

THREE MINUTE BREAK AND ENTERS



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Jewellers Vigilance Canada (JVC) would like to acknowledge Jewelers Security Alliance (JSA). This document contains some material from the JSA Manual of Jewelry Security written by John J. Kennedy and Robert W. Frank and has been copied with their kind permission. We appreciate this partnership which allows greater knowledge for both Canada and the USA.

In addition JVC would like to thank our partner Jewelers Mutual Insurance Company (JMIC) for their ongoing support of JVC'S Crime Prevention Program.





NOT A COMMON EVENT

The traditional safecracking break and enter has become difficult for criminals due to the high-security safes and alarm systems now commonly used by jewellers. The upgrade in systems has largely been brought about by the demands that insurance underwriters have placed on jewellers seeking insurance. Underwriters frequently require high security safes and alarm systems certified by Underwriters Laboratories (ULC), which offer significant protection.

Attacks on safes of jewellers are not common, some do take place each year. In almost all break and enters of jewellers' premises criminals are after whatever has not been put away in the safe at night. Goods left in showcases, repair items left on work benches and other goods that can easily be seen from outside the premise. Most criminals who commit break and enters do not have the equipment, skills or time to enter today's modern safes.

There are three main types of burglars who break into retail stores. First, there are "three minute burglars" who smash through a jeweller's front door or window and don't care whether they set off an alarm. They plan to be out in three minutes, before the police or alarm company can respond.

Second, there are criminals who attempt to enter a jeweller's store with stealth, either through an opening of some sort unprotected by an alarm, or who attempt to disable a jeweller's alarm system.

However, even in the cases of criminals who attempt to enter a jeweller's store without setting off an alarm, only a handful expect to get into a safe. This group is also seeking exposed goods or goods left out of the safe.

The third type, traditional "safecrackers," while not eliminated as a risk for retail jewellers, make up a very small percentage of all break-ins. While safecracking may be decreasing, break-ins of jewellers, essentially taking goods not kept in a safe overnight, are still a very serious threat.

THREE MINUTE BREAK-INS

The most common type of break-ins today consist of criminals smashing a glass window or door of a retail store, smashing cases and removing goods, or stealing exposed jewellery on shelves or benches. These criminals take whatever goods have been left out of the safe overnight, and get out of the premises swiftly.

These are called three-minute break-ins because after an alarm sounds, these criminals want to be out in "three minutes", that is, before the police or guards from the alarm company can respond.



When you leave jewellery in your showcases overnight, especially when the jewellery can be seen from the street, you are inviting criminals to break into your store. Three-minute

criminals know an alarm is likely to sound, but they plan to be gone in just a few minutes. They have no intention of attacking the safe

Three-minute criminals who range from youth gang members and drug addicts to cool professionals, act alike: if they can see it from outside the store, they will try to steal it!

What do jewellers tell JVC after these break-ins occur? “It takes too much time and trouble to put everything away, so I take a chance,” or “Lesser merchandise is not put away each night to save staff time,” or “My safe is too small,” or “Merchandise gets scratched if we put it in and out of the showcases every day.” These excuses can all lead to expensive three-minute break-ins.

The trauma and financial loss from a three-minute break-in are much worse than the relatively minor time and trouble of properly protecting your store and safely storing your merchandise each night. By following simple procedures, three-minute break-ins can be prevented, or, if they do occur, losses can be greatly reduced.

When a jeweller suffers a three-minute break-in, the jeweller doesn't only lose merchandise, which too often is of surprisingly high value. The jeweller also suffers extensive physical damage to the store, including windows, doors and showcases, and experiences interruption of selling time, before the damage is repaired.



Also significant is the harm to the morale and feeling of safety and security of the jeweller, as well as to the jeweller's family, employees and customers.

The following are recommendations for reducing three-minute break-ins:

1. Never leave merchandise out and visible overnight, regardless of value. Even if your insurance company permits you to leave goods out of your safe up to a certain value, nevertheless, put all your goods away so that none are visible from outside the store.
2. If you do not have enough room in your main safe, consider buying a second, less expensive safe for your lower-end merchandise.
3. Do not cover your cases with cloth or other material since this gives the impression that valuable merchandise is being concealed.
4. Metal grating or gates, which can be rolled down each night, should be installed on the inside of your store windows and doors. Alarms will sound when the glass is broken before criminals even reach the gates. Metal gates inside the doors and windows discourage three-minute break-ins because of the extra time required to cut through them.
5. Make sure that you understand your insurance requirements regarding leaving goods out of the safe overnight, and never leave any goods out of your safe overnight in violation of your insurance coverage.
6. Make sure that mall security will check your store immediately upon discovery of any forced entry into the mall. Despite the temptation of dozens of other stores, a jeweller is often the prime or only target of criminals breaking into a mall.
7. Proper lighting, good visibility into your store overnight, proper deadbolt locks, and video surveillance systems capable of running 24 hours a day help keep burglars away.
8. Making sure that the glass in your windows and doors is made of break & enter resistant glazing materials listed with Underwriters Laboratories can further protect your premises. This glazing material should also be applied to showcases. This makes it much harder for criminals to smash the glass and get at your merchandise. It slows them down. A sign in the window stating all windows and showcases are made of special break & enter resistant glass might help slow criminals down or even discourage attacks.
9. Canadian jewellers have also been victims of three minute break-ins when a stolen vehicle has been used to smash through the front door. In many cases the vehicle has also been used to smash into a mall and then into the store all in less than three minutes. In a street location jewellers should have balusters installed in the front of the store. In mall locations the mall should have balusters to prevent breaking into the mall.



CONCRETE BALUSTERS CAN PREVENT A STOLEN VEHICLE FROM BEING DRIVEN INTO YOUR STORE

If a criminal sees exposed jewellery inside your store, his business is to break in and take it. Would you leave cash out in your showcases overnight? Treat jewellery the same way.

There are several particularly dangerous situations related to alarms and break & enter requiring caution. For example, be very careful if any store or office bordering your premises, whether over it, under it, or on either side, is vacant. Burglars often smash into your store or office from a neighboring store or office that is unoccupied.

Do not forget your telephone box or junction box, whether you are in a mall or elsewhere. There have been cases in which a telephone line connection in a jeweller's junction box has had a tag saying "jewellery store alarm" on it, making it easy prey for burglars to identify and possibly disable. Your telephone box needs protection, which you should discuss with your alarm company, the telephone company and possibly with mall management or your landlord.

One sign that criminals may be setting you up for a break & enter is if you experience unexplained trouble or interference. A jeweller should never let telephone trouble or disturbances of any kind go unexplained. Make sure the telephone company and/or your alarm company investigates even apparently minor problems thoroughly. Criminals could be testing or interfering with your line.

The JVC has been told many times by victims of break & enter that they started having some problems with their phones a few days or a few weeks before a break & enter.

Even following one or more false alarms, you must continue to respond to every alarm signal. It is common for burglars to set off an alarm on your premises and then fade into the surrounding area to see how long response will take and what the alarm company, the police and the jeweller will do. Burglars may repeat this several times until they have discouraged any response at all or until they are satisfied as to the response pattern.

Jewellers must respond to all instances of signals at their store. Even if you have been the victim of a break & enter, don't think it won't happen again, and you can now relax. There have been many instances following a break & enter of criminals waiting from a few months to a few years, and then hitting the same store again, often with exactly the same method.

If a jeweller receives a call from the police or from his alarm company when the store is closed stating that a signal has been received, the jeweller must call back the police or alarm company to confirm the call before leaving the house. Also, the jeweller must be sure to call back the actual number of the police or the alarm company, not necessarily the number given to him by the caller.

Also, if you do have a break & enter or an attempt, you may wish to have a guard remains in the store overnight. If there has been damage to the door, locks or alarm system, obviously you will need to have the premises safeguarded until the damage is repaired.

Finally, do not authorize your alarm company to approve any irregular or unscheduled openings of your premises when you are closed for business. If you must enter the premises during non-business hours, establish the requirement with your alarm company that you must personally sign in at your monitoring station before entering your premises.

With the strong protection of a proper alarm and safe, a jeweller can breathe a lot easier with respect to protection from break & enter. However, full security for the jeweller demands having adequate insurance protection and following the in safe and other requirements of his or her insurance policy, so that coverage isn't impaired.



JOIN THE JVC NETWORK

Be part of the solution and not part of the problem

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Who we are

Jewellers Vigilance Canada Inc. (JVC) is a non-profit association to advance ethical practices and loss prevention within the jewellery industry. JVC works closely with all law enforcement agencies in Canada. Join the JVC crime network and receive regular alerts as to various jewellery crimes happening in Canada. It is also an avenue for you to share information on jewellery crime.



General Manager of Canadian Jewellers Association

Brian has more than 20 years of senior management experience in Canadian Retail including roles as Vice President of Sales and Operations at Peoples Jewellers Corporation; Divisional Vice President — Retail with Henry Birks & Sons and Vice President Retail — the Americas for Waterford Wedgwood Royal Doulton (WWRD).

Brian was past president and had served for more than 20 years on the Board of Directors of Jewellers Vigilance Canada (JVC),



Senior Advisor and Crime Analyst .

John had spent 20 yrs in the Toronto Police Service and 24 years with Peoples Jewellers as the Security Manager.



Detective Sergeant Don Cardwell (Retired) is the Director of Loss Prevention . Don served 32 years with the York Regional Police Service

