



# Vandalism Prevention Toolkit

## Security of Business Premises

Addressing security issues quickly and employing some basic risk management principles, can reduce the risk of crime for business, staff and customers. This toolkit provides important security advice and information however it is not intended to replace privately contracted security advice.

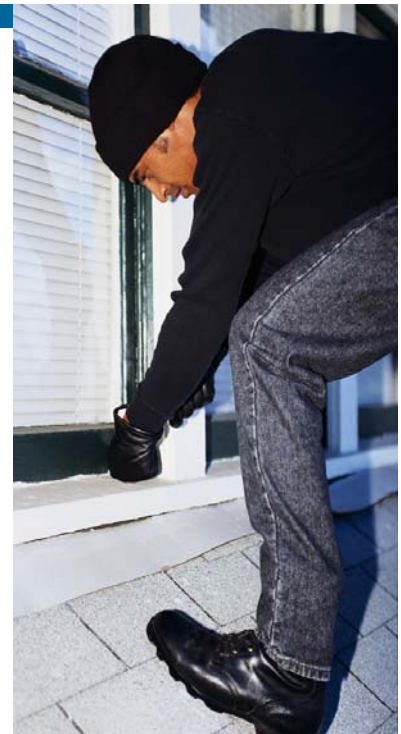
### The main aim of business security is to:

- Prevent the business being targeted by offenders
- Reduce the impact that crime can have on a business
- Reduce the rewards for the offender
- Increase the efforts required to access the premises and goods
- Increase the likelihood of an offender being identified and caught
- Assist R.C.M.P. in the apprehension process of any offender(s)

### Your level of security should depend on:

- The type of business or trade
- The nature of the business or stock
- The period of time that the premises is not occupied
- The location of the premises
- The history of offences on the premises/business

Inside this issue, you will find basic security tips on how to help protect your property and staff from potential acts of crime or vandalism. Additional Business Security Self Assessment forms are also provided with this toolkit. They will help you identify areas of vulnerability and provide suggestions to reduce the risk of crime against your business.



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## Further Information Contacts

**For urgent police, fire or ambulance attendance, dial 911.**



### Fort Saskatchewan R.C.M.P. Detachment:

For further crime prevention information, contact the Fort Saskatchewan R.C.M.P. Detachment at 780.992.6100  
Fax: 780.998.5299 .

### Crime Stoppers:

Call: 1.800.222.TIPS (8477) or visit on-line [www.crimestoppers.ca](http://www.crimestoppers.ca) or email: [www.tipssubmit.com](mailto:www.tipssubmit.com)

### Fort Saskatchewan Victim Services:

Call: 780.992.6100

### National Crime Prevention Council Canada:

Call: 1.877.302.6272 or visit [www.publicsafety.gc.ca](http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca)

### Alberta Occupational Health & Safety:

Call Toll Free: 1.800.416.8690 or Edmonton and surrounding area: 780.416.8690 or visit on-line at: <http://employment.alberta.ca>.

## Prevention: Basic Security Tips

1. Make sure aisles, lanes and other external areas are well lit. Lighting should be in good working order and regularly inspected.
2. Prune all trees and shrubs around your building to enable clear visibility. Ensure that this is maintained. *(Please do not trim City trees or shrubs. Contact the City's Public Works Department at 780.992.6248).*
3. Clear all building perimeters including fences of rubbish and potential climbing aids.
4. Maintain well built and adequately secured boundary gates and fences.
5. Fully secure all external doors and windows with good quality locking devices. Make sure they are regularly maintained. All doors should be of solid construction and well fitted.
6. Fasten steel doorjamb strengtheners to doorframes.
7. If padlocks are required to secure fixtures or items, confirm that selected locks meet or exceed the requirements of Alberta Standards and are appropriate for their intended use.
8. Lock away employees personal items in a locker or locked room.
9. Consider installation of security bars, screens, grills or roller shutters to vulnerable windows and / or skylights.
10. Consider installation of your own bollards, heavy planters or large rocks to act as ram raid barriers.
11. Avoid placing spirits or high value goods in the shop window, this can be an irresistible invitation for opportunists to "smash and grab".
12. Be helpful to your customer! A "Can I help you?" shows people in your business that you care but also that you are vigilant.
13. Consider installation of a monitored security alarm system.
14. Prominently display any signs indicating the presence of a security system, the continual surveillance of the premises and any other security measures present.
15. Consider installing electronic sensors to advise staff when customers are entering and leaving the business.
16. Install a good quality surveillance camera which will act not only as a deterrent but will assist R.C.M.P. in identifying offenders.
17. Minimize posters and curtains on shop windows (where possible) to ensure visibility to and from the street is maintained.
18. Ideally stand alone shelves within the store should be no more than 1.6 metres high thereby enabling clear visibility throughout the floor area by staff.
19. Secure and register all property of value including details of make, model, serial number, description, etc.
20. Clearly and permanently mark all property with your Business #, Store Name or other identifier.
21. Never leave large amounts of cash on premises overnight. Banking should be conducted during working hours.
22. If a safe is present on site, ensure that it is located in a secure position and affixed to a solid object.
23. Ensure all staff understand and obey lock-up procedures.
24. Advise local R.C.M.P. and any security provider of emergency after hour contacts for the business.



# Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)

## Where to use

- After hours surveillance of areas which have little or no natural surveillance such as passing motorists, pedestrians or employees.
- Areas at risk to vandalism, graffiti or other criminal offences.
- High-risk areas such as computer rooms or cash handling areas that are not adequately protected by staff surveillance.
- Entrances, exits, front counter areas etc.

## Equipment consideration

- Cameras – quality digital lenses provide quality images.
- Video recorders/computer hard drives – connected to cameras, continually recording.
- Copying facilities – to provide police with a copy of recorded footage.
- Signage - clearly displayed reminding customers that all activity is being recorded.
- Monitors - placed in a prominent position, easily observable by staff.

*It is important that staff know how to operate security equipment and that it is tested and checked regularly.*



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*“Don’t put yourself or others at risk. If someone tries to commit a robbery, theft or an act of vandalism, do not try to stop them. Report it by calling 911.”*

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## Positioning of cameras

- At places where the offender(s) is most likely to have to pass or want to access, such as building entry/exit points, cash registers, rear storerooms or areas where high value items are kept.
- Clearly visible if seeking to deter potential offenders.
- Placed at a height that captures a full view of the offenders face whilst not being obscured by other interferences.
- In areas where image capture will not be compromised by insufficient lighting.
- For CCTV to be useful for police purposes, the largest possible facial image of an offender is required. The usefulness of facial images captured is largely dependent upon the quality of the camera used and placement of cameras. Do not position cameras at heights that only provide vision of the top of a person’s head.

## Key/Access Card Control

- Maintain at all times to ensure internal security.
- Utilize security keys/cards that cannot be copied without authorization.
- Maintain a formal key/card register, ensuring that their issue and return is monitored.
- Utilize a lockable key/card storage cabinet which provides controlled and restricted access.
- Maintain strict control of all keys/cards. Keys/cards should be restricted to a minimum number of people and retrieved from ex-employees.

## Private Security

When selecting a security firm, ensure that the firm is registered with the Canadian Security Association (CANASA). To check whether a security company is registered, refer to their website at [www.canasa.org](http://www.canasa.org).

*It is advisable to select a company that has an established reputation for quality service.*



## Graffiti Vandalism

Graffiti vandalism is a significant problem for businesses, as graffiti detracts from the image that retailers work hard to maintain. This crime often occurs out of business hours, making many people believe that little can be done to prevent it. However, it is possible to substantially reduce the vulnerability of your premises to graffiti.

Is your business at risk from graffiti vandalism? YES NO

Does your building have blank walls? YES NO

After hours, is the building dark and an easy target for vandals? YES NO

Does your building have windows or glass doors which are potential surfaces for etching? YES NO

Do you leave graffiti up for days or weeks to be admired and added to by graffiti offenders? YES NO

Does your business sell spray paints or felt pens/markers? YES NO

Are spray paint or felt pens/markers sold by nearby retailers? YES NO

***If you answered YES to any of the above you could become or continue to be a victim of graffiti vandalism.***

*“Everyone needs to play a part in tackling crime effectively—the police and other public services, businesses and residents.”*

### Glass Etching

An expensive problem is the etching of scratches onto glass doors and windows. If you consider that your business premises may be at risk of this occurring you can add protection by applying a plastic film over the outside of the windows. This film can be removed if damaged and a fresh film applied, reducing the cost of window replacement. (See under "Coatings - Protective" in the Yellow Pages.)

Increased lighting over windows and doors can reduce your vulnerability.

## What is your approach to graffiti vandalism?

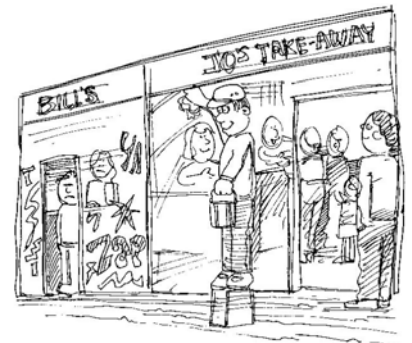
Do you:

- Report the graffiti to the R.C.M.P.? YES NO
- Remove graffiti by cleaning within 24 hours? YES NO
- Remove damaged items from view immediately? YES NO
- Organize commercial removal of graffiti within 48 hours? YES NO
- Call the City for advice in the removal of graffiti? YES NO
- Keep any potential graffiti implements you sell in locked cabinets and ensure that they are sold only to adults? YES NO

***If you answered NO to any of the above you should consider revising your current practices.***

### Graffiti Removal

It is important to remove or clean up vandalism and graffiti without delay. If customers see that the shopping environment is clear of graffiti, they are more likely to feel safe, secure and relaxed. Contact the City of Fort Saskatchewan’s Public Works Department at 780.992.6248 for advice on the removal of graffiti from porous or non-porous surfaces. When painting over graffiti, paint the entire wall or panel rather than the affected area only. This avoids creating a patchy surface and removes evidence that it was once a site for graffiti.



## Reducing Your Risk

Limit access to items that can be used to scale walls. Vandals often climb onto roofs so they can "tag" shop fronts etc. at a height that is difficult to clean off. Replace or clean outside equipment damaged by graffiti, e.g. commercial waste bins, storage bins.

Don't use graffiti images in advertising materials or in-store displays.

Avoid using problem materials such as "flat" or porous wall finishes in public areas as they are readily stained by graffiti dyes and difficult to maintain.

Materials such as strong, wear-resistant laminates, impervious glazed ceramics, treated masonry products, and stainless steel are superior alternatives. Lightweight timber and brittle (synthetic) fencing screens should be avoided in public areas.

Use graffiti-resistant paint. For example: Watty! Grano Shield or Vitraform clear sealer by Shipway can be used as a clear sealer over any painted surface; Pascol Anti-Graffiti clear sealer can be used on any unpainted concrete or brick surface.

Graffiti can be scrubbed off these surfaces with detergent and water up to five times before a second coat is required. Darker colours are thought to provide a less attractive surface for graffiti. Consider painting large surfaces with dark paint.

Consider wall treatments. Climbers and other plants can make it difficult for graffiti vandals, and reduce the visibility of any graffiti that does appear. In some areas good quality wall murals have been used to discourage graffiti and vandalism.

Prickly plants (e.g. roses ) can form effective barriers outside ground floor windows and balconies. However, avoid blocking a clear view of the building from surrounding buildings or creating places for potential offenders to hide.

Consider liaising with Council to provide a legal site for graffiti art on a wall or surface that is regularly hit with tags. This site may be either a permanent mural or a site that is regularly repainted by graffiti artists.



### What is the Cost?

Vandalism impacts all of us. Here are some examples:

Local Taxpayers—industry, businesses, families and even you—pay the bills for vandalism through tax dollars.

Businesses that are vandalized pay for costly repairs. Some businesses are forced to move to different neighbourhoods, taking good shopping and employment opportunities out of our community.

Schools pay thousands of dollars each year to clean up graffiti, repair buildings and replace vandalized equipment. This is money that could be used to buy better sports equipment, new computers and books.

Our community loses its unique and attractive features due to vandalism.



## Safety in the Workplace



Caution at work is not necessarily paranoia or a lack of trust in your colleagues. Getting to know your workmates before revealing personal information is a way of protecting yourself and your possessions. The following tips will help you remove the element of opportunity for crime within the workplace.

*Be wary of sharing too much information. You do not know who may hear conversations in your workplace, so it is important to take care when discussing personal or company details such as living arrangements or your financial situation. Be mindful to avoid:*

- \* Inviting unwanted attention.
- \* Making the assumption that all offenders are unknown to you.
- \* Talking too freely on your cell phone as others may be listening to confidential or valuable information.
- \* Check the identity of unknown visitors.

*Claim ownership over your workplace - you have a right to be there and others that do also will not feel offended when questioned. If you have any doubts about someone, report them to your supervisor or security. To increase your security:*

- \* Verify ID of new visitors to your workplace.
- \* Wear your ID and question those who do not.
- \* Be mindful of people following you into the building or secured areas ("tail gating").
- \* Report incidents to a supervisor- no matter how minor.
- \* Secure your valuables.

*Many thefts are committed in-house by staff. Your own property is at risk as well as company assets if security is not taken seriously. Remember to:*

- \* Keep valuables secured.
- \* Protect personal property such as wallets, phones and laptops.
- \* Take care travelling to and from work.

*When working after hours or in an isolated location, find ways to make yourself feel more comfortable. Where possible:*

- \* Park in a well-lit area with easy access to your workplace.
- \* Make use of company security or work mates to walk you to your vehicle when you are concerned about safety.
- \* If available, take advantage of a staff taxi service.
- \* Investigate the possibility of car pooling or travelling with work colleagues.
- \* Remove ID tags when leaving work.
- \* Know what to do in an emergency.

*It is important to be aware of key contacts and procedures in an emergency. Find out:*

- \* What your company's emergency plan is.
- \* Who to contact.
- \* Where the panic alarms are.

# Securing Your Home

## Securing your home

When thinking about how you can make your home safer, you should ask yourself a couple of questions.

### Do I have adequate security?

- Do the locks on doors and windows operate correctly?
- Do I have timers for lights, TV and the radio?
- Do my alarm and locks meet Canadian standards?

### Am I using my home security properly?

There is no point having the latest protection if it is not used for the purpose it was designed. Here are some tips for the everyday care of your home:

- Leave a key with a trusted friend or neighbour instead of hiding a spare key that could be found.
- Do not leave spare keys or car keys readily available inside the house.
- Consider installing motion-activated lighting in your yard.
- It is best to lock up any tools in a shed.
- If you like pets, then dogs can be your best burglar alarm. If not, a 'Beware of Dog' sign may still deter a burglar.
- If you have unique items of jewelry and other collectables, consider a portable and concealable hide-away safe, available in a variety of sizes.
- If you purchase expensive electrical appliances, cut the boxes into pieces before recycling because boxes left on the curbside can let burglars know what is new in your house.
- Back-up computer hard drives and keep these copies in a different location to prevent the loss of information on your computer.
- Mark your property using an engraver or ultra-violet markers, with a 'FS' (for Fort Saskatchewan) followed by your license number. These markers can be purchased from various electrical stores in the Edmonton area. Marked property is much harder for burglars to resell.



## When You Are On Holiday

*When you are on holiday there are things you can do everyday to help make your home safer!*

*The key to deterring burglars while you are away is to make it look like someone's at home.*

*Before heading off on holiday, here are some easy tips to prepare your home:*

Leave a radio on and tune it to a talkback station.

Use a timer on lamps to make it look like someone is inside.

Cancel deliveries, such as newspapers, or have a trusted person collect it for you.

You should also have a trusted neighbour, relative or Neighbourhood Watch Area Coordinator empty your mailbox and take your waste bin out and in, even if it is empty.

Hang some old clothes on the line and leave old shoes outside the front door.

If you are going away for an extended period of time, consider getting a house-sitter and arrange for someone to mow your lawn or clear snow.

Try not to leave invitations or notes about holidays in plain view such as stuck on the fridge, next to the phone or on a whiteboard.

If you are out for the evening, leave a light on and close the curtains.

Divert your home phone to your cell phone or lower the volume on your phone.

On your answering machine say 'We can't come to the phone right now' rather than 'I'm on holidays and will be back on...'

### Learn More & Become Involved

Report Vandalism when you see it!

#### CALL

Fort Saskatchewan R.C.M.P. Detachment

Crime Reduction Unit

Tel: 780.992.6100 / Fax: 780.998.5299

9901 - 90 Street

Fort Saskatchewan, AB T8L 3T1

OR

Crime Stoppers: 1.800.222.TIPS (8477)

or visit [www.tipssubmit.com](http://www.tipssubmit.com)

***This package is brought to you by supporters of decreasing vandalism in our community:***



*Additional Information Sources: National Crime Prevention Council of Canada & Neighbourhood Watch Canada.*

## Start a Neighbourhood Watch

The prevention of crime – particularly crime involving business and residential neighbourhoods – is a responsibility that must be shared equally by Police Services and private citizens. The fact is, the impact on crime prevention by Police Services alone is minimal when compared with the power of private citizens working with Police Services and with each other. Neighbourhood Watch is based on this concept of cooperation, and statistics prove that it works. When citizens take positive steps to secure their own property (business or residential) and neighbours learn how to report suspicious activity around their businesses or homes, break and enters and related offences decrease dramatically.



### What Neighbourhood Watch is:

Neighbourhood Watch is an extension of what you are probably already doing on an informal basis. We tend to know and watch out for our closest neighbours. A group at one end of the block, however, may not know another family or business who resides at the opposite end of the block. Organizing a Neighbourhood Watch makes this attitude of watchfulness more systematic in nature. You are provided with a Neighbourhood Watch brochure including neighbours names and telephone numbers so that it may be used during situations of emergency or non-emergency.

### Neighbourhood Watch involves :

- 1) A commitment to improve your business or home security.
- 2) A commitment to be concerned about your neighbour's property as well as your own. After all, a watchful neighbour is the best burglar alarm!
- 3) A commitment to report any crime that is occurring and any suspicious activity to the police and then to your neighbours. Talk to your neighbours; keep them abreast of current crime trends and crime prevention techniques.

### What Neighbourhood Watch isn't:

- 1) Neighbourhood Watch does not require you to perform any special tasks, go to a lot of meetings or take on extra responsibilities.
- 2) You don't have to patrol the neighbourhood or chase burglars. Neighbourhood Watch just involves being alert as part of your everyday life.
- 3) Being a part of Neighbourhood Watch does not require you to know your neighbour's business. All that is required is that you be familiar enough with your neighbours to be aware of who belongs and who doesn't.

For more information on how to get started, visit [www.neighbourhoodregistry.com](http://www.neighbourhoodregistry.com).