

Armed Robbery – Prevention and Response

You should develop appropriate strategies around how cash is handled and sensible business precautions and procedures to reduce the risk of armed robbery to your business. You should also know what to do if your business becomes a victim of armed robbery.

Cash handling

- Do not keep large amounts of cash on hand and advertise the fact that minimum cash is held on the premises.
- Bank regularly but vary the times of banking and routes taken to the bank. Use two staff members for banking where possible. Larger businesses may consider security pickup of cash.
- Don't use a bank bag, use a less conspicuous bag.
- Remind staff to be on the alert whilst carrying cash.
- Cash should never be counted in view of the public and never leave cash lying around.
- Never talk in public about cash handling procedures.
- Electronic beepers or other devices should be installed to indicate when people are entering and leaving your premises.
- Shop frontage should be uncluttered providing a clear view to the street. If possible, place your service area in clear view of the street frontage. Have open glass store fronts where possible.
- Ensure you have adequate exterior and interior lighting.
- Consider a silent alarm that is connected to a security company and can be activated from near your cash drawer or register.
- Consider the installation of a security camera that can capture good quality images of the offender/s committing the armed robbery. Ensure that you have a high quality data storage system which has not been reused to the extent that the quality is affected.



How to reduce the risk of armed robbery

- Be aware of any suspicious activity near any business. Note the descriptions of any suspicious vehicles and/or persons and inform the police immediately.
- Ensure all doors and windows at the rear of your premises are secured with deadlocks, key locks and/or bars.
- Ensure security camera has unobscured vision of the counter area and that the camera is angled at the right position for face height.
- Consider installing a video screen displaying footage of customers during service. Ensure the screen is in view of customers as this may deter illegal activity.
- Train staff in downloading CCTV footage so that Police have access immediately.

- Ensure that measurement sticks on doors are accurately placed at the right height so that offender can be appropriately measured.
- Have rough height guides in store, e.g. know the height of magazine racks etc. so that comparison can be made to identify a correct height for the offender.
- Ensure that staff are given proper instructions by management to give over all that is requested of them by the armed robber. Instil the mentality that staff safety is paramount.
- Ensure that you have enough insurance to cover any potential losses and inform staff that insurance will cover losses. Some staff members may be concerned about the consequences of handing over money.
- Stay out of danger if you are not directly involved and if you can leave the building safely, do so and then raise the alarm.
- Phone the Police emergency number 000 if you or some other responsible member of your staff is able to do so without danger. If possible keep the line open.
- Alarms should be activated if it is safe to do so. If there is any danger in activating the alarm wait until the threat has gone.

What to do after an armed robbery

- When offender leaves, do not pursue them, use this opportunity to make as many observations as you can including direction and method of departure.
- Phone police first on 000 and management second.
- If necessary administer first aid/comfort to any injured persons and request ambulance.
- At this time secure the premises and do not touch anything in the area where the offence occurred. Place a notice in the front window stating you are closed due to an armed robbery.
- Isolate areas where the offender/s stood, touched, spat or bled immediately and indicate to police on arrival.
- Record all observations as quickly as you can after the robbery. Use the offender description form which is provided in this package.
- Please also note the offender/s level of aggression, tone, confidence or lack of, posturing, stance, weapons confidence, ordering and appearance. This may provide information as to the offender/s level of experience.

- Ask all witnesses to stay until the police arrive. Ask witnesses not to discuss the incident prior to talking to police. If a witness wants to leave, you have no right to hold them. Ask them to provide some identification and take down all their details. Provide this information to police as soon as they arrive. Offenders sometimes have accomplices posing as customers during a robbery.

How to assist the Police

Key things to remember:

- The time of the offence.
- The time the offender left the premises.
- The weapon/s used or implied.
- A description of the offender.
- What the offender took.
- Any evidence at the scene.
- The direction the offender left in.
- Any transportation of the offender used including type, make, model, colour, registration and number of occupants.
- Witnesses to the event (they should still be in the premises).

If you are a victim of an armed robbery

- Consider your safety at all times. Obey the offender's instructions, but do only what you are told and nothing more. Do not volunteer any information.
- All armed offenders must be treated as dangerous. Some may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol and may react in an unpredictable way.
- Try to remain calm. It can reduce the chance of the offender becoming violent and may enhance your attention to detail.
- Keep your distance from the offender. When asked to hand over the money, place it on the counter and take a step back.
- Keep your hands in sight at all times. If you need to move your hands out of the offender's sight, ask for permission and await approval.
- Be deliberate in your actions. If you are ordered to hand money to the offender, start with lower denomination notes.

Victims

Victims of armed robbery frequently suffer trauma after the event. The police have victim liaison officers who can provide advice and assist you in accessing counselling.

**Victims of crime
(Police assistance – ACT only)**

Victim Liaison Officer

City Police Station
London Circuit, Canberra City
Telephone: 6245 7441
Email: Victims-Liaison-office@afp.gov.au