EMBEZZLEMENT & PILFERAGE

Sometimes employees take only a few items, like office supplies, if they use company equipment, like cars or copying machines, for personal use. But embezzlement and pilferage can get bigger. Cashiers may use “short ring ups” - ringing up a lower price on the sales register to cover money taken from the till. Or they may overcharge customers and pocket the difference or undercharge other employees and friends.

Embezzlement can go from simple overloading of expenses to payments to non-existent companies. Watch for the following:

- Records are rewritten so they’ll look “neater.”
- Stock shortages increase in frequency or size.
- Employees refuse vacations or promotions.
- Business patterns change when certain employee is absent.
- Customers complain about errors in monthly statement.
- Collections decline.
- Employees seem sensitive to routine questions about procedures.

MAINTAIN STRICT INVENTORY CONTROL!

- There are many ways dishonest employees can cheat their employers.
- The best defense is frequent, thorough inventory control. Limit employees access to stock and inventory records. Periodically check trash bins, nooks and crannies. Conduct unexpected inventory checks so dishonest employees know they run the risk of being caught by surprise.

REMEMBER

It's your store, your merchandise and your profits!

SHOPLIFTING

Compliments of:

Coeur d'Alene Police Department

3818 Schreiber Way

Coeur d’Alene, ID 83814

208-769-2320

WARNING!

DO NOT SHARE YOUR PROFITS WITH SHOPLIFTERS!

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PUT A STOP TO SHOPLIFTING!

Shoplifters assume they won't get caught. So your strategy is to prove them wrong. The following TIPS require thought and ingenuity, but cost very little.

- Alert employees are your best defense. Make sure they are familiar with shoplifting laws. Establish procedures for them to follow if they suspect shoplifting.
- Make sure that you can see everything that goes on in your store. Keep counters low, no more than waist-high. Mount mirrors in corners so there are no blind spots.
- The use of video surveillance will discourage most shoplifting.
- Arrange counter and display tables so there is no direct path to an exit. Some stores put turnstiles at entrances so the only way out is to pass the checkout counter. Place expensive items in the center of the store away from exits.
- Arrange displays so that missing items are easily noticed. Place small items in neat rows or clearly defined patterns. If you must, fasten expensive merchandise with alarms. Reverse alternate hangers on hanging garments to prevent "grab and runs".
- Announce and observe a policy to prosecute shoplifters. The threat of being caught, questioned by the police, put on trial and maybe even put in jail, may be enough to discourage shoplifters. If someone ignores your warning, follow through. An empty threat is a meaningless gesture.

WHO ARE SHOPLIFTERS?

Professional shoplifters are skilled thieves who have specialized techniques. The pro is the hardest to deter and the most difficult to detect. The professional's targets are usually expensive items.

- Shoplifting isn't limited to professionals, the general public—frequently shoplift.
- Juveniles make up nearly half of all shoppers. Many do it just for kicks. Some teenagers even shoplift in gangs, and compete to see who can steel the most.

- Narcotic and drug addicts shoplift to support their habit. They are often desperate.
- Kleptomaniacs are persons who steel because of psychological compulsion. Stopping the kleptomaniac is a service to both the offender and the community.

WHAT SHOPLIFTERS USE

Shoplifters use the following to conceal items:

- Bulky clothing (coats, pants, maternity outfits) are often used to hide merchandise.
- Packages, bags, backpacks and purses are hiding places, and sometime they have false bottoms.

- Special props include hollowed-out books, fake casts, umbrellas, secret pockets, belts or hooks under coats.
- Folded newspapers or magazines are used to hide small or flat items.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Be aware of customer's hands— and their pockets, purses, handkerchiefs.
- Notice open packages, purses, shopping bags and backpacks.
- Keep an eye on people who wear baggy clothes or heavy outer garments out of season.
- Watch for customers who are nervous, have wandering eyes, are loitering or lingering in hidden areas.
- Watch groups of people, especially if a person tries to distract you.

Remember, a store with a reputation for good security and tough prosecution policy is a less likely target for shoplifters!

EMPLOYEES ARE NOT EXEMPT!

Some experts believe businesses lose more to employee theft than to burglary, robbery and shoplifting combined. Examine your management practices. Make your employees feel that they've got a stake in your business. Then they won't be tempted to steal it away!