

Property Protection

Theft and Vandalism on the Rise, Protect Your Business

THEFT AND vandalism against business has been growing rapidly, with 28% of businesses reporting an increase from 2021 to 2022, according to a new report.

Only 3% of organizations polled in “The State of Physical Security Entering 2023” survey by Pro-Vigil reported a decrease in such crimes, while 59% said it had stayed the same.

Burglaries, robberies and vandalism can be devastating to small businesses in terms of money, customers and employee safety. Mitigating this risk can be difficult since gaps in insurance may leave firms unprotected.

Here are some considerations to safeguard your firm:

Burglary prevention

Establish clear policies about employee theft, crime reporting, opening and closing, and other security procedures. Provide training for all employees on these procedures.

Use good locks, safes and alarm systems, keep detailed inventories and banking records and have back-up copies off-premises. Engrave your company name on valuable office equipment and tools.

Fit outside entrances and security doors with deadbolt locks. Security doors should be metal lined; secure them with metal crossbars and install security hinges or peen hinge pins.

Remove expensive items from window displays. Light the outside, especially around doors and windows, and keep lights covered or high to prevent tampering.

If you have a safe, leave it open when empty, as well as the cash register. Change the combinations and keys when an employee that has had access leaves the business.

Robbery prevention

If confronted by a robber, your employees should cooperate with them. To minimize risk, employees should greet every person who enters in a friendly manner, as personal contact can discourage a would-be criminal.

Keep windows clear of displays and signs and make sure the business is well-lit. Eliminate any blind spots that may hide a robbery in progress. Instruct employees to report any suspicious activity or person, and write down any information, like car license plate, for future reference.

Make your bank deposits often, and during business hours. Do not establish a pattern; take different routes and times.

Vandalism prevention

Annual damage in the United States due to vandalism is in the billions.

Use landscape designs, building materials, lighting or fences to discourage vandals. Clean up any vandalism after it happens, and work with local law enforcement to report vandalism.

Consider organizing a “business watch” that is modeled after the neighborhood watch. Be alert and report suspicious behavior to law enforcement immediately, even if it means taking a chance on being wrong.

The takeaway

Crime and theft prevention are key to keeping your premises, inventory and machinery safe. You should have in place procedures for all of the above to ensure the safety of your property and your employees. ❖



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