

Shard End
Neighbourhood Policing Team



How to protect your business

*'Target hardening' advice for
businesses*

By considering the contents of this leaflet, you could significantly contribute to an increase in the profitability of your store.

We would like this information to be shared with all of your staff. After all, it is everyone's responsibility to protect the stock in your store.

Please read this information, help to reduce crime and make the community as a whole feel safer.

What is 'target hardening'?

Target hardening means making your shop a harder target for criminals; most notably shoplifters.

Shoplifting

Shoplifting is a commonly used term to describe theft from shops and stores.

It is not possible to categorise a shoplifter by what they look like or by their background. You will however, already know many of the regular shoplifters who visit your store. You may also know their descriptions and patterns of behaviour.

Rather than stereotype what a shoplifter may look like, it is easier to identify what is more likely to be stolen. Joints of meat, electrical goods, toiletries, DVDs, CDs and alcohol are commonly targeted. However anything near the door or left unmonitored will also be vulnerable and may be stolen.

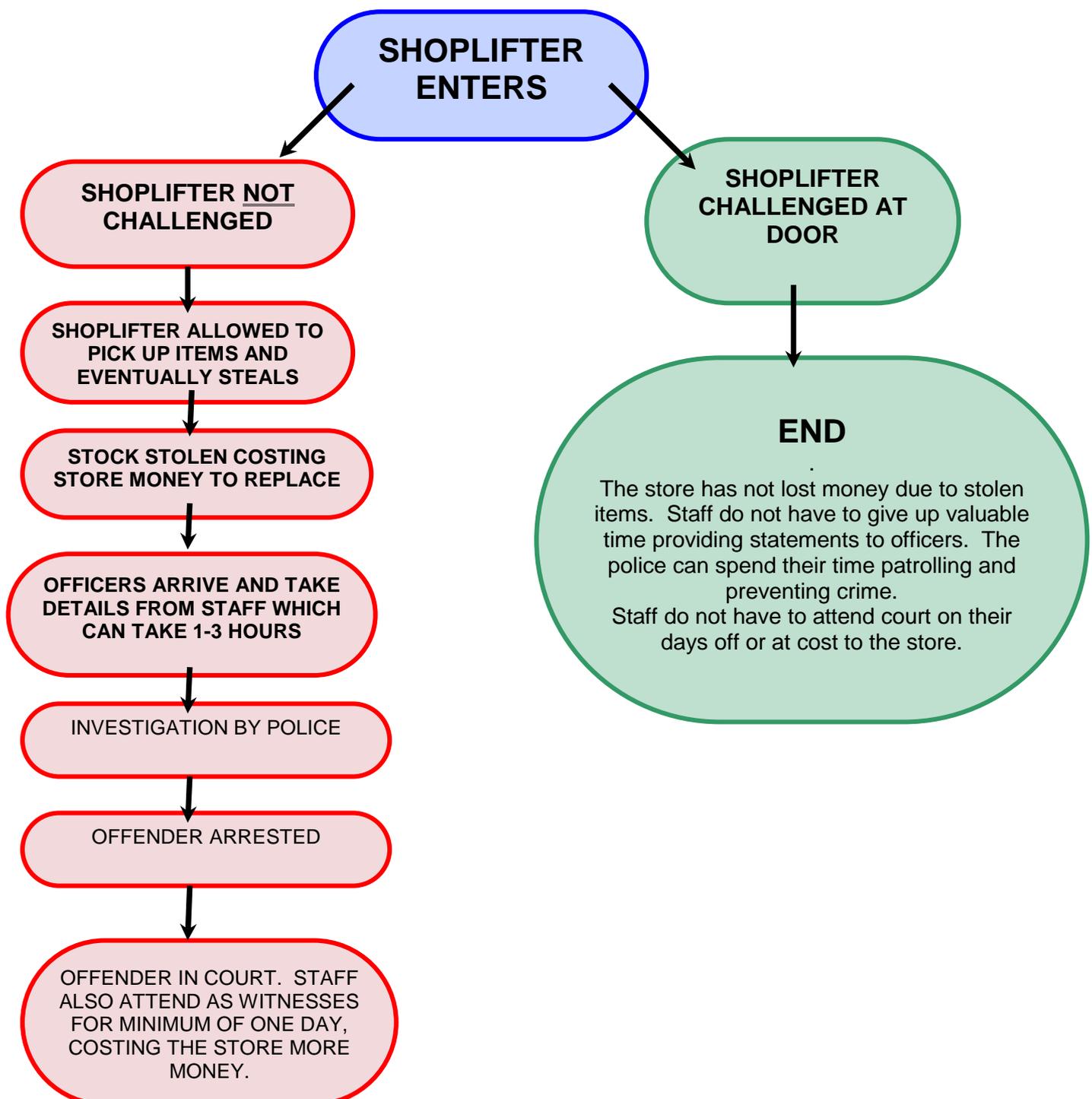
Many businesses refer to the measurable financial losses of shoplifting as 'shrinkage'. In simple terms this means that the amount of profit they take is shrunk or offset against the goods stolen that will need to be replaced.

Shoplifting is not a victimless crime and can directly affect the local community, your employees and you as the store manager/owner.

WHICH ROUTE WILL YOU TAKE?

No matter how good your security is, or how vigilant your staff may be, occasionally people will manage to steal from your store. West Midlands Police will investigate thefts and, where possible, arrest anyone identified as committing these offences.

If a shoplifter that is known to you or anyone acting suspiciously enters your store, consider the chart below:



PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

Preventing a crime before it happens is always preferable to investigation and apprehension after the event.

In terms of shoplifting, preventing it from happening takes seconds. The alternative disrupts the store massively, costing money and staff time.

Challenging a shoplifter does not necessarily mean becoming involved in confrontation. There are a number of ways to do this, as long as you are professional and not putting yourself or anyone else at risk.

Please consider some options below:

- **Directly tell someone they are not coming into the store.** This would be effective for known offenders and leaves the person in no doubt that they are not welcome.
- **“Hello!” - Greet them at the door.** Shoplifters do not want to be noticed and will be reluctant to steal if they have been acknowledged by staff and feel they may be watched.
- **Stock replenishment.** If you feel someone is acting suspiciously, why not tidy up the shelves/stock in the immediate area. This is an excellent way of indirectly challenging them as it will undoubtedly put them off stealing without having to engage with them face to face.
- **Customer service.** Again if someone is acting suspiciously, why not ask them if they are alright and if they need any help at all?
- **Security guard/staff at the door.** If someone is already in the store and you begin to suspect that they have secreted items on their person to steal why not ensure your security guard or member of staff are visibly noticeable on the door. This often leads to shoplifters dropping the items and leaving the store empty handed.

Most shoplifters are not violent and will only become aggressive if they have been caught with stolen goods and know they are probably going to be arrested. However:

REMEMBER, WHILST YOU HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT YOUR STOCK AND PREMISES, YOUR PERSONAL SAFETY IS THE PRIORITY. DO NOT PUT YOURSELF OR OTHERS AT RISK.

TARGET HARDENING – Points to consider

Target hardening means making your shop a harder target for criminals; most notably shoplifters.

Shoplifters are generally creatures of habit. They will steal from the same shops over and over again if they feel they are getting away with it. They will target the same products too. Usually things they can sell quickly, for example toiletries, joints of meat and electrical goods. They will also share this information with other criminals.

It is easier and less costly to prevent shoplifting than it is investigate and apprehend after the event.

CCTV

- Is your CCTV of adequate quality to identify shoplifters?
- Can your CCTV cameras be seen?
- Are there warning signs displayed highlighting your CCTV?
- Is your CCTV regularly reviewed and maintained?
- If CCTV is not appropriate, consider mirrors to eliminate observational blind spots.

DESIGNATED SECURITY

- Who provides your security and when?
- Do they work on your target days/times?
- Do they patrol or are they static?
- Are they “shop floor” or office based?

STAFF DUTIES

- Do you patrol the shop/car park where possible?
- Do you know who your offenders are?
- Do you challenge offenders at point of entry?
- Do you know which items or specific isles are targeted?

STORE GEOGRAPHY

- Does your store allow clear visibility throughout store/car park?
- Does your store have expensive items by the door?
- Where are your targeted items displayed?
- Where are your tills?
- Is your store/stock room secure?

This list is not exhaustive and any idea that you feel will be effective in preventing shoplifting is worth bringing to the attention of either your line manager or the police.

USEFUL CONTACTS

West Midlands Police

Phone: 0845 113 5000

Website: www.west-midlands.police.uk

Call the above number for all non-emergencies and enquiries.

Crimestoppers

Phone: 0800 555 111

Website: www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Crimestoppers are an independent charity. Call anonymously with information about crime.

Secured by Design

Phone: 020 7227 3423

Website: www.securedbydesign.com

The UK police initiative supporting the principles of 'designing out crime' by using effective crime prevention and security standards.

Trading Standards

Website: www.tradingstandards.gov.uk

Find your nearest trading standards office.

Home Office

Phone: 0870 000 1585

Website: www.homeoffice.gov.uk

The government department responsible for policing and reducing crime and disorder.