



**Canadian Jewellers™
Association**

A Sign of Trust Since 1918

SHOPTHEFT



**Jewellers
Vigilance
Canada**

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Acknowledgements

JVC would like to acknowledge Jewelers Security Alliance (JSA). This document contains some material from the JSA Manual of Jewelry Security.



Jewelers' Security Alliance

Leading The War On Jewelry Crime Since 1903

JVC would also like to thank our partner Jewelers Mutual Insurance Company (JMIC) for their ongoing support of our crime prevention program.

Jewelers Mutual[®]
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Theft

Theft is a broad category which takes in such jewellery crimes as distraction and shop thefts, grab and runs, smash and grabs, and switches.

Retail Council of Canada has suggested that we should stop using the term shoplifting, which sounds like a frivolous victimless activity, and start calling it by its real name “Shop theft”

“Every day a jeweller is open for business an opportunity thief may enter their store, and if you give them the opportunity to steal, they will.”
(John Lamont)



Key left in countertop display

Shop Theft

Shop theft is a crime that everyone pays for, from the retailer who loses a big bite out of his/her profits, to the consumer who ends up paying higher prices.

Shop thieves come in all shapes and sizes, young to old. Kids under the age of 18 make up one third of all shop thieves. Collectively, shop thieves take a total of millions of dollars every year.

Preventing Shop Theft

- DO WATCH YOUR CUSTOMERS. THIEVES DO NOT LIKE ATTENTION
- DO MAKE CONTACT WITH EACH CUSTOMER AS SOON AS THEY ENTER YOUR STORE.
- DO BE SUSPICIOUS OF CUSTOMERS WEARING OVERSIZED CLOTHING.
- DO KEEP YOUR INVENTORY ORGANIZED AND ON A DAILY BASIS COUNT YOUR HIGH END PRODUCT.
- DO ONLY SHOW ONE VALUABLE ITEM AT A TIME.
- DO ARRANGE DISPLAYS FOR MAXIMUM VISIBILITY BY YOUR STAFF
- DO INSTALL A VIDEO SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM
- DO PROSECUTE ALL SHOP THEIVES.



- ◆ **DON'T GIVE SHOP THIEVES THE OPPORTUNITY TO STEAL BY NOT PAYING ATTENTION TO THEM**
- ◆ **DON'T RESIST A GRAB AND RUN**

JVC does not recommend that sales associates attempt to arrest shop thieves. Instead, if the sales associate observes a theft taking place they should approach the suspect with the following suggested questions:

“That is an excellent choice you made, how would you like to pay for that.”

“That item you selected, would you like me to wrap that for you?”

If you hand a customer two rings and he/she hands you back only one, don't you think you have a right to ask where the other ring has gone?

Don't accuse, but ask.

Don't forget you can be direct.

Thieves usually steal if they have a need, can rationalize the theft and are given an opportunity to steal. One of the best methods to reduce theft is to take away the opportunity.

BASIC PROCEDURES TO PREVENT THEFT

1. Have buzzers on your doors.
2. Greet each customer who enters your store and note his or her appearance. If possible introduce yourself and asked them their name. Ask them what is the special occasion that brings them into your store today. (*Criminals don't like this type of attention and it may give you a clue as to their intentions*)
3. Have at least two people on the floor at all times
4. Wait on only one customer at a time.
5. Never turn your back on a customer.
6. Never leave the showroom unattended, even “just for a minute.” You can be especially distracted or tempted to go to the rear of the store if someone asks for gift-wrap or another box for a big sale, or when answering the phone.



Customer left examining product while another customer is served.

7. Show only one item at a time.
8. All wall cases, show windows, display cases and showcases must have locks, and be kept in a locked position except when actually removing or returning goods. It is best to have locks that do not permit the key to be removed unless the case lock is in a "locked" position.
9. Keep the keys to the showcases on your person, never on a hook or shelf in plain view. Keep the keys on a wrist or other holder so that it is less likely for you to put them down and forget them.



Showcase keys left on showcase unattended

10. Inspect the tops and sides of showcases several times a day for evidence of tampering or attempts to lift the top.
11. After a customer has handled an item, re-examine it to make sure it is the same item before returning it to the showcase. Do not allow a customer to return an item to a tray.
12. Keep all jewellery trays completely filled, either with goods or with markers.
13. When showing high-end goods to unfamiliar customers, tell them that your insurance requires you to ask for identification before displaying the items.
14. The most difficult showcases for a thief to get into are the cases in which the back flips up. It is easier for thieves to reach into cases that slide open from either side.
15. Do not let non-employees into work areas, your safe area, your rest room or behind your showcases. This can be a trick to gain access to your merchandise, or to case your premises for a future crime.
16. Your counter display cases should be built in a way that does not permit someone to crawl under them.
17. Make sure there are no blind spots in your store in which visibility from another part of the selling floor is obstructed.
18. Keep your safe locked during the day.

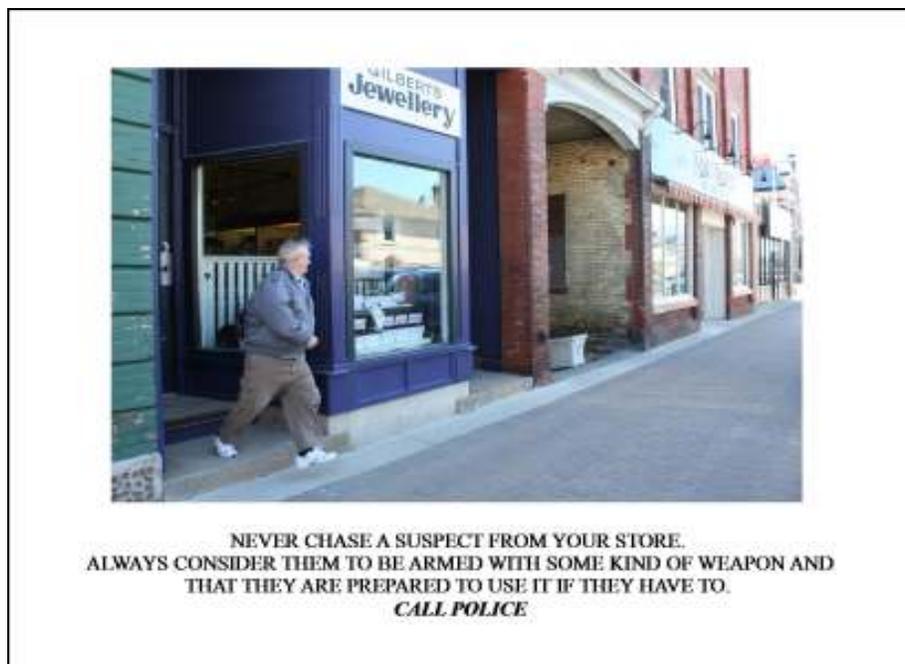


The safe had been left unlocked

19. Have an alert system in place in your store. If a suspicious person or situation is spotted, a code word or phrase can be used to alert the other employees that a crime may be underway. EX "Mary, JVC called for you on line 2"

20. While not strictly a prevention technique, you should wipe showcases, especially the tops, frequently and thoroughly during the day. This will help obtain fingerprints.

Grab and Run Thefts



Grab and run thefts are difficult to prevent. The cardinal rule in reducing losses from grab and runs is that a salesperson should never show more than one item at a time. A thief likes nothing better than a salesperson granting his request “to compare these two watches in a better light.” Then he can run out with both watches, doubling his take.

Many crimes are committed by “customers the jeweller knows,” who are really criminals who have cased the store, sometimes repeatedly over many days, in an effort to lull the jeweller into relaxing his or her guard. Sometimes these criminals will even place a small amount down on a layaway to gain the jeweller’s confidence.

Proper equipment and the design of the store can also be very helpful in discouraging grab and run artists. **Surveillance cameras tend to discourage them.** Even the physical set up of the store can create a less tempting target. Some stores have diamond rooms or alcoves that may make it more difficult for a thief to run. Having the thief sit to examine goods may discourage grab and runs. Not showing high-end goods near the door might also help.

Having a buzzer system on the entrance may cause the thief to think that you can electronically block the door, preventing a quick exit. When the high-end goods are in the front near the door, the thief has an easier escape. There are even cases of thieves being permitted to take goods outside the store “to see them better in the light.” No sooner are they outside the store than they break into a run.



Switch artists are highly skilled thieves who plague the jewellery industry. They victimize retail jewellers and sometimes other segments of the industry. They are sleight-of-hand artists who will most often attempt to substitute a cubic zirconia, diamond simulant or moissanite for a diamond, either loose or in a ring. They may case your premises to find out about your stock, your settings and your tags, and return at a later time to make the switch when they are being shown goods.



Some steps to combat switches include:

1. After a customer has handled an item, re-examine it to make sure it is the same item before returning it to the showcase.
2. Show only one item at a time.
3. Don't turn your back on any customer.
4. Wait on only one customer at a time.
5. While inspecting an item, if a customer drops it, begins to faint, claims to be ill, or asks for a drink of water, be especially on guard for a switch. Don't allow yourself to be distracted by any disturbance or commotion.
6. Use identification tags on jewellery merchandise. Do the customers seem unusually interested in the tags? Perhaps they're planning to return, or have an accomplice return, with an item to switch and a tag just like the one used in your store.
7. When placing an item back in its tray, be certain it has the genuine store tag, and that the item and a fake tag have not been substituted. Never allow a customer to return an item of jewellery to a tray.
8. Keep all trays completely filled, either with goods or with markers. Do not leave empty spaces. Accordingly, if a space is empty, you will know something is missing.
9. When showing loose stones, use a locked tweezers.

One method used by switch artists and other thieves to hide loose stones or small rings is to swallow them. Even if the police are called and are able to search the criminal, the goods don't turn up. However, there have been cases in which the police kept a suspect in custody until the goods passed through his or her system.

Pick and Key gangs

Another threat to your showcases is that many cases have generic locks. These are locks for which the same key or only a few different keys will fit all the showcases of that type made by the same company. That is, your lock and key is not unique to the showcase on your premises. In addition to these interchangeable keys, other showcases have locks that may be picked or forced easily.

It is advisable to have unique and pick resistant locks installed on your showcases. The keys should be of a type that are difficult to duplicate. Furthermore, you should have a strict key control system, keys should be numbered and assigned to specific employees, which includes limiting the number of duplicate keys, and carefully monitoring to whom they are issued.

It is also important to have keys that have a “KEY Retention” feature. That is, the key cannot be removed from the showcase when the lock is in the open position. This eliminates the human error of forgetting to lock a case when moving from one to another.

***Tip:* It is important that all keys are recovered from employees who quit or are terminated from your employment.**

Smash and Grabs

During daytime hours smash and grab thieves either smash a jeweller's show window, grab goods and run away, or enter the store and smash one or more cases and flee. While three minute burglaries involve smashing windows or cases when the store is closed, smash and grab thefts occur when the store is open and goods are in show windows and display cases.

Glass is usually the weakest point in a jeweller's overall security system and is deserving of appropriate consideration. It is strongly recommended that you confer with an expert security consultant familiar with the security concerns of jewellers when choosing the proper glazing material. Glazing material rated by Underwriters Laboratories ("U.L.") should be used.

"Break & enter resistant" glazing material is a laminated assembly of plate glass and plastic, sometimes several layers thick, which is designed as a substitute for glass display windows and display case panels. It has also been designed to protect against the "smash and grab" type of attacks. "Bullet resisting" glass is also laminated but is much thicker than break & enter resistant material.



It took many hits with a sledge hammer to commit this damage limiting the amount of merchandise stolen.

Many thieves have cut their hands trying to remove goods from a small hole after numerous blows with a hammer failed to make a larger opening. Slowing thieves down puts time on the side of the jeweller. Thieves want to flee quickly. Using laminated glass at least for the showcases containing your high-end goods is well worth the investment.

Break & enter resistant show windows may also slow down thieves who want to smash a window and make a quick getaway. It may be an additional deterrent to a smash and grab thief to put a sign in the show window indicating that it is made of U.L. rated break & enter resistant glass.

As a less expensive alternative to break & enter and bullet resistant glass, many retail jewellers have had their show windows and display case glass reinforced with a plastic or polyester film.

This product, referred to as a safety and security film, decreases hazards associated with shattering glass because it will keep the glass in position during an attack. It is also reported to be useful in slowing down criminals who engage in smash and grab thefts.

A thief may decide to flee empty handed rather than spend the extra time needed to penetrate film-reinforced glass.

As an additional deterrent, you may also wish to place goods in the show window in a "shadow box" that is, a box also made of laminated glass and securely fixed so that even if the thief breaks through the first window, he still isn't finished smashing if he is to obtain the goods.

The JVC recommends, however, that no goods be kept in the show window overnight, when you are closed, even with a shadow box or in any other way. When you are closed, your goods belong in your safe.

LIFTING CASE TOPS



After slitting the sealant the criminals lift the glass to remove product

Another stealth technique used against retail jewellers is to slit the adhesive that holds some glass countertops down, and either then, or upon returning later, to lift the glass. While leaning on a counter, sometimes while holding a raincoat or other bulky garment to block the view, a person working with a theft gang will use a razor blade to cut the seal.

Entire trays have been removed in this manner. Be especially careful of customers who place coats or large packages on display case counters. They might be trying to cut or lift the top!

There are jewellery display cases in which the glass is under secure metal edges, which prevents the glass from being lifted. In addition, there are metal clips available which discourage such lifting even if the glass seal is cut. There are also sealants that are available that when applied to showcases prevent the seal from being cut.

A well-known Canadian Department store had showcase doors that could be lifted out of the tracks when locked. Slims should have been installed so that the doors could only be lifted when opened to a certain position.

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 is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Canadian Jewellers Association. 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. Be part of the solution and not the part of the problem.

JOIN OUR NETWORK NOW

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