

Commercial Burglary

Commercial burglary is an unauthorized entry by force into any portion of a business for the purpose of stealing anything of value, or in some states, committing any felony. The risk of commercial burglary is lower for businesses that operate 24-hours a day, because someone is always present in the store. Since the majority of pharmacies are not open 24-hours a day, you face a higher risk of burglary during the hours your pharmacy is closed.

There are two main defenses against burglary:

- Physical barriers to deter entry or slow it down
- Detection measures to detect a break-in if it does occur, and to summon the appropriate response

Because most burglars enter through an existing door or window, you should focus your prevention measures in these areas.

Physical Barriers

Cost or aesthetic considerations can be tough to overcome when thinking about installing physical barriers to windows and glass door doors at the front of the pharmacy. However, taking protective measures are essential to keeping your pharmacy and employees safe. In addition to the front of the store, you should also take protective measures with side and rear doors.

Physical barriers include:

- Security cameras with digital recording
- Steel window curtains or shades
- Signage
- Motion lighting
- Exterior glass protection
- Side and rear door protection
- Doors should be of hollow metal securely attached to a metal doorframe and firmly attached to the building walls (a door is only as strong as its weakest part)
- Utilize a spring latch plus a key-operated deadbolt with at least a 1-inch bolt throw; a latch guard should cover the locking area
- Install one or two hand-operated bolts or bars attached to the inside of the door to increase resistance to forceful entry

Check for entry points on the side and back of the building like windows, which can be broken, and wall- mounted air conditioners, which can be pushed in. Consider replacing both

with cinder blocks or other solid building materials. If your pharmacy is in a multi-unit building, check for rooms in the same building but outside of your pharmacy (like a restroom), that may have drop-ceilings, permitting entry into the pharmacy. Also be sure to check entry points on the roof.

Store high-value items, such as narcotics and cash, in a safe. You should also consider bolting or cementing the safe to the floor.

Detection Measures

Detection measures are essential should a burglar get past the physical barriers. The following are basic detection measures that you can take:

- Install an alarm monitoring system that includes magnetic alarm contacts on doors, including doors to an interior "safe room"
- Equip the front doors with glass-break sensors
- Install interior motion detectors in the front of the store and in the rear stockroom area

Detection devices can be set up to contact the police, which could even lead to the apprehension of the burglar before he has a chance to escape. Finally, keep in mind that well-lit door entries and perimeter lighting are essential in preventing burglaries.

Make sure to advertise on the front of the building that you have taken security measures, for example announcing surveillance, intrusion alarm and the use of time-delay safes.

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