



Crime Prevention

The economic effect of crime on small businesses can be crippling, and one can only hint at its magnitude. One reason for this is the tendency to mask the problem with such terms as inventory shrinkage, shortage or profit loss, as if crime is to be taken as a normal consequence of being in business. Since these crimes may go unreported and are often accepted as part of doing business, prevention measures might not be considered by some business owners. Crimes against businesses tend to attract less attention than those against individuals or their property, even being seen by some as “victimless” offenses. However, the consequences can be far reaching — impacting the personal well-being of staff, business viability and vitality, the local economy, and the community as a whole.

Crime, such as burglary, robbery, vandalism, shoplifting, employee theft and fraud, costs businesses billions of dollars each year. Crime can be particularly devastating to small businesses, which lose both customers and employees when crime and fear claim a neighborhood.

All great businesses are built on a foundation of good, solid, reliable employees. Conducting pre-employment screening ensures that your investment in your people pays dividends in the future and helps guarantee a stable and efficient workforce. A great deal of information is available to an employer willing to invest the time and make a reasonable effort to screen employees.

Employers have numerous options available for screening applicants, such as resumes and job applications, reference checks, interviews and background checks. While some may be time consuming and expensive, many are fairly straightforward and cost-effective. The failure to investigate properly could have even more severe consequences.

What should be included in a background check?

- Driving records (MVRs)
- Vehicle registration
- Credit records
- Criminal records
- Social Security number
- Education records
- Past employment work history
- Military records
- Reference checks
- Bankruptcy
- State licensing records

There are many companies that specialize in employment screening. This can range from individuals commonly known as private investigators and online data brokers, to companies that do nothing but employment screening.

With the information age upon us, it is easy for employers to gather background information themselves. Much of it is computerized, allowing employers to log on to public records and commercial databases directly via the Internet. Finding one of these online companies can be easily accomplished by searching for websites that specialize in background checks.

Recently, violence in the workplace has received considerable attention in the popular press and among safety and health professionals. Much of the reason for this attention is the reporting of data by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) regarding the magnitude of this problem in U.S. workplaces.

Violence is a substantial contributor to death and injury on the job. NIOSH data indicates that homicide has become the second-leading cause of occupational injury death, exceeded only by motor vehicle-related deaths. Workplace violence is not distributed randomly across all workplaces, but is clustered in particular occupational settings. More than half (56%) of workplace homicides occurred in retail trade and service industries. Homicide is the leading cause of death in these industries, as well as in finance, insurance and real estate. Eighty-five percent of nonfatal assaults in the workplace occur in service and retail trade industries.

Security measures to consider:

- Parking lot security
- Closed-circuit television
- Credit card and check fraud prevention
- Robbery and violence prevention
- Burglary prevention
- Alarm systems
- Preventing employee theft
- Shoplifting prevention
- Controlling visitors