

BUSINESS CRIME WATCH

BAY CITY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY December 2019 EDITION 4, VOLUME 12



SAFETY TIPS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

The holidays often mean increased sales, new inventory and more customers for retail businesses, with November and December accounting for as much as 30 percent of a retailer's annual sales. This time of year can also bring greater risks for retailers, from losses due to employee theft, to accidents caused by overstocked shelves.

"With increased inventory and the hiring of seasonal employees, the holidays can be a more vulnerable time for a retail business," says Scott Humphrey, a Travelers Risk Control professional who says injuries and employee theft are two issues that can become more prevalent during the holiday season.

Inexperienced employees can be more prone to injuries and accidents, with one in four employees suffering injuries within the first year of employment, according to a 2014 Travelers study. And more than a third of the \$44 billion retailers lost to "inventory shrink" in 2014 was due to employee/internal theft, according to the National Retail Federation.² Shoplifting, administrative and paperwork errors, vendor fraud or error and unknown causes accounted for the remainder of losses.

Taking steps to prepare well before the holiday season begins can help retailers avoid these common problems.

Hiring Seasonal Workers Early and Training Properly

Start the hiring process early to allow enough time to fully vet employees. This includes conducting background checks and planning sufficient time for onboarding seasonal hires. After a new hire has been on boarded, evaluate his or her level of experience before assigning specific tasks. If possible, pair new workers with more experienced employees until the newer workers can perform the job on their own.

Help Prevent Employee Theft

An increase in workers can mean an increased potential for theft, according to Humphrey. With more merchandise and more employees present during the holidays, it's important to have steps in place to protect your inventory. Evaluate daily transactions, review security camera videos and validate voided or deleted sales to help mitigate theft.

It can help to have cameras and supervisors visible on the sales floor. Clearly communicate company policies and protocols on theft, and consistently enforce them when appropriate.

Maintain a Safe Workplace Environment

Create an environment for workers that values and promotes safe practices, such as safe use of ladders and good housekeeping to reduce the risk of a slip, trip or fall. This can help protect both employees and customers, and is particularly important during the holidays, when stores see increased foot traffic and inventory occupying more space. Toward this end, consider:

- Choosing decorations wisely. Some decorations may be combustible. Paper, decorated trees and wreaths will increase the fire load in an area. Keep these and other similar decorations away from heat or other ignition sources.
- Carefully selecting locations for any additional holiday displays and products. Be sure not to cover emergency exit signs, overcrowd aisles or clutter any place that would make it difficult to get out in an emergency.
- Maintaining appropriate inventory levels. Avoid overcrowding backrooms and other storage areas. Remember that overstocking shelves could lead to merchandise falling onto staff or customers.

Having the right insurance coverage in place can also make a difference to the bottom line if something goes wrong. A consultation with an insurance agent can help make sure a retailer's coverage is up-to-date. It also can account for changes in inventory and new workers.

The holiday season can be a make-or-break time for retail businesses. With preparation, retailers can start the season with well-trained employees, better inventory controls and safely stocked shelves that will make for an enjoyable shopping experience, encouraging customers to return year-round.

BUSINESS CRIME WATCH NEWSLETTER UPDATE

Beginning in January of 2020, our Business Crime Watch Newsletters will be sent out every quarter. You can expect to receive a Business Crime Watch Newsletter in March, June, September and December.

BAY CITY BUSINESS CRIME UPDATES

11/5- A downtown business reported vandalism they discovered on the roof of their building. It appeared access was gained to the roof by the fire escape. Once on the roof, someone spray painted graffiti.

11/08- An east side dollar store reported receiving a counterfeit \$100.00 bill from a regular customer. The customer has been identified by police and is mentally handicapped. This incident has been turned over to the prosecutor's office for review.

11/08- An east side dollar store reported a retail fraud. The suspects were described as a white female with a scar above her right eye and a white male. They were last seen in an older tan Subaru SUV.

11/10- Officer were dispatched to a burglary alarm at a west side convenience store. Upon arrival, they discovered damage to the front glass door. Upon review of the security footage, an unknown individual threw a brick at the front glass door twice, which set off the alarm. Entry was not gained into the business.

11/12- An east side dollar store reported a possible retail fraud. At this time, it is unknown if anything was actually stolen.

11/18- Two west side convenience stores reported retail fraud complaints involving the same suspects. Officers were able to identify one of the suspects. The second suspect was identified after the department utilized Facebook and posted a request with help identifying the second suspect. Warrant requests were sent to the prosecutor's office on both suspects.

11/18- An east side convenience store reported a retail fraud. The employee was able to give central dispatch a very detailed description of the suspect and direction of travel. The suspect was located a few blocks away and placed under arrest.

11/19- Officers were investigating a stolen vehicle near an east side convenience store. During the search of the vehicle, they located a bottle of unopened alcohol. Officer checked with an employee of the convenience store and the bottle of alcohol was stolen from the store.

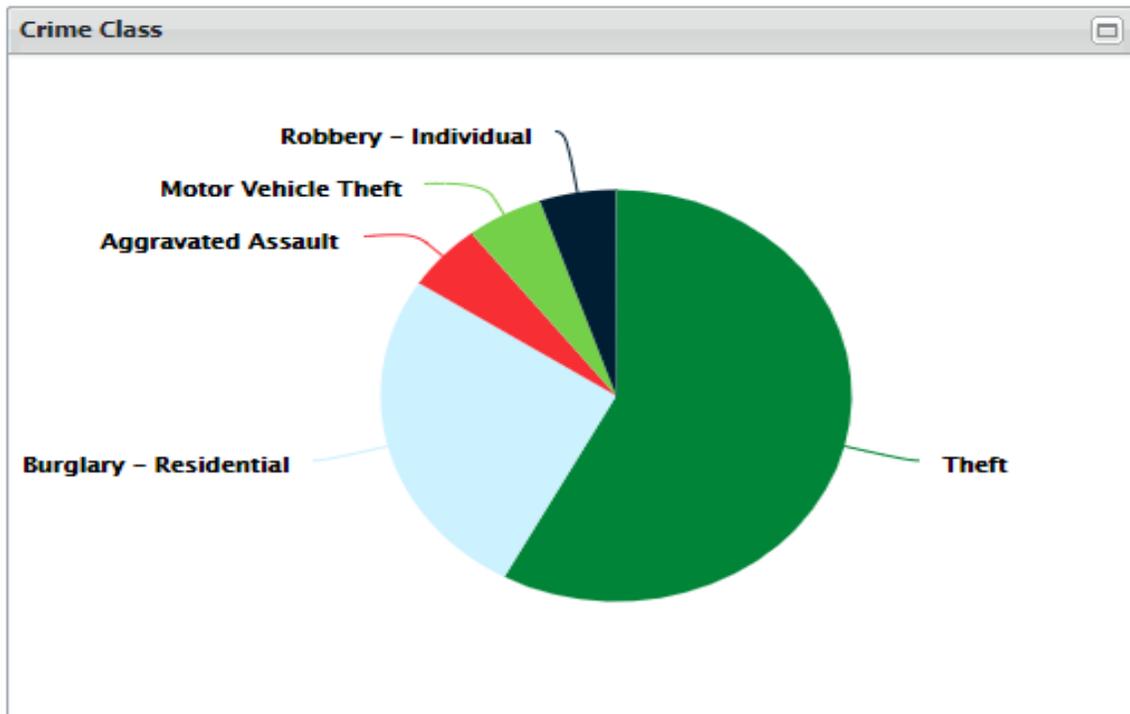
11/22- An east side restaurant reported an embezzlement. An employee had been adding a tip amount to customer's bills who paid with a card and keeping the cash from the till. The employee was also comping meals for customers who paid with cash and keeping the money. This complaint is still under investigation.

11/26- An east side convenience store reported a retail fraud. The suspect attempted to steal three cans of beer from the store, but was confronted by the owner. The suspect was identified by police and a warrant request was sent to the prosecutor's office.

LEXIS NEXIS

The Bay City Department of Public Safety is now utilizing Lexis Nexis Crime Mapping technology to track and report crime within the City of Bay City.

<https://communitycrimemap.com> is a public website which allows you to view criminal activity reported within Bay City. Below is an analytic map of reported crime within the city from 11/01/19 to 11/30/19



Boards and Committees

- Zoning Board of Appeals - Canceled
December 10, 2019, 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM @ Commission Chambers
- Historic District Commission
December 11, 2019, 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM @ Commission Chambers
- Planning Commission
December 18, 2019 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM @ Commission Chambers

City Commission

- Finance Policy Meeting
December 02, 2019, 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM @ Commission Chambers
December 16, 2019, 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM @ Commission Chambers
 - Special Finance Policy Meeting
No meeting this month
 - City Commission Meeting
December 02, 2019, 7:30 PM - 8:30 PM @ Commission Chambers
December 16, 2019, 7:30 PM - 8:30 PM @ Commission Chambers
 - Commission Orientation
December 09, 2019 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM @ Conference Room 306
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