



Shoplifting is a drain on your profits. Stopping shoplifting must make good business sense

Shoplifting according to the Theft Act 1968 is defined as - a person who dishonestly takes property belonging to another, with the intention of permanently depriving the other of that property is guilty.

North Yorkshire Police provide the following advice on their web site northyorkshirepolice.uk/staying-safe/safety-business

Suspicious behavior

- Attempting to avoid attention or being noticed
- Repeatedly browsing – picking up/putting back the same items
- Looking round the store rather than at the products
- Sweating, becoming flushed or looking nervous
- Wearing clothing that is not appropriate for the weather that could be used to conceal goods, or carrying large bag

Positive action

- If someone is behaving oddly or suspiciously, let them know they have been noticed. Some ideas include approaching to ask if the person needs help with their purchase, or rearranging stock and tidying shelves in the same aisle.
- Join the local crime prevention initiatives. They can often make you aware of known shoplifters to look out for.

Power of arrest

If you have witnessed a crime being committed, you can undertake a citizen's arrest. You can only exercise your citizen's power of arrest when:

- It is not reasonably practical for a police officer to make the arrest
- The arrest will prevent the person causing physical harm to themselves or anyone else
- The arrest will prevent the person from causing loss or damage to property
- The arrest will prevent the person from making off before a police constable can take responsibility for them

Common tactics

- Distraction theft is where a group of people will enter a store and distract staff in order to steal.
- Bagging is where stolen items will be placed in metal-lined bags that the thieves bring with them to stop tagging alarms being activated on leaving the store.
- Hiding is where stolen items will be concealed in clothing, pram/pushchair under trays, handbags or in the packaging of less expensive goods, which the shoplifter will purchase.
- Walk-out techniques is where the shoplifter will simply walk out with no attempt at concealment hoping no-one will stop them.
- Price swapping is when the shoplifter will change the price tag to one with a lower price, then paying the low price at the till.
- Fake returns is when thieves will select an item in store then take it to the returns desk to obtain a refund claiming they have lost their receipt.
- 'Accidental' stealing is when thieves will pay for one item at the till but hold another in view/in a pocket. If caught, the offender will pass the theft off as an accident.

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