

Mini-Marts and small convenience stores which participate in check cashing are targets of robberies and other criminal activity. In an effort to reduce your chances of being victimized, the Mesa Police Department is encouraging you to read and follow the recommendations listed below.

Visibility

Keep the front of your store, doors and windows clear from signs and displays that restrict visibility either into or out of your business. Always maintain maximum visibility.

Increase lighting in the interior and exterior of the business.

Place cash registers in the front section of the store. This increases the chances of someone spotting a robbery in progress and reporting it to the police. Employees will also be able to see who comes in and goes out of the store.

Cash Control

The check cashing area should be fully enclosed with limited access to the public. If you are at high risk, consider investing in a bulletproof cashier screen. The cost of a secured location will far outweigh the continual loss from robberies



Consider having a short time period when people can come in and cash

checks and hire an off-duty police officer or armed security guard to protect the business during that time period.



Limit the amount of cash available for check cashing and post highly visible signs announcing that limited cash is available. Keep money well secured and safeguarded.

Bank deposits should be made at different times throughout the day during business hours. Taking different routes also helps reduce the opportunity to be followed and robbed outside of the business. When possible, try to use different employees when making bank deposits.

Keep a small amount of cash in the register to reduce losses. Use a drop safe into which large bills and excess cash are dropped by employees and cannot be retrieved by them. Post signs alerting would-be robbers of this procedure.

Place signs at entrances and exits indicating that safes require secondary keys not in possession of employees.

Take the check that needs to be cashed into the locked check cashing area alone, get the cash, come out and relock the area. With other people in the store and employees nearby, if someone forces their way into the locked area and

it is apparent that more than one person has entered that room, other employees can call police, knowing there is a problem.

Observation

Install a security camera that videotapes action inside the store, but have the taping area in a location where it cannot be compromised or stolen. Consider the installation of a security monitor/screen at the entrance to the store, visible to incoming customers to make customers aware of the extent of security video coverage.

Mark doorways with proper height markings. (For example: place colored tape markers at entrances/exits at heights of 5 feet 6 inches and 6 feet. Then, if you are robbed, you can give an accurate estimate of the robber's height as he/she leaves.)

Security

Each room should have a working land line telephone.

If possible, each employee should carry a cell phone with them. Even if the cell phone does not have a provider, a charged cell phone can still be used to dial 911 to request emergency assistance.

Install emergency alarm buttons (hooked up to a monitoring system) at several locations throughout the store.

Provide information about your security systems to employees only on a “need-to-know” basis. Instruct your employees to report any suspicious activity or person immediately and write down the information for future reference.

Avoid having employees work alone.

Lock all unused doors.

Do background investigations on employees.

Train employees on cash handling procedures.

What To Do During A Robbery

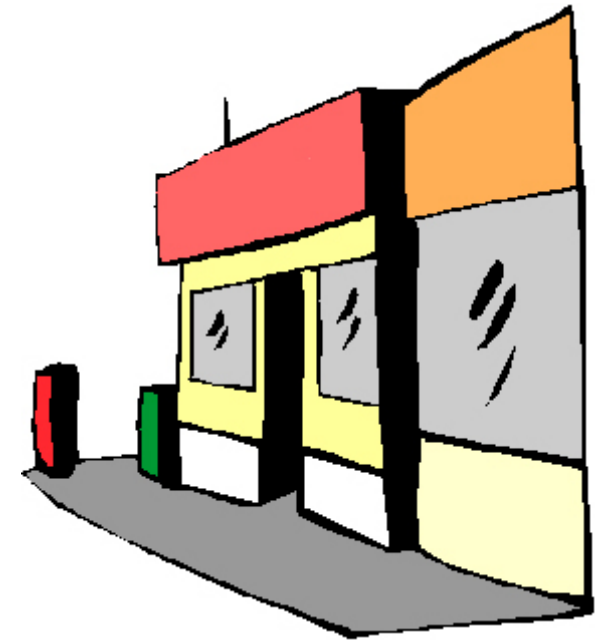
- Remain calm.
- Let the robber know you intend to cooperate.
- Don't make sudden movements or try to overtake the robber.
- Don't argue with the robber.
- Obey any orders or directives from the robber.
- Always assume the robber has a weapon, even if you don't see one.

After The Robbery

- After the robber has left, push the alarm button if you have one, or call 911 immediately and lock the doors to protect the crime scene.
- Notify police dispatch the direction and mode of travel.
- Keep everyone away from surfaces the robber may have touched.

- Do not attempt to follow the robber.
- Write down everything you can remember about the robber and the crime itself; the robber's appearance — height, weight, color of hair and eyes, scars, tattoos, accent, anything unusual — and as much as possible about his/her clothing, weapon and mannerisms.
- Try to observe any vehicle that is used to get away, and the direction and mode of travel.
- The most important thing you can do if you're robbed is OBSERVE. The description of the suspect you give to police may be the only information they have to go on.
- Have witnesses write down information without talking amongst themselves.
- Cooperate with police. If the suspect is caught, prosecute him/her or the crimes will continue to occur.

Security For Check Cashing Operations



Mesa Police Department
www.mesaaz.gov/police
