

BUSINESS WATCH PROGRAM

THE HANDBOOK



El Paso County Sheriff's Office

27 East Vermijo Avenue
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

www.epcsheriffsoffice.com

Business Watch Program : The Handbook



Business Watch Basics

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- Helpful Tips



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Robbery Prevention

- Helpful Tips



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EL PASO COUNTY

SHERIFF

Business Watch Basics



WHAT IS BUSINESS WATCH?

Business Watch is a program designed to improve the relationship between the El Paso County Sheriff's Office and local businesses. The goal is to provide community businesses with educational and up-to-date information regarding shoplifting, internal theft, burglary, robbery, and other aspects of crime prevention geared specifically toward businesses in El Paso County.

WHAT CAN BUSINESS WATCH DO?

Business Watch allows the Sheriff's Office to provide you with details about crime trends and current criminal activity through a communication network which can alert members of potential problems in a timely manner, as well as assisting businesses with crime prevention strategies which can help with several aspects of making your business less attractive to would-be offenders.



***LESSEN THE
OPPORTUNITIES
FOR CRIMINALS.***

Employment Considerations

IMPROVE THE LEVEL OF YOUR PERSONNEL:

Screen applicants thoroughly; hire only quality employees

- Check references and contact previous employers
- Perform credit checks
- Use a drug screening process
- Use polygraph tests (if allowed)
- Perform background checks
- Keep employee information up to date

Create a company culture of honesty

- Make your expectations known to employees. Inform them of your code of ethics, your security policy and clearly identify unacceptable behavior
- Require a high level of integrity from managers: employees need to see their supervisors held to the same level of integrity
- Treat employees fairly and with respect in order to increase loyalty
- Provide a supportive and safe environment for employees to report thefts or other abuses they witness

STAY ALERT TO INTERNAL CONCERNS:

Audit Control Methods

- Create deliberate errors to ensure checks and balances of daily deposits
- Conduct unannounced inspections/audits; especially on items you have in inventory
- Change strategies; do not let employees know the methods you use for audits; if they must know, then be sure to occasionally change your routine

Burglary Prevention

ASSESS POTENTIAL SECURITY RISKS

Pretend you are a burglar. Stand outside, look at your business and try to imagine how you would get in. Then go inside and imagine what you would try to steal and how you would accomplish it. Every potential issue you identify needs to be corrected.

BE PREPARED & AWARE

Teach employees to be very observant of their surroundings, both inside and outside the business. Stress they need to be consistent about using the correct safety and security procedures.

DO NOT ALLOW LOITERING

Loitering is simply people hanging around your business with no legitimate reason. Contact the Sheriff's Office if loitering becomes a problem.

TAKE ACTION AGAINST LOITERING

- Loitering can discourage customers from coming into your business
- Loitering can lead to harassment
- Loitering can create a bad image for your business

HELPFUL TIPS



KEY CONTROL

- Keep a record of all keys issued
- Consider having locks re-keyed
- Have employees sign keys out



LIGHTING

- Illuminate your entire property, especially at night
- Consider using timers on lights
- Maintain interior lighting at a level that allows clear visibility into all buildings

Burglary Prevention



SAFES

- Limit the number of people who have access
- Anchor the safe firmly to the floor
- Money, checks, credit card machines should be stored in a secured location



DOORS / LOCKS / HINGES

- Doors should be secured with heavy-duty dead bolts
- Attach the strike plate to the door frame with 4" screws
- The door frame **MUST** be as strong as the door
- All exterior doors should be constructed of steel aluminum alloy or solid-core hard wood
- All outside hinges should have non-removable hinge pins



WINDOWS

- First floor windows should be protected with burglar-resistant glass
- Install bars, grilles, grates, or heavy-duty wire screening
- Sliding glass windows and single or double-hung sash windows should have locking pins, bolts, locks or swing latches



ALARMS

- Understand law enforcement policy when deciding on alarm services
- Have a battery backup, fail-safe system for any alarm installed
- Consider location of alarm (e.g. holdup or silent alarm)
- Change codes after employees end employment



TOOLS and EQUIPMENT

- Invest in engraving tools and equipment
- Machines should be secured by installing locks that secure the equipment into place
- Tools and portable equipment should be secured in drawers or cabinets at the end of each day

Check and Credit Card Fraud

CHECK CASHING PRECAUTIONS

- Only accept local checks with current names and addresses printed on them
- Do not accept checks with alterations
- Require government-issued identification with all checks
- Do not accept post dated checks
- Do not accept two-or-more party checks

REFUSING A CHECK

- Merchants ARE NOT obligated to take checks
- Never accept a check from a person who appears intoxicated

CREDIT CARD PROTECTION

- Ask for identification with EVERY purchase; compare signatures
- If you are using carbons, destroy all of them
- Purchase credit card machines that provide approval numbers automatically; and do not accept credit cards if the machine is not functioning

CREDIT CARD FRAUD (If suspicious)

- Check the validation and expiration dates
- Call the company for authorization
- Learn and USE the code to alert the credit card company of your suspicions
- Follow any and all instructions given to you by the credit card company
- Check the signature on the back of the card with the signature on the sales draft



Robbery Prevention

MAKE THE STORE ATTRACTIVE TO CUSTOMERS, NOT TO ROBBERS!

- Keep the store neat and clean
- Keep the store well stocked
- Get away from the sales counter when there are no customers in the store
- Consider closed circuit television recording devices

SPOT POSSIBLE HIDING PLACES OUTSIDE THE STORE

- Take note of possible escape routes from the store
- After dark, observe lighting and dark corners
- Keep shrubbery and trees well-trimmed and maintained

KEEP ALERT AT ALL TIMES

- Notice what is happening outside of the business
- Be aware of parked cars
- Look for anyone who may be watching the business or loitering
- If you see ANY suspicious activity, CALL THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE IMMEDIATELY!

GIVE A FRIENDLY GREETING TO EVERYONE WHO ENTERS THE STORE

- Look customers in the eye
- Ask persons who are alone if they need assistance, customers like attention, robbers do not!

KEEP THE CASH REGISTER FUND TO A MINIMUM

- Drop all large bills immediately, do NOT keep large amounts of cash in the register
- Make deposits regularly and change patterns so that robbers are not familiar with your routine

TAKE EXTRA PRECAUTIONS AFTER DARK

- Always be aware of your surroundings
- If at all possible, do not work alone
- Have car keys in hand, do not fumble around trying to find them

Additional Sheriff's Office Resources

Citizens' Academy:

719-520-7216

The Citizens' Academy gives citizens an inside look at the various functions of the Sheriff's Office. Participants tour the El Paso County Jail and courthouse, go on a ride-along with a deputy and learn about the responsibilities of each division from the staff who work there.

Sheriff's Citizen Patrol:

719-520-7216

This program utilizes citizen volunteers to perform law enforcement-related duties that do not require sworn officers, including traffic control, parking issues, and crime prevention.

Ride-Along Program:

719-520-7270

This program allows citizens to ride with patrol deputies during normal shifts so they can observe incidents and situations deputies respond to every day.

9-1-1 Education:

719-390-5555

The Communications Center offers instruction concerning how Emergency Medical Dispatch works and the proper use of 9-1-1.

Victim Assistance Program:

719-520-7272

Full-time professional staff employees and dedicated victim advocate volunteers are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to assist crime victims and their families.

Volunteer Coordinator:

719-520-7216

The Volunteer Coordinator can provide information on volunteer opportunities available throughout the El Paso County Sheriff's Office.

Crime Tips:

719-520-7777

This is a non-emergent tip line which is checked during business hours. Tips requiring immediate action should be given to the El Paso County Dispatch Center at 390-5555.

Community Affairs & Research:

shrcommunity@elpasoco.com

This unit coordinates EPSO participation at community events, strengthens relationships within the community and supports a healthy interaction between law enforcement and the community we serve.

Helpful Phone Numbers



El Paso County Sheriff's Office
(non-emergency Dispatch number)

(719) 390-5555

epcsheriffsoffice.com



Colorado Springs Police
Department

(non-emergency Dispatch number)

(719) 444-7000

coloradosprings.gov/police-department



Fountain Police Department
(non-emergency Dispatch number)

(719) 382-8555

fountaincolorado.org



Colorado State Patrol

(non-emergency Dispatch number)

(719) 544-2424

csp.state.co.us



Colorado Department of
Transportation

(Road Conditions)

(877) 315-7623

cotrip.org



El Paso County Department of
Transportation

(719) 520-6460

Emergencies

9-1-1



Crime Prevention & Business Watch
Coordinator

Office: (719) 520-7151

NeighborhoodWatch@elpasoco.com

SCAN HERE
FOR MORE
INFORMATION



flowcode.com/page/crimeprevention