

# An Garda Síochána Crime Prevention Information Sheet



## Preventing Customer Theft



### Theft From Shops

An Garda Síochána, through its Theft from Shop Strategy encourages retailers to adopt and promote shop-lifting crime prevention measures.



This Information leaflet outlines some facts about shoplifting and advises on ways to prevent customer theft.

A detailed analysis of thefts from shops by An Garda Síochána Analysis Service found:

- In December, Clothes and Cosmetic thefts increase.
- Groceries, Clothing, Cosmetics or Alcohol account for just over three quarters of all thefts.
- Around one in five thefts involve the theft of cosmetics; mainly from pharmacies.
- Grocery theft remains the highest volume theft type.
- Supermarkets are targeted in over 40% of theft from shops. Small shops, convenience stores & service stations make up 19%

According to the Central Statistics Office, 2016 Quarter 2, Recorded Crime Report, Theft from Shop offences decreased by 2.7% to 21,885

The Irish Small and Medium Enterprise Association, I.S.M.E., reported that the direct shoplifting cost to retailers in 2015 was in excess of €255m, of which €56m occurred at Christmas alone. It is estimated that shoplifting alone adds up to 3% to the price of products.

### Times Offences Are Committed

Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays are the most common days for thefts from shop.

Almost two thirds of all thefts from shop occur between 12pm and 6pm.

#### Alcohol Theft

One in four thefts of alcohol occur between 2pm and 10pm on Friday or Saturday.

Views of alcohol shelves and coolers should be clear. Alcohol should be kept away from exits.

#### Grocery Theft

Grocery theft tends to occur in the afternoon with half of all thefts occurring between 1pm and 6pm.

Robust stock controls will identify theft patterns which can be remedied.

#### Cosmetics Theft

Half of all cosmetics thefts occur between 1pm and 6pm from Tuesday to Saturday.

Consider posting warning signs on high risk merchandise to alert thieves that these items are subject to extra surveillance.

#### Clothing Theft

Over one in three thefts of clothing occur on Thursday or Friday, peaking in the afternoon.

Consider increasing electronic tagging and hiring more staff for high risk periods.

#### Thefts from Pharmacies

Over 40% of all thefts of cosmetics occur in pharmacies, particularly in November and December.

Consider rearranging your pharmacy and put high risk products further from exits and in full view of staff.

**Turn over for more security tips.**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS OR OTHER CRIME PREVENTION ISSUES,  
PLEASE CONTACT

your local GARDÁ CRIME PREVENTION OFFICER

or

visit the Garda website at [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)

# Preventing Customer Theft

## Types of Shoplifter:

**Opportunist:** Could be anyone, unattended goods taken / little risk of getting caught

**Persistent:** Regular thief, mixing purchased goods with stolen goods, could be a frequent customer

**Young people:** Usually engage in thefts in groups or through peer pressure

**Substance Abusers:** Target high value goods to fund drug habits

**Professional:** Target high value goods, take large quantities & nearly always work in groups. If well known could be disguised

## Security Tips

**Store Design:** Design the store lay out so customers must pass the register area and staff to exit the store. Never leave the register unlocked or unattended. Do not display merchandise near the store exits. Avoid multiple entrances and exits

**Tidy Up:** Keep the store neat and orderly. Full displays and straightened shelves allow employees to see at a glance if something is missing.

**View All:** Use mirrors to eliminate blind spots in corners that might hide shoplifters. Maintain adequate lighting in all areas of the store. Keep fixtures and displays low for better visibility.

**Under Lock and Key:** Place small and or expensive items in locked cabinets or behind the counter. Toilets and dressing rooms should be watched at all times. Keep dressing rooms locked and limit the number of items taken in by each customer. Use alarms on unlocked exits and close or block off unused checkout aisles.

**Signage:** Signs and posters reinforcing security messages should be used. 'Private Areas' should be clearly marked.

**Security:** Use security equipment such as closed circuit television and security tags. Uniformed security guards are also a useful visual deterrents to the shoplifter.



**Staffing:** Schedule an adequate number of employees to work at one time and provide security training including part time staff.

**Greetings:** Greet every customer that enters the store. This lets the customer know you are aware of their presence. Make yourself available to all customers and never leave the store unattended.

**Helping Hand:** Approach the suspicious person and ask if he/she is finding everything okay. Mention that you'll be near by should he/she need your help. Make the shoplifter feel watched.

**Receipts:** Give each customer a receipt for every purchase. Require receipts for refunds for cash. Bin any discarded receipts immediately.

**Stay Focused:** Don't allow customers to distract the cashier while another person is being checked out.

**Store Security Code:** If you notice suspicious activities, alert other employees immediately. Many stores have a security code to alert staff of possible shoplifters.

**Tag Swap:** Cashiers should watch price tags and be on the lookout for price switching. Ask for a price check if something seems out of place.

**Hidden Items:** Shoe boxes, pocket books, baskets with lids and any other product easily opened should be inspected by cashiers to be sure it does not contain other merchandise.

**Sealed Shut:** Every bag should be stapled closed, with the sale receipt attached.

**Business Watch:** Set up or join a business watch scheme. Working together businesses can prevent theft from shops through attention and consultation

*The advice contained in this information sheet is not intended to be exhaustive or absolute. Nothing contained in this publication should be interpreted as mandatory, obligatory or designed to conflict with any statutory regulations.*

**Useful Numbers :**  
Garda Confidential Number : 1800 666 111  
Crime Stoppers; 1800 25 00 25  
Crime Call: 1800 40 50 60  
Crime Victims Helpline: 116 006

Issued by the National Crime Prevention Unit,  
Garda Bureau of Community Engagement,  
Harcourt Square, Dublin 2.  
Tel: (01) 6663362 Email: [NCPU@garda.ie](mailto:NCPU@garda.ie)