

FACT SHEET

MANAGING THE RISK OF ROBBERY AND VIOLENCE IN SERVICE STATIONS

1. WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

This Fact Sheet is aimed at assisting employers manage robbery and violence risks. The steps recommended here should be read in conjunction with requirements set out in the OHS Act 2000 and OHS Regulation 2001.

High cash flow and high customer traffic businesses such as service stations are exposed to the risk of violence or robbery. Incidents could be robbery or threats of violence from a dissatisfied or abusive customer. The results of such incidents include:

- Impact on the health and safety of you or your staff
- Impact on trading levels and the image of your business
- Possible increases in workers compensation and general insurance premiums.

2. WHAT IS THE RISK OF ROBBERY OR VIOLENCE IN YOUR BUSINESS?

OHS legislation requires you to identify any violence related hazards in your workplace. You then need to assess any violence related risks and take action to minimise any identified problems. Some simple steps can be taken to work out how likely the risk of violence is to your business.

- Find out from your industry association or local police what types of incidents are common in your type of business and in your local area
- Consult with your employees about their experience and concerns
- List possible hazards (e.g. night work, cash handling, working alone)

- Check these hazards against common factors that might increase the risk of violence using the 5-point checklist.

Five-Point Checklist	YES	NO
1. Is there good visibility both inside and from outside to discourage robbery?		
2. Do you have any form of security system (e.g. electronic sensors, CCTV)? Is it advertised to customers? Is it working effectively?		
3. Do you minimise cash levels and have procedures to manage and bank cash?		
4. Have you or your employees been trained to detect warning signs of violence or robbery and how to react if there is an incident?		
5. Do you have any arrangements for when you or a staff member have to work alone (e.g. telephone call-ins, personal duress alarm)?		

If you checked **NO** to any of the points above follow the recommended actions in the next sections. If there are other risks not mentioned above make sure you assess them and take appropriate action. Consult with your employees as you work through your plan of action.

3. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO MANAGE VIOLENCE AND ROBBERY RISKS?

Design and layout your service station to discourage robbery and violence

- ✓ Clear visibility of the shop area from outside and clear visibility and line of sight within the store and to forecourt
- ✓ Cashier or console operator located for maximum visibility
- ✓ Counters wide enough and high enough to make physical contact between staff and public difficult
- ✓ Use drop safes and time delay safes and advertise fact to customers
- ✓ Well lit interior and exterior to minimise hiding places
- ✓ Rear and side external doors secured to restrict access and escape
- ✓ Designate safe areas or escape routes for you and your staff
- ✓ Install security devices to detect people entering and to monitor their movement.

Follow safety procedures that protect you and your staff

- ✓ Avoid opening and closing the shop alone
- ✓ Keep counters clear of heavy or sharp items that could be used as weapons
- ✓ Encourage electronic forms of payment
- ✓ Minimise cash levels and use cash handling procedures that make cash less visible
- ✓ Transfer cash to bank at regular intervals, at irregular times, by different routes and where possible with two people or use professional security services
- ✓ Use systems such as two key safes and advise customers that safes cannot be opened
- ✓ Regularly check your alarm systems to make sure they are working
- ✓ Work with neighbouring businesses to reduce risks in your area.

Provide training and information so everyone is prepared

- ✓ Provide training that shows employees how to deal with customers politely, how to avoid queues, how to deal with complaints using positive listening and to be aware of signs of anger and tension.
- ✓ Inform staff that their own safety is paramount and that they should not put their own safety at risk to order to protect goods or property.
- ✓ Train staff in non-violent responses to threatening situations
- ✓ Train staff in what they should do in the event of a robbery or shoplifting incident
- ✓ Make sure staff are familiar with cash handling procedures
- ✓ Make sure staff know how to raise the alarm and to operate security equipment

Personal protection devices such as personal duress alarms may be required as an additional safe guard to the measures above.

WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER INFORMATION AND SERVICES?

- **WORKCOVER NSW**
WorkCover Information Centre 13 10 50
or visit our website
www.workcover.nsw.gov.au
- **INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS**
Service Station Association
Phone: 02 9808 4188
Web: www.ssa.org.au
Motor Traders Association of NSW
Phone: 02 9213 4222
Web: www.mtansw.com.au
Australian Manufacturing Worker's Union
Phone: 02 9897 2011
Web: www.amwu.asn.au
Check the Service Station Security Guidelines produced by the Australian Institute of Petroleum.
- **POLICE**
Assistance is available from local police through Crime Prevention Officers. These officers can help you make your business and your local community safer and more secure places to live and work.