

## **Smash-and Grab Burglars – A Growing Threat**

One evening in early November, two “smash-and-grab” burglaries occurred at convenience stores in Albany, Georgia. Two masked men, using a stolen car, knocked down the front doors of the stores, stealing cigarettes and money. Police interrupted the second burglary, but the burglars got away. Both stores had employees quit because they were afraid.

Unfortunately, this scenario is being played out at c-store operations across the country. The incidence of smash-and-grab burglary is on the rise. The thieves are often into drug-use, and are only looking for cash or items that can easily be exchanged for cash, like cigarettes.

### **Convenience Store Security Tips**

The following list of procedures and practices can help protect your employees and provide security for your property:

- Good lighting (interior and exterior)
- Good visibility of the interior of the store from outside
- Video cameras
- Silent alarm system connected to police station or monitoring company
- “Panic button” alarms worn by employees
- Written security survey and management enforcement of security policies
- Security warning signs posted on the front door that advise of low cash on hand and that clerk cannot open safe
- Cash management procedures
- An adequate security budget
- Police liaison program
- Crime prevention inspections by police
- Use of a drop safe (preferably a time-delay safe) with limited access by employees
- Height tapes on inside of front door
- Location of cash register near front door
- Location of pay phones - should not be located just outside the front door, as robbers can pretend to be on the phone while watching the inside of the store
- “Bandit Barrier” to keep robbers from getting behind register counter
- Two clerks on duty at night
- Night clerks should not be required to perform any duties outside the store

Obviously, not all these items pertain to every operation. The purpose of this list is to advise you of the prudence of constantly monitoring a security program and the industry standards for security. You may find a professional security consultant useful to analyze the security program and advise of any appropriate changes.

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