

HEADS UP

Do your part to help fight jewellery crime
by **David J. Sexton**

Even when you follow all security precautions at your business, you can become a victim of a jewellery crime. If that happens, sharing your information with other jewellers and law enforcement is the best way to fight crime and help keep you safe. Communication can be your most effective tool, as it may help prevent future crimes at other jewellery businesses and get criminals off the streets.

By reporting crime information and details about the perpetrators, you can help law enforcement in their efforts to identify and apprehend criminals. In addition, jewellers working closely with police helps educate the branches of law enforcement about specific crime challenges in the Canadian jewellery industry.

When law enforcement is aware a crime has been committed, they can connect the dots between organized criminal activities that might otherwise appear unrelated. Making these connections is critically important, as organized crime doesn't usually go away on its own.

When a crime occurs at your jewellery business, do the following steps as soon as possible:

- Lock the doors and secure your premises immediately to help prevent further loss.
- Call local law enforcement to report the crime.
- Write down details about the incident, including a full description of the criminal(s) so you don't forget anything later. Do not touch anything or disturb the crime scene in order to preserve evidence, such as fingerprints or footprints.
- Contact your insurance broker to file a claim.
- Determine the size of the loss, as well as gather requisite claim documents to substantiate the loss for your insurance company.
- Notify Jewellers Vigilance Canada (JVC) at (800) 636-9536 or info@jewellersvigilance.ca. The information you provide may help JVC and law enforcement authorities track suspected jewellery thieves and alert others in the area.
- Make sure your surveillance video or related equipment captured the crime and do not overwrite the video.
- If damage occurred during the crime, take photos of the affected areas after police have completed their work. Have contact names and numbers for glass and showcase companies if you need to repair or replace them after the incident.
- If applicable, contact your alarm company so they can inspect your system and make sure it is operating properly after the incident.

Why Jewellers Should Report Crime

Even though reporting crime has multiple benefits for the jewellery industry, some jewellers don't want to advertise a crime when it happens at their businesses.

Why? They may not be properly insured, they may consider this their personal business and want to keep it confidential, or they may not understand to whom to report the loss. Whatever the reasons, many jewellers fail to report crime and don't share their loss information with other jewellers.

One question I am often asked is, "How bad is crime against Canadian jewellers?" Unfortunately, my answer is we may never know because so many jewellery crimes go unreported.

By reporting a crime to police and sharing the information with JVC, you will help jewellers stay informed about criminal activity, which increases their awareness level and preparation tactics. Sharing crime information helps the jewellery community become aware of emerging criminal activity and understand how criminals are targeting other businesses, so they can take necessary precautions.

When jewellers report a crime to JVC, the organization sends out alert bulletins to its members with the details of the crime, along with photos that help identify the suspect. The bulletins also provide tips to help jewellers prevent this type of loss.

"Information is power," says Phyllis Richard, executive director of JVC. "When you have the information, you have a better chance of deterring crime and knowing what to do if it happens to you."

While discretion should be used when publishing loss information, the value of sharing it may help other jewellers avoid a similar situation and may assist law enforcement in their efforts to identify and apprehend the criminals.◊

For training resources regarding safety and security when carrying or working with jewellery, visit JM University at JewelersMutual.com. Jewelers Mutual Insurance Company is the only company specializing exclusively in jewellery insurance in the United States and Canada. It is licensed in all 50 U.S. states and Canada.