



Blaine Retailer Guide



Blaine Police Department
10801 Town Square Drive N.E.
Blaine, MN 55449
www.ci.blaine.mn.us

Emergency

(Police, Fire, Ambulance)

911

Non-Emergency

(24 hour police dispatch center)

763-427-1212

Police Administrative

(M-F 7:00 am-4:30 pm)

763-785-6168



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Introduction

As part of the continuing efforts of the Blaine Police Department to build working relationships with our retailers, we present this informational packet to help assist you in dealing with the world of retail crime. This guide is meant only to assist you in the processes of identifying, reporting, and preventing certain types of retail crimes. This guide is not meant to replace Federal or State laws or statutes. Though some information will be provided here, ultimately it is the retailer's responsibility to familiarize themselves with their own company policies and applicable State and Federal Statutes, and stay current with changes as they may occur. Minnesota State Statutes can be found online at <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/statutes.asp>

Retail Crime Contacts

Though the Blaine Police Department does not currently have officers dedicated strictly to retail crime and enforcement, there are members of our department that are designated to assist retailers in proper training, and to act as a liaison between retailers, police, and the courts. Training sessions with your business can be arranged, and an officer may even be able to come to your store to present material to your employees upon request.

Generally the Retail Officer will host a series of training sessions once per quarter. These meetings are normally set up in a manner that is catered to certain types of businesses and/or loss prevention abilities. The current series includes specific meetings for Gas Stations, Businesses without loss prevention, Northtown Mall tenants, and recently added a Tri-City Loss Prevention meeting featuring loss prevention personnel from Blaine, Coon Rapids, and Fridley. One or more of these meetings may apply to your business. If you wish to receive future information on these meetings, please contact the Retail Officer.

If you need to contact the Retail Officer, please keep in mind that officers typically work a rotating schedule with varying days off, and it may take a few days for response from the retail officer. For all routine reports or immediate assistance, any officer can assist you by calling Anoka County Central Communications at 763-427-1212. Anoka County Central Communications can also inform you as to whether the retail officer listed below is working.

Retail Officer: Officer Jim Schilling
jschilling@ci.blaine.mn.us
763-717-2600 Ext 246



Theft Defined

Theft is one of the most common types of retail crimes that officers respond to. Theft is defined by Minnesota State Statute 609.52. For the purposes of retail theft it defines theft as:

“Intentionally and without claim of right takes, uses, transfers, conceals or retains possession of movable property of another without the other’s consent and with intent to deprive the owner permanently of possession of the property.”

The level of the offense for purpose of criminal charges is determined by the pre-tax combined dollar amount loss suffered by the victim or business. The statute defines thefts with loss greater than \$1000 a felony, value between \$500 and \$1000 a gross misdemeanor, and value under \$500 a misdemeanor.

Theft-Shoptlifting

Prevention

Deterrence and preparation are some of the best prevention steps retailers can take to prevent being victimized by shoplifting. We recommend the following steps to help in the deterrence of shoplifters.

1. Acknowledge and interact with customers entering and shopping in your store. This provides not only good customer service, but also lets potential shoplifters know that you are paying attention to people in the store. (Note: pay special attention to those who may seem anxious or refuse your assistance.)
2. Observe people in your business. Watch hand and eye movement. Legitimate customers will be looking at merchandise for price, sizes, and colors. Shoplifters will likely be looking for cameras and staff. They will normally target items by ease of access and concealment, as well as potential resale value.
3. Pay attention to customers with strollers, large bags, and purses. Pay special attention if the bags or purses appear to be empty. You should also pay attention to those who are not dressed appropriately for the weather, i.e. large jackets or sweatshirts in warm weather. These items offer areas of concealment for would be shoplifters.
4. Watch for groups who enter your business then split up, this can often be used to distract staff. Arrange a signal or code to alert other employees to allow for more careful monitoring if needed.
5. Note customers who select an item and move to an area of the business that could allow them concealment. Pay special attention to restrooms and fitting rooms, and follow procedures described below for those areas.



6. Monitor fitting rooms and bathrooms. Consider limiting the amount of product allowed in these areas, and make efforts to inspect after each use. Presence of staff around these areas can at times be a deterrent. (Note: We recommend you follow any applicable store policy, but keep in mind below described procedures and elements must be met for criminal prosecution.)
7. If possible install digital cameras, or other cameras and recording equipment. Not only can the presence of cameras act as a deterrent, but images can aid in identification and prosecution of those who victimize your business. Please note, certain privacy laws may apply, and cameras can not be installed in fitting rooms and restrooms themselves. Please take time to review applicable laws on invasion of privacy, as well as your businesses policy.

How to Handle Shoplifters

If you suspect a potential shoplifting is or is about to occur, take steps to attempt to prevent the crime before it happens.

1. Provide the best customer service possible. If the individual becomes uncomfortable and moves to another part of the store, you can follow them. Don't feel you need to move away and let a crime take place.
2. Alert other employees to the situation. Again we recommend you create a prearranged and discrete code or signal to alert other employees. This will assist in watching the suspects, as well as exits and areas where they may attempt to conceal items.
3. If in a mall, contact mall security. They can generally provide walk through service, which can be a further deterrent.
4. Continue observations of the individual. If you wish to prosecute the individual you will need to ensure that the following elements are met.
 - a. Observe selection of merchandise from your business. You will need to describe the items taken, as well as provide a value.
 - b. Maintain visual observation of the subject. This helps to eliminate the claim that they put an item back, as well as bad stops in the event they actually do put the item back
 - c. Monitor as the suspect passes all point of purchase, and exits the store. (Note: for purpose of prosecution, this means they must completely exit your store. Stops that are made in vestibule areas are not considered a full exit and can not be prosecuted.)
5. Remember, always follow your company policy. However, do keep in mind that if elements are not met, police can not contact, identify, or prosecute a suspect.
6. Keep in mind that concealment alone is not enough to charge a theft, they **MUST** exit the store and meet the elements described above.



Fitting Room and Restroom Concealment

It is important to carefully monitor these areas, as they provide an area where a suspect can conceal items without detection. The below elements can not only assist you in detecting a concealment in these areas, but are also required elements for charging a suspect.

1. Was the fitting room/restroom cleaned or inspected prior to entry.
2. Did the suspect enter the room with merchandise, if so how many items.
3. What did the suspect exit with? The same product, less, or nothing.
4. Was the room checked after the suspect exited? (This will show if items were left behind, tags were removed, etc.)

Making the Stop

Once a theft has occurred the next step in the process is the stop itself. Keep in mind, your safety and that of your staff and customers is of the utmost importance. **NO PIECE OF PROPERTY IS MORE VALUABLE THEN YOUR SAFETY!**

As most of these crimes are generally misdemeanors and not occurring in the presence of the officer being called, you will be making the stop, and essentially a citizen's arrest. Police will respond, but in this situation, they will act as a liaison between you and the courts. The following procedures should be followed in making a shoplifting arrest:

1. An employee of the business must make the stop. Police can offer assistance if you believe that there is a danger to your safety, or if weapons are involved.
2. Once above elements have been met, approach the suspect and ensure that you identify yourself as a store employee, security, manager, etc.
3. Inform them as to the reason for the contact, and if you believe a theft or crime has occurred, inform them that they are under arrest or detained for the theft.
4. Escort the individual back inside the store, and bring them to your security or management office for further processing.
5. Once back inside and situation is under control, the individual who witnesses the theft can then begin completing the reports for police. (Note: this form **MUST** be filled out by the witness, and not the manager.)
 - a. Copies of these forms are included in this guide.
 - b. If your company has an established theft report form that is similar or more thorough than the form provided you may continue to use it.



6. Once all appropriate paperwork has been completed you may then contact Blaine Police. An officer will then be called to your location. The officer will review your reports, verify that all criminal elements required for charging are in place and take appropriate police action.
7. **Exceptions to these procedures will be made in the event of a fleeing, fighting, or armed suspect.**
 - a. When faced with resistance follow company policy and use common sense.
 - b. If a suspect is running, fighting or possibly armed call 911 immediately.
 - c. When calling 911 it is of the utmost importance to provide the following information
 - i. Suspect description; gender, race, clothing, hair, etc.
 - ii. **WEAPONS**: Be as specific as possible. (NOTE: If armed DO NOT attempt to apprehend the suspect, contact police and let us make the stop for you. Attempt to keep bystanders, and other employees away from the armed individual.)
 - iii. Direction of travel or area of the store where action is taking place. Keep in mind officers will go right where you tell them. If you say ABC Outlet, the officer will likely go to the front of the business. If you are fighting at the back doors and the officer has to come and find you, we are wasting precious time that could result in unnecessary delay and/or injury. **Be specific so we can get to you as quickly as possible!**
 - iv. Vehicle description, this includes color, make/model if possible, and plate. We are aware these events happen very quickly, but the more information we have, the better.
 - d. In situations where police are called before reports can be started, you must at a minimum complete reports before the close of business. Your reports are a required part of the case file, and the officer's reports can not be turned in without it.

Stores should always be aware of their own company policies, and integrate these procedures in a manner that will not violate those policies. You should also review and become familiar with the **Merchant Detention Law** covered in Minnesota State Statute 629.366. <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/statutes/?id=629.366>

This statute states that a retailer may detain a person they suspect of theft if they have reasonable cause to believe that the person has committed a crime. This reasonable cause is essentially covered in the elements described in the section above. Simply put,



reasonable cause is information you can articulate that a reasonable person faced with the same facts would come to the same conclusion.

This law is in place to protect the retailers and employees from civil liabilities associated with detaining a suspect. Keep in mind that you are only protected when you can clearly state a reason why you believe that the person has committed a crime. Again, know your company policy, and follow it. Even though you may be protected by law, your company policies may vary and you may be subject to action from the company itself.

Fraudulent Returns

This is another form of theft that businesses often face. In this type of theft rather than leaving your store with merchandise, they will select an item within the store and bring it to be returned. Rather than leaving the store with the product, they will return it for money, or store credit.

The procedures for reporting these crimes are slightly different from a traditional theft and are as follows:

1. Must observe suspect without the merchandise.
2. Observe the suspect select items from within the store.
3. Maintain constant surveillance of suspect after merchandise selection
4. Observe suspect present selected merchandise at return counter.
5. Observe the suspect complete the transaction and be given money/store credit.
6. Allow the suspect to step away from the counter.
7. This is the time to stop the suspect and identify yourself as security/store employee.
8. This is the time to stop the suspect and identify yourself as security/store employee.
9. Complete procedures as you would with any other theft case



Employee Theft

Retailers should keep in mind that the threat of theft does not just come from outside your business, but can also include employees. This type of theft can include (but not limited to): theft of money from tills, theft of merchandise, fraudulent returns or even theft of credit card information through use of electronic card skimming devices. Be vigilant of employees working with money and credit card information, as these crimes can take place quickly through slight of hand and distractions of customers and other staff.

For incidents of employee theft, use the following procedures:

1. Conduct appropriate internal investigation into the employee. This should include the gathering of appropriate evidence to prove that a crime has occurred. (Ex. Transaction records, receipts, video surveillance, witness statements, and any other applicable documentation.)
2. Complete a written report of the incident(s), you may use the form provided and/or any company forms. (See report writing section for more specifics.)
3. Obtain written statements from witnesses, and victims who have information that would be of use to the case. Ensure that full contact information is provided in the event the officer needs to take a more thorough statement.
4. Below reports and forms should be prepared and completed for officer's review prior to calling for police action.
 - a. **Blaine Police Department Theft Report**
 - i. Including subject/witness information page, narrative, and Merchandise Report pages.
 - b. **Copies of evidence-** (To include copies of video, receipts, or other applicable evidence.
 - c. **Witness List.**
 - d. **Interview-** If you interview the suspect yourself, we highly recommend that the interview be recorded if possible. Be mindful of company policy on this subject, as it is not our recommendation you violate your policies. In the event the suspect refuses to speak with police, the interview may be included with the case file and forwarded to our attorneys for possible use. If you can not record the interview, take detailed notes and include them with your reports. You may also allow the suspect to complete a written signed statement. (Note: if you are not comfortable with conducting your own interview, contact police when all other documentation is completed and allow the officer to interview.)
5. Once your investigation is complete including described documentation, contact Blaine Police. Ideally this should be done prior to termination. It is



more difficult for police to get cooperation from the suspect if they have been terminated prior to our involvement. Have the subject detained in a security or management office, and advise the officer that you have an employee in custody for theft. Officers will then respond, and review your case in a manner similar to a shoplifting. Officer will then take appropriate action based on findings.

- 6. Please note: Officers will only intervene once your internal investigation is complete, and you have completed all of the appropriate documentation.**

Gas Station Drive Offs

Over the past few years we have introduced a new method of reporting gasoline drive offs. This information has been disseminated to the individual service stations over the last two years. The following is a brief refresher on the required information for police action. We ask that you continue to follow the information that has been given to you

If arrangements with a driver have been made with the store to make payment at a later time, or collateral is left, this now becomes a civil matter between the customer and the business. In this situation a police report may be written, however you can not pursue criminal charges.

In a theft situation, where the driver has driven off without attempting to pay, and all required information is provided, the store may pursue criminal charges for theft. In this situation officer will take a report and likely require video or a photo lineup with the caller in order to be able to issue a citation for the theft. If you do not wish to pursue charges, the Blaine Police Department will not be acting as a collections agent to have the suspect return to pay. However, if during the course of our investigation towards criminal charges, we determine there was an oversight, or the individual tried to pay at the pump and it did not process, such circumstances may allow for the individual to return to pay. There are some officers who will still offer to contact the suspect to return to pay. This should be noted as the exception and not the rule.

If the store does not want to pursue criminal charges for the theft, officers will document as much information as possible to allow for a report and the matter will be treated as a civil issue. The business itself will have to follow through with any civil or collections processes as it sees fit.

What information is required:

For criminal charging the reporting Officer will need the following information

1. License Plate of the suspect vehicle
2. Description of the suspect vehicle
 - a. Color



- b. Make and model
 - c. Distinct marks or damage that would make the vehicle stand out
 - d. Rough range of age of the car ex. Late 90's etc.
 3. Description of the driver or any other suspects.
 - e. Gender
 - f. Race
 - g. Height and build
 - h. Glasses
 - i. Hair color and length
 - j. Facial hair
 - k. Clothing description
 4. Dollar amount taken in the theft
 5. Direction of travel
 6. Is there any video available?
 7. Can caller identify the driver if they saw them again?
- This will determine if a photo line up can be used

Report Writing

Report writing is one of the most important steps in the criminal justice process. Your reports will help establish if a crime has occurred, and will be part of a permanent record of the events that took place. It is used establish probable cause that a crime has occurred, and is reviewed by many people in the criminal justice process. It is important that your report provide all the facts of an incident without opinion. Your reports should also be legible, easy to understand, and be checked for spelling and grammatical errors.

The officer will review your reports, ensure criminal elements are in place, issue citations and/or make arrests, and then forward the information to attorneys for prosecution. You will be the one required to testify to your observations and actions just as an officer would if they were to issue a citation for a traffic violation.

Keep in mind, if elements are not met or the report is not of acceptable standards, the officer can request it be re-written, or decline the report. If it is determined that there is no crime, the subject will be released and there will be no further police action. You may trespass based on your store policy, but there will be no further police involvement in the case.

The following guidelines should be used when drafting a report:

1. Whenever possible reports should be typed. If hand written, use black ink.
2. The report **MUST** be written by the individual who witnesses the offense. A manager can not write the report if they are not the witness.
3. Write in complete sentences and paragraphs, and make efforts to use correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling.



4. If you make an error, do not use white out, or scribble over the error. Use on single line through the error and place you initials above.
5. Write a detailed narrative of the events. Your narrative at a minimum should include the following information:
 - a. Time and Date of Offense
 - b. Name and DOB of suspect
 - c. Name and complete address of the business.
 - d. Provide a chronological description of events:
 - i. Initial observations
 - ii. Subject actions
 1. Item selection
 2. Item concealment or location (Be specific, i.e. right front pant pocket.)
 3. Constant Surveillance
 - iii. Pass all points of purchase with out attempting payment
 - iv. Exit the store (Note: must be out of vestibule areas.)
 - v. Your Actions (The act of stopping subject, identifying yourself as a store employee, escort back to office.)
 - vi. Describe items taken. This includes price of the item. Use regular pre-tax price for the item. Do not use sale prices.
 - vii. Ensure all other elements of the crime are in place (as provided by section. Also refer to applicable State Statute.)
6. Proof read your report. Ensure all pertinent information is present, detailed observations are included, and the report makes sense.

Check Reports and Policy

Currently the Blaine Police Department works in conjunction with Financial Crime Services (FCS) as part of a check diversion program. Due to the amount of worthless checks each year, it is more productive to use the assistance of this service in helping you achieve restitution for your loss. This company operates at no cost to you or the taxpayers of Blaine. Their primary goal is restitution to you, increased accountability to those who issue bad checks, and to reduce costs of investigation and prosecution of these cases. **For more information FSC can be contacted at 1-800-880-5420**

If FCS reveals there is a crime that should be prosecuted, the case will be returned to the Blaine Police Department for further action.

Currently this company will handle bad check cases of a value less then \$1,500.00. This includes NSF Checks, Account Closed, Refer to Maker, Stop Payment, Business to Business, Rent and Electronic checks. These checks must be received within the city limits and within 120 days of date issued by check writer.



You may still contact the Blaine Police Department for the following check crimes:

1. Checks with a value of over \$1,500.00
2. Counterfeit check(s)
3. Altered checks
4. Forged checks
5. checking account opened with fraudulent information
6. stolen checks

Check Acceptance Procedures

The Blaine Police Department as well as FCS requires you follow the following procedures in accepting checks

1. Record identification number (DL# A-123-123-123-123)
2. Have employee initial upper left corner
3. Record home, work and cell numbers
4. Record date of birth
5. Make sure the photo on the identification matches the customer
6. Check signature on identification to that provided on the check. If they do not match, acceptance should be declined.

Check Forgery/Stolen Check Procedures

Passing a check that is either forged, altered or stolen does constitute a crime. In the event that someone is in your business passing a check of this nature the Blaine Police should be contacted immediately. We recommend you follow the below procedures for reporting these crimes:

1. Notify co-workers of the situation and attempt to stall the person trying to use check.
 - a. Establish a prearranged code or signal to advise co-workers of the situation and to assist or call police.
2. If unable to stall the suspect attempt to get the following
 - a. Suspect description (age, gender, race, height and weight, hair, and other distinguishing traits.)
 - b. Suspect vehicle. (Make/model, approximate year, color, damage, distinguishing characteristics.)
 - c. Last known direction of travel.
 - d. Any associates or accomplices present.
2. Do not return the check to the suspect.
 - a. The check itself will be entered into evidence.
3. Contact Blaine Police
 - a. An officer will respond, take possession of the check and submit it for evidence.
 - b. Be prepared to present the following information or documentation when the officer arrives.



- i. A store narrative of the incident, including any loss to the business.
- ii. Video of the incident if available
- iii. Any transaction records
- iv. **Note:** We are aware that some of these items may require time, or some form of formal police request. If your business requires formal request by letterhead or other means, please contact the Retail Officer so arrangements can be made before these crimes occur.

Counterfeit Currency

Counterfeit currency has been a problem in the retail community for some time. Though there are devices that are out there that are designed to help combat this crime, criminals begin to find ways to defeat them.

The best defense for counterfeit currency is well trained staff that is knowledgeable on current trends and patterns in counterfeit currency. Those who deal with currency on a regular basis should also familiarize themselves with changes in our currency as well as new security features.

Spotting Counterfeit Currency

1. Carefully inspect the currency.
 - a. Ensure that the paper has the right feel. (Most currency is made of a blend of fibers. A common type of counterfeit currency involves using heavy stock wood based paper.)
2. Check security features such as color shift ink, watermarks, and double check the corners of the bill to the other areas where denomination is written.
 - v. It is common to print a higher denomination bill over a faded out low denomination bill. This provides the correct paper type, and will pass the pen test. TIP: Lincolns watermark does not belong on a \$100.00 bill.
 - vi. Another trend is to paste a higher denomination number in the corners of a bill and present it folded in a manner where you can't see the portrait on the bill. It is common to see "10" in the corners but the bill to really be only a \$1.00 bill.
- c. Look at the borders, portraits and seals
 - i. These images should all be crisp one color images
 - ii. Almost all counterfeit currency will have some form of pigmentation pattern to mimic the colors of real currency.
 - iii. Images and borders will be flat as opposed to sharp and standing out from the paper
3. Familiarize yourself with trends, new bills, and all security features



- d. There are many resources available on counterfeit currency, but the best resource is the US Secret Service website:
http://www.secretservice.gov/know_your_money.shtml
- e. The government also presents information on new currency on
www.newmoney.gov.

Reporting Counterfeit Currency

When encountering counterfeit currency, it is important to follow the below reporting procedures:

1. Notify co-workers of the situation and attempt to stall the person passing the bill.
 - a. Establish a prearranged code or signal to advise co-workers of the situation and to assist or call police.
2. If unable to stall the passer attempt to get the following
 - a. Suspect description (age, gender, race, height and weight, hair, and other distinguishing traits.)
 - b. Suspect vehicle. (Make/model, approximate year, color, damage, distinguishing characteristics.)
 - c. Last known direction of travel.
 - d. Any associates or accomplices present.
3. Do not return the bill to the passer.
 - a. The bill itself will be entered into evidence.
 - b. The serial number and other features of the bill can at times be useful in assisting the Secret Service determine trends, patterns, and producers of counterfeit currency.
4. Contact Blaine Police
 - a. An officer will respond, take possession of the bill and submit it for evidence. Serial numbers are recorded and information is forwarded to the U.S. Secret Service.

Financial Transaction Card Fraud

Crimes involving the use of another person's credit card or credit information are some of the fastest growing types of retail crime we face today. With advances in technology this trend has expanded far beyond just the use of another person's physical card in a fraudulent manner. Though not a large scale problem yet in Blaine, card skimming practices are becoming more popular through out the United States, and will be addressed here.

Stolen Credit Card Use

Even with the advances in technology the most common types of financial transaction card (FTC) fraud we are experiencing in Blaine is still using another person's



stolen credit card. These types of crime are very time consuming for all involved, including the business, police, and the victim. They involve numerous hours of investigative work on the part of the police and the business, and countless more hours by the victim to file appropriate reports with the police, the businesses their card was used, credit card companies, and credit bureaus just to name a few.

FTC fraud is actually one of the more preventable types of identity theft we face. The problem associated with this however is company policies on the part of retailers, and the credit card companies themselves. In most FTC fraud cases an individual will break into a vehicle, locker, or steal a person's credit card through some means. They will then immediately go to a business and start making charges. Most often the victim doesn't even know their card is gone, and thus it has not been reported as stolen.

Prevention

To prevent this type of crime from occurring at your business, we recommend the following steps:

1. View the Credit Card
 - a. Verify if the name matches the gender (Use common sense with names that could go either way.)
 - b. Look at the signature.
 - I. Does it match the signature provided
 - II. Most suspects don't attempt to learn the signature knowing that it will not likely be checked.
 - III. If needed or requested by the card holder on the back of the card check identification.
2. Be mindful of persons who wish to purchase either several large items, or several gift cards of high value.
 - a. The suspects know they don't have a lot of time. They will often try to get large amounts of high denomination gift cards.
 - b. These cards can then be used to purchase anything the person wants, and are more difficult to track.
3. Review your individual company policy and follow it.
4. Install some form of camera to monitor transactions, and attempt to set them up in a manner that will capture the transaction as well as the face of the suspect(s)

Reporting

As opposed to shoplifting thefts, you do not need to wait for the person to leave before taking action. If you suspect that an individual is in your business using a stolen card you would respond in a fashion similarly to a forged check, or a counterfeit bill.

1. Notify co-workers of the situation and attempt to stall the person trying to use the card



- a. Establish a prearranged code or signal to advise co-workers of the situation and to assist or call police.
2. If unable to stall the suspect attempt to get the following
 - f. Suspect description (age, gender, race, height and weight, hair, and other distinguishing traits.)
 - g. Suspect vehicle. (Make/model, approximate year, color, damage, distinguishing characteristics.)
 - h. Last known direction of travel.
 - i. Any associates or accomplices present.
4. Do not return the card to the suspect.
 - a. The card itself will be entered into evidence.
5. Contact Blaine Police
 - a. An officer will respond, take possession of the card and submit it for evidence.
 - b. Be prepared to present the following information or documentation when the officer arrives.
 - i. A store narrative of the incident, including any loss to the business.
 - ii. Video of the incident if available
 - iii. Any transaction records
 - iv. **Note:** We are aware that some of these items may require time, or some form of formal police request. If your business requires formal request by letterhead or other means, please contact the Retail Officer so arrangements can be made before these crimes occur.

Card Skimming

As mentioned, this type of crime is becoming more popular in the United States. It involves taking the electronic information from the magnetic strip on a credit card, copying the information and either making a copy of a card, or using the information online to make purchases.

As a business, you should keep in mind that the media has brought this type of crime into the attention of the general public. You may from time to time encounter a customer who may be wary of releasing their card to you for a transaction.

This is important to note, as often it is an employee within the business. Criminal organizations will either get a member to become employed in a position where they have access to swiping credit cards, or recruit a member from within a business. The employee will then generally use a hand held device, often the size of a lighter, and will scan the card on their device while scanning the card in a legitimate setting.

When reporting this crime, we ask you treat this as you would any employee theft case. However, it is important to attempt to maintain the device being used. Minnesota State Statute 609.527 Sub. 5b. states:



Unlawful possession or use of scanning device or reencoder.

(a) A person who uses a scanning device or reencoder without permission of the cardholder of the card from which the information is being scanned or reencoded, with the intent to commit, aid, or abet any unlawful activity, is guilty of a crime.

(b) A person who possesses, with the intent to commit, aid, or abet any unlawful activity, any device, apparatus, equipment, software, material, good, property, or supply that is designed or adapted for use as a scanning device or a reencoder is guilty of a crime.

Forms

Over the years several forms have been created to help you with reporting incidents to police. With the assistance of Northtown Mall Security, these forms have been implemented not only at the mall, but at retail outlets throughout the city. We are providing a three page theft report form that includes sections for a large majority of the information that will be required by police to make a report. Also included will be a generic trespass notice form.

These forms are for your convenience. We understand that many businesses have their own documentation that needs to be completed for their company. If your paperwork includes at a minimum the information we require, we encourage you to continue using your forms, as they can be submitted with our reports just as easily.