, check their references, and review their consumer complaints to see if there have been complaints filed against them.

Only carry identification documentation(s) that you need – Do not use your Social Insurance Card as an ID and keep it in a safe place, do not carry it on you.

Protect Yourself Online

Use a strong password – Make passwords more complicated by creating word phrases and/or using a combination of special characters, letters, and numbers. If possible, activate multi-factor authentication.

Be wary of public WiFi – Public WiFi is not a secure place to access your financial or personal information as it can be compromised by hackers. Wait until you are at home to access your information.

Be careful of phishing – Be cautious before you click on links you receive. Thieves may impersonate organizations such as the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) to contact you. The CRA will not email or text you a link to your refund or send you a link to an online form for personal/financial details.

Online safety - Do not overshare online as fraudsters may use those information and send you phishing emails or links that reflect your habits and organizations you use, in order to trick you into providing information or money.



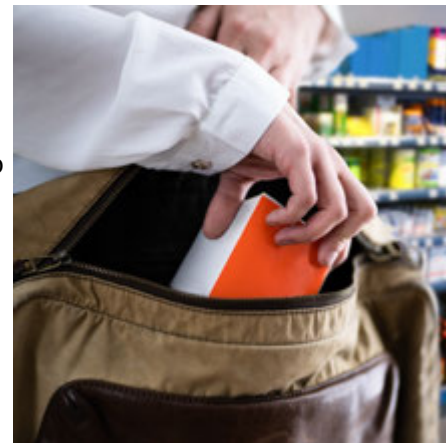
You Can Help Curb Shoplifting



Shoplifting is on the rise and has become a significant issue affecting businesses. It has evolved from individual acts to organized retail crime involving coordination and planning. This not only impacts businesses but also puts consumers at risk, as shoplifters may resort to violence. To address this, collaboration between stores, customers, and law enforcement is crucial. As a consumer, you can help by being patient and reporting any incidents of shoplifting to store employees, who are trained to handle such situations. Your cooperation can make a difference in combating this problem.

To be a good witness, focus on observing the shoplifter's appearance and practice describing people accurately. That is a skill that improves with practice. Begin by focusing on the person's physical appearance, starting from the head and moving down to the feet. Key details to note include height, age, gender, race, and facial features. Additionally, take note of distinguishing characteristics like tattoos, scars, earrings, and glasses, as these can be easily identifiable traits.

Lastly, pay attention to the clothing and headwear worn by the individual. Logos and designs on clothing and hats can help differentiate them from other brands. Describing these logos accurately is key to being a reliable witness. For instance, if you spot a shoplifter with a Vancouver Canucks logo on their hat, it's important to specify which logo you saw, whether it's the orca, stick and rink, or the black and yellow skate. Shoplifters may change their outfit while on the run, discarding easily disposable items like hats or bulky jackets. Therefore, focusing on the shoes of the person is crucial, as they often have unique features and are difficult to switch out while fleeing. Even simple white sneakers can have distinguishing characteristics like different-colored soles, hidden logos in the stitching, or specific designs.



In the heat of the moment, store employees may miss some details, making an additional observer valuable in confirming the identity of the shoplifter. Even if the shoplifter changes clothes, someone may have noticed a distinguishing detail that sets them apart from others. Thus, even as a customer, you can play a role in helping curb shoplifting by participating in the reporting process and aiding in identifying and prosecuting the shoplifter.



Left—Shoe description: Nike Red and white high top. Black shoe laces. Black Nike check mark. Red and white soles.

Right—Shoe description: Men's brown leather zip up ankle boots. Darker brown on the tip. Pull up tab on the back of the left shoe. Dotted pattern on the front of the left shoe.



Knock, Knock... Who's there?

The beginning of a “knock, knock” joke is an effective crime prevention habit. Asking the question “Who’s there?” is crucial to your safety and preventing a break and enter. Thieves sometimes knock on doors to check if anyone is home. If no one answers, it suggests that the residence is unoccupied. While it has become common practice to ignore doorbells and knocks out of disinterest, it is recommended to make your presence known. You do not have to open the door to communicate with the individual, you can talk through the door, wave at them from a window, or talk to them through a video doorbell. This allows the person at the front to know that someone is home and watching. The door or window creates a barrier for you to talk safely with the individual on the other side. A strength of a video door bell is that you are able to communicate with people at the door even if you are away. The imitation of someone being at home may be enough to confuse a thief and deter a break-in.

In addition, answering the door can also help you prevent other crimes such as package theft as some delivery companies ring the doorbell after drop off. Not only does responding to a door prevent a break and enter but it also suggests to potential intruders that people living here are highly alert. This might make thieves think twice before committing a crime as there are watchful neighbours in the area.



To Start a Block Watch Group

Interested in starting a Block Watch group? Let us tell you a little about Block Watch! Block Watch is a program that brings the police and the community together. This program helps you build connections and relationships with people in your neighbourhood and the police while striving for the common goal of crime prevention.

Select a Captain/Co-Captain

- ◇ Each Captain/Co-Captain to submit an application and will be contacted for a suitability interview. Candidates will then need to complete a free Police Information Check.

Recruit and build your group

- ◇ Upon confirmation from the Block Watch office on completing and passing all required steps in becoming a Captain/Co-Captain, you may begin to recruit homes that are near to you with the provided recruiting materials from the Block Watch office. To build an effective Block Watch, try to involve 50-75% of households in your area.

Complete activation of your team

1. **Complete** Block Watch Captain/Participant training – invite everyone in your group to participate in a virtual/in-person training session.
2. **Submit** your participating household list.
3. **Qualify** for Block Watch street signs once above steps are completed.

If you are interested in creating a Block Watch group in your area, email us your name and address at blockwatch@richmond.ca or call 604-207-4829.

BUSINESS LINK

WORKING TOGETHER TO PREVENT CRIME

NEWSLETTER

Checklist for your Business

As the seasons change, businesses are seeking to introduce new products and update their appearance. What aspects can you consider changing? The visual appeal of your store can impact how it is viewed by potential thieves. Conduct a thorough inspection of your business to identify areas that may require maintenance, updates, or enhancements.

Here are some safety precautions to keep in mind:

Electronic Crime Prevention Tools

What types of electronic crime prevention tools do you currently utilize? Most businesses will have lights, security cameras, and alarms. It is important to ensure that all three of these tools are functioning properly and easily accessible when needed. Bright lighting is essential for illuminating key areas and detecting suspicious activities, while security cameras provide additional surveillance capabilities. Installing cameras inside and outside the establishment can offer real-time notifications and valuable footage for police investigations in case of a break-in. Alarms, such as motion and glass break alarms, play a vital role in alerting individuals to unauthorized entries. Overall, a combination of bright lighting, security cameras, and alarms are essential for maintaining the safety and security of a business.

Quality of Points of Entry

The security of your business heavily relies on the quality of your doors and windows, as they serve as the initial line of defense. It is essential to assess both the interior and exterior of your premises. Consider potential entry points and vulnerabilities from a thief's perspective. Enhance the security of your doors by installing commercial-grade door guards and grade 1 deadbolts, which can significantly impede unauthorized access attempts. Additionally, windows are another common target for intruders. Strengthen existing window locks with auxiliary locks and consider applying security film to reinforce the glass against break-ins. Remove any items or tools from the exterior that could aid in a break-in and consider adding security bars to windows for added visual deterrence and physical barrier. By implementing these security measures, you can better safeguard your business and reduce its appeal to potential thieves.

Please report all suspicious or criminal activity to the police.

Richmond RCMP Non-Emergency line [604-278-1212](tel:604-278-1212). If you witness a crime in progress, dial **9-1-1**.

Online reporting available at bc.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/richmond/report for the following:

- Damage/mischief to property under \$5,000
- Damage/mischief to a vehicle under \$5,000
- Hit and run to an unoccupied vehicle or property
- Theft of bicycle under \$5,000
- Theft under \$5,000
- Theft from vehicle under \$5,000
- Lost property

