

How to Prevent and Handle a Robbery Situation

Review to complete space and environment of your pharmacy, and put yourself in the place of a potential robber. Try to determine how attractive your store is to a robber and what your weakest points are:

- Are your exterior doors and windows and parking lot areas adequately lit?
- Is the interior of your store lit and arranged so that the cash register is clearly visible from the outside?
- Do all window surfaces in the storefront provide unobstructed visibility into the store?
- Do you keep your narcotics in a safe, and if so do you have a sticker outside with that information?
- Do you have visible surveillance cameras?

If you answered NO to any of the above questions, take appropriate action to turn them into YES answers.

Review the following action plan with your employees on a regular basis:

- 1. STAY CALM. DO NOT TRY TO BE A HERO.** Serious injury or death may result.
- 2. BE ALERT.** Concentrate on getting a detailed description of the robber: height (place a height marker on the exit doorjamb), weight, eye color, age, clothing, jewelry, shape of hairline, rough or manicured hands, hair color, right- or left-handed, scars/tattoos
- 3. SPEECH CHARACTERISTICS.** Listen when the robber talks: accent, impediment, rapid or slow speech, high or low pitch
- 4. GUN.** Observe the weapon used: long or short barrel, color, type (revolver/automatic/shotgun), make, caliber
- 5. WHAT IS THE ROBBER CARRYING?** Observe bag, briefcase, or other container.
- 6. GETAWAY CAR.** If possible and without endangering yourself, observe the getaway car: license number, make, year, color, model (two or four door}, whitewall tires, other persons in car, direction of car when last seen
- 7. CALL 911 AS SOON AS IT IS SAFE TO DO SO:**
 - a. "I want to report an armed robbery" or "Two men with guns just held us up". It is crucial that the police know that firearms were used
 - b. Inform the police if anyone is injured
 - c. State as accurately as possible the amount of time that has elapsed since the robbery (i.e. five minutes ago, one minute ago)
 - d. State your name and address
 - e. Give number, race and sex of robbers
 - f. Give direction and mode of travel of robbers
 - g. Provide a brief physical description of robbers, an investigating officer will take more details later

h. Describe the weapon used

8. IMMEDIATELY WRITE AN ACCOUNT OF WHAT HAPPENED. Include time, date, day of week, and every detail you can recall

9. WITNESSES. All other employees who were involved or who observed the robbery should write their own independent account of what they saw. Do not discuss your observations with other employees; each person should report only what he or she personally observed.

Consider offering Employee Assistance Program (EAP) help to those employees involved in the robbery.

Sources :Caridnal Health Security Literature, Retail Crime, Security, and Loss Prevention: An Encyclopedic Reference, by Charles A. Sermewald and John H. Christman, copyright 2008, published by Elsevier

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