



Problem-Oriented Guides for Police
Problem-Specific Guides Series
No. 60



Theft of Customers' Personal Property in Cafés and Bars

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Kate J. Bowers
Lorraine Gamman
Loreen Mamerow
Anna Warne

www.cops.usdoj.gov



Center for
Problem-Oriented Policing

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The Internet references cited in this publication were valid as of April 2010. Given that URLs and web sites are in constant flux, neither the author nor the COPS Office can vouch for their current validity.

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About the Problem-Specific Guide Series

The *Problem-Specific Guides* summarize knowledge about how police can reduce the harm caused by specific crime and disorder problems. They are guides to prevention and to improving the overall response to incidents, not to investigating offenses or handling specific incidents. Neither do they cover all of the technical details about how to implement specific responses. The guides are written for police—of whatever rank or assignment—who must address the specific problem the guides cover. The guides will be most useful to officers who:

- **Understand basic problem-oriented policing principles and methods.** The guides are not primers in problem-oriented policing. They deal only briefly with the initial decision to focus on a particular problem, methods to analyze the problem, and means to assess the results of a problem-oriented policing project. They are designed to help police decide how best to analyze and address a problem they have already identified. (A companion series of *Problem-Solving Tools* guides has been produced to aid in various aspects of problem analysis and assessment.)
- **Can look at a problem in depth.** Depending on the complexity of the problem, you should be prepared to spend perhaps weeks, or even months, analyzing and responding to it. Carefully studying a problem before responding helps you design the right strategy, one that is most likely to work in your community. You should not blindly adopt the responses others have used; you must decide whether they are appropriate to your local situation. What is true in one place may not be true elsewhere; what works in one place may not work everywhere.



- **Are willing to consider new ways of doing police business.** The guides describe responses that other police departments have used or that researchers have tested. While not all of these responses will be appropriate to your particular problem, they should help give a broader view of the kinds of things you could do. You may think you cannot implement some of these responses in your jurisdiction, but perhaps you can. In many places, when police have discovered a more effective response, they have succeeded in having laws and policies changed, improving the response to the problem. (A companion series of *Response Guides* has been produced to help you understand how commonly-used police responses work on a variety of problems.)
- **Understand the value and the limits of research knowledge.** For some types of problems, a lot of useful research is available to the police; for other problems, little is available. Accordingly, some guides in this series summarize existing research whereas other guides illustrate the need for more research on that particular problem. Regardless, research has not provided definitive answers to all the questions you might have about the problem. The research may help get you started in designing your own responses, but it cannot tell you exactly what to do. This will depend greatly on the particular nature of your local problem. In the interest of keeping the guides readable, not every piece of relevant research has been cited, nor has every point been attributed to its sources. To have done so would have overwhelmed and distracted the reader. The references listed at the end of each guide are those drawn on most heavily; they are not a complete bibliography of research on the subject.
- **Are willing to work with others to find effective solutions to the problem.** The police alone cannot implement many of the responses discussed in the guides. They must frequently implement them in partnership with other responsible private and public bodies including other government agencies, non-governmental organizations, private businesses, public utilities, community groups, and individual citizens. An effective problem-solver must know how to forge genuine partnerships with others and be prepared to invest considerable effort



in making these partnerships work. Each guide identifies particular individuals or groups in the community with whom police might work to improve the overall response to that problem. Thorough analysis of problems often reveals that individuals and groups other than the police are in a stronger position to address problems and that police ought to shift some greater responsibility to them to do so. Response Guide No. 3, *Shifting and Sharing Responsibility for Public Safety Problems*, provides further discussion of this topic.

The COPS Office defines community policing as “a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies, which support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime.” These guides emphasize *problem-solving* and *police-community partnerships* in the context of addressing specific public safety problems. For the most part, the organizational strategies that can facilitate problem-solving and police-community partnerships vary considerably and discussion of them is beyond the scope of these guides.

These guides have drawn on research findings and police practices in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia. Even though laws, customs and police practices vary from country to country, it is apparent that the police everywhere experience common problems. In a world that is becoming increasingly interconnected, it is important that police be aware of research and successful practices beyond the borders of their own countries.

Each guide is informed by a thorough review of the research literature and reported police practice, and each guide is anonymously peer-reviewed by a line police officer, a police executive and a researcher prior to publication. The review process is independently managed by the COPS Office, which solicits the reviews.



For more information about problem-oriented policing, visit the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing online at www.popcenter.org. This website offers free online access to:

- the *Problem-Specific Guides* series,
- the companion *Response Guides* and *Problem-Solving Tools* series,
- special publications on crime analysis and on policing terrorism,
- instructional information about problem-oriented policing and related topics,
- an interactive problem-oriented policing training exercise,
- an interactive *Problem Analysis Module*,
- online access to important police research and practices, and
- information about problem-oriented policing conferences and award programs.



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Debra Cohen, PhD oversaw the project for the COPS Office. Phyllis Schultze conducted research for the guide at Rutgers University's Criminal Justice Library. Nancy Leach coordinated the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing's production process. Katharine Willis edited this guide.

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The Problem of Theft of Customers' Personal Property in Cafés and Bars

What This Guide Does and Does Not Cover

We begin this guide by describing the problem of theft of customers' personal property from cafés and bars and reviewing associated risk factors. We then identify a series of questions to help you analyze your local problem, and, finally, review responses to this type of problem. At present, evaluative research—whether carried out independently or by the police—is scarce; consequently it is not possible to draw any firm conclusions as to which responses to theft of customers' personal property from cafés and bars are the most effective. Nevertheless, we review several responses to this problem and make tentative statements as to their effectiveness.

Theft of customers' personal property from cafés and bars is one aspect of the larger set of theft- and property-related problems. This guide, however, is limited to addressing the particular harms created by the unlawful removal of customers' personal property from cafés and bars. Table 1 on page 2 shows some of the different types of theft that might occur in a café or bar environment and the extent to which the offender is visible to the victim at the time of the offense. Unless otherwise stated, the phrase 'theft of customers' personal property' will be used interchangeably with 'theft in cafés and bars.'

For the purpose of this guide, the two types of problems—theft from customers in cafés and theft from customers in bars[§]—are considered together but independently from the crimes of larceny/theft/robbery in general for the following reasons. The two types of premises (and associated victims and offenders) share a number of characteristics that contribute to the crime problems experienced. Consequently there is considerable overlap in terms of the types of appropriate crime reduction tactics. To elaborate, both types of premises are semi-private spaces that provide similar services and the opportunity for social interaction. Both generally have a substantial turnover of patrons, comprising both regulars and infrequent visitors. In both types of facilities the likelihood of crime occurrence is a function of many things, including: 1) the type of

[§] Here, a bar is defined as a business that serves drinks, including alcohol, for consumption on the premises, while a café is defined as a facility where meals and non-alcoholic drinks are served and consumed. Bars do vary considerably and may include "neighborhood" bars, jazz clubs, wine bars, and dance clubs (Madensen and Eck, 2008). Note that typical restaurants are not included here.



Table 1: Different Types of Theft that Occur in Cafés and Bars.

| Offender Anonymity | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|------------------------------|
| High | | Low | |
| Victim not present | Victim present but unaware of offender | Offender visible to victim but not recognized as such | Offender seen by victim |
| Type of Offense | | | |
| Unattended bag theft | Pocket-picking and similar offenses involving stealth | Distraction theft | Snatch offenses [§] |

[§]Snatch offenses differ from personal robbery because there is no violence or threat of violence associated with them.

^{§§}Place managers monitor places and are therefore in a position to discourage crime (Eck, 1994).

security employed, both in terms of staff (and their training) and physical measures; 2) the internal layout of the facility; and 3) the types of people who frequent the property and the purposes of their visits. To some extent at least, each factor is within the managers' influence. Moreover, cafés and bars are likely to be subject to similar legal regulations that might be useful when trying to encourage certain responses from place managers^{§§}, or that place managers might use to achieve desired outcomes.

Although cafés and bars display similar crime-related characteristics, they also exhibit differences that are worth considering. For example, dance or nightclubs might leave women patrons especially vulnerable to bag theft because bags are often poorly attended to while they are dancing. On the other hand, café patrons might be more at risk of laptop computer theft because they are more likely to take them to such facilities. In what follows, these differences will be highlighted where they are important to crime-prevention planning.



Related Problems

Related problems not directly addressed in detail in this guide (those with asterisks are briefly touched upon), each of which requires separate analysis, include:

- Robbery
- Theft outside of cafés and bars
- Assaults in and around bars
- Crime against tourists
- Theft by employees*
- Identity theft*
- Check and card fraud*
- Cell phone theft*

Some of these related problems are covered in other guides in this series, all of which are listed at the end of this guide. For the most up-to-date listing of current and future guides, visit www.popcenter.org.

General Description of the Problem

Theft of customers' personal property from cafés and bars is a problem that has largely been overlooked in research literature. Reasons for this—discussed in more detail below—are that many crimes go unreported and data are rarely recorded or analyzed by crime reduction agencies in a way that would draw attention to the extent of the problem. However, the problem is substantial, serious, and could increase over time, meaning that addressing it is important.

Popularity of Cafés and Bars

There have always been large numbers of bars in the United States and elsewhere[§]. However, the popularity of coffee shops and other types of cafés has risen steadily. For example, in 1990 there were approximately 200 freestanding coffee houses in the United States. In 2004, there were more than 14,000.¹ This impacts the volume of crime that occurs at these types of locations. Simply put, if there are more cafés and bars, more people will visit them, and the opportunities for crime in such establishments will increase.

[§]According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2000), in 1997 there were nearly 7,000 coffee shops in the United States, and more than 52,000 licensed venues. Recent figures suggest there are more than 21,400 coffee shops in the United States. In 2007, there were about 51,000 licensed bars in the United Kingdom alone.



The Extent of the Problem and Measurement Issues

§ www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm

§§ This estimate is based on 1,001 surveys conducted in 2004 in a New York City using a random sample of the population.

§§§ For the New York City sample of the ICVS, the rates per 1,000 population at risk were 23, 19, and 66 for the crimes of robbery, burglary, and theft from vehicle respectively.

Results from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)² suggest that only one-third of completed thefts in the United States are reported to the police. Even when victims do report offenses to the police, the extent of the problem may still be distorted. For example, the victim may be unaware that an offense has occurred and report the stolen item(s) as lost property.³ Furthermore, police might not consider reported incidents serious enough to formally record them.

Analysis of police-recorded crime data is also problematic as there is no specific category for recording thefts of customers' personal property from cafés and bars. For example, in the United States, these crimes are recorded under the general category of larceny, which refers to the taking of money or property where no force or threat thereof occurs. Because this is a general category, statistics are not routinely available for the specific crimes that are the focus of this guide, and figures can be derived only when sufficient additional information is recorded about the location of offenses.

In the United States, summary data regarding pocket picking and purse snatching, for example, are readily available as part of the analysis of Uniform Crime Reports published by the U.S. Department of Justice[§]. Data regarding theft in cafés and bars are not.

Data from the International Crime Victim Survey (ICVS) and the European Survey on Crime and Safety (EU ICS) provide an estimate of crime risk across 30 countries and the 33 main cities within them. The estimated rate of personal property theft in 2004 in the United States^{§§} was 77 (pocket picking = 33) crimes per 1,000 population at risk⁴. In London (U.K.), the corresponding figure was 102 (pocket picking = 52) crimes per 1,000 population at risk. These rates are higher than those for other types of acquisitive crime covered in the survey^{§§§}.



Although official statistics for theft in cafés and bars are not publicly available, summary data from a large-city police force in the United States are instructive. The data relate to grand larceny crimes recorded in 2004. Of the total recorded, one-quarter occurred in bars/clubs or eateries. Unfortunately data were unavailable for suburban or rural agencies at the time of this writing, but we suggest that bars are high-risk facilities in most contexts.

§ In fact, the highest risk of theft in cafés and bars is likely to be concentrated within a relatively short period of time rather than being consistent throughout the day (Smith et al., 2006). This pattern is also referred to as an “acute” temporal clustering of crimes (Ratcliffe, 2004).

Consideration of where pocket-picking and purse-snatching offenses occur is also instructive. Analyses of the NCVS 2006⁵ indicate that just under one-quarter of all offenses occurred in bars, restaurants, and nightclubs. Similarly, secondary analysis of 2006 British Crime Survey (BCS) data suggests that about one-quarter of cell phone thefts occur in such facilities.

However, the above statistics consider only a fraction of the crimes that occur in bars. The results from a study conducted in a chain of bars licensed to sell alcohol in London (U.K.) provide more detail. Over two years (January 2005 to December 2006), police recorded a total of 1,023 incidents of theft in the 26 bars considered.⁶ This equates to about 1.5 crimes per day across the 26 establishments. Put another way, the rate of crime across the bars, expressed as the number of crimes per seats available, equated to 101 crimes per 1,000 seats per year.

These calculations are limited because they do not account for the amount of time patrons are exposed to the risk of this crime type. For example, houses may be burgled at any time. However, people can be victimized in bars only when they are in them. As this is usually less than 24 hours[§], the quoted rates underestimate the actual risk.

To summarize, measuring the extent of theft in cafés and bars is difficult due to the way these crimes are recorded. Nevertheless, available estimates suggest that the risk of this type of crime is greater than that for other types of acquisitive crime.



Clearance Rates and Offenders

According to data from the NCVS, arrests are made for about 4 percent of cases of pocket picking or snatch theft. For theft in general the figure is less than 1 percent. Reasons for low-detection rates include: 1) the problem of identification—items stolen are rarely registered to the rightful owner in a way that would facilitate their identification if recovered; and 2) theft of this kind is generally a crime of stealth[§], so the victim is unlikely to be able to provide a description of the offender.

As a consequence of low clearance rates, systematic data about the types of offenders who commit theft in cafés and bars are lacking. These offenders may have the same profile as pocket-pickers, or the possibility exists that they may be employees. For example, some research suggests that there is a significant amount of theft by employees in retail stores.⁷ Moreover, conversations with police officers in the United States suggest that some café and bar employees are arrested for committing theft in the establishments in which they work.

Spatial Concentration

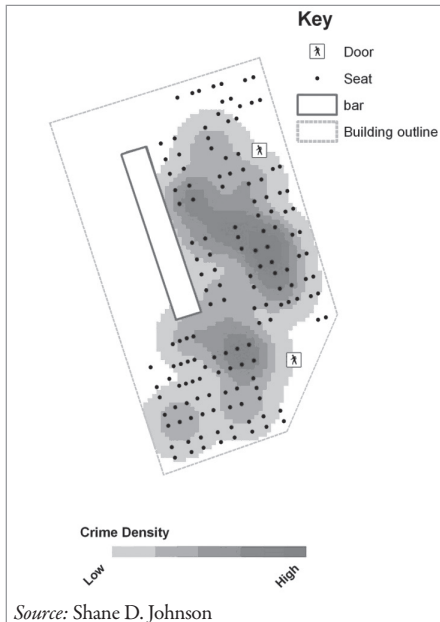
As with many forms of crime, the incidence of theft in bars is not random. The Washington Post noted that almost all incidents of purse thefts in restaurants and bars occurred in three of the city's seven police districts.⁸ Analysis of crimes at a sample of 26 bars in London (U.K.) showed that about 60 percent of thefts occurred in only 20 percent of the premises considered.⁹ Although analyses of thefts in cafés are unavailable, the pattern of concentration described has so far proven to be so consistent for other crime types that we are willing to speculate the same would hold true here.¹⁰

Research also suggests that the risk of theft in bars may cluster *within* bars. The hotspot map in Figure 1—reproduced from an earlier study¹¹—indicates that bag theft was unevenly distributed. There appears to be an elevated risk around the south but not the north entrance.

[§]In a study conducted in London (U.K.), 89 percent of victims did not notice the crime occurring and 35 percent realized an offense had occurred only when they were about to leave the bar (Smith et al., 2006).



Figure 1. An Example of a Micro-Environmental Hotspot to Show How Risk Varies within a Bar.



Perpetrator Techniques

Offenders use a variety of techniques to steal from others depending on a range of factors such as the type of place, the time of day, the items targeted, the victim, and the offender(s) themselves. Some common techniques are described below (a one-page illustrated summary of which can be found at www.designagainstcrime.com/index.php?q=perpetrator-techniques):

- **Lifting:** Picking up property from a table, a chair, or the floor while the victim is not looking
- **Dipping:** Reaching into the victim's pocket, purse, or bag
- **Snatching:** Pulling the property off of or away from the victim and then fleeing
- **Slashing:** Cutting the property loose from the victim; e.g., cutting purse straps to steal a bag
- **Distraction:** Creating a scene, asking for directions, or otherwise distracting the victim's attention from his or her property.



§The economic costs of thefts in cafés are unavailable, but, according to NCVS results, victims of pocket picking (one technique used for this type of crime) lose about \$32 million per year.

Bag thieves do not always work alone. Working in teams is especially fruitful in distraction offenses.¹² For such offenses, a 'stall' often stops the victim (e.g., by asking for the time) while a 'blocker' obstructs the victim's view so the theft goes unnoticed. Sometimes, a third party takes the stolen items from the pocket-picker.¹³

Victims

Although it is not always possible to identify those most at risk of theft in cafés and bars, several risk/protective factors have been identified for the general crime of theft. Analyses of NCVS data suggest that individuals between the ages of 16 and 19 are at the greatest risk of purse-snatching or pocket-picking offenses.¹⁴ There do not appear to be gender differences in the risk of these types of crime.

Results from the BCS suggest that people who visit cafés and bars three or more times a week are at more than twice the risk of theft (snatch and stealth) than those who do not.¹⁵ One reason for this may be that those with active social lives are simply exposed to the risk of crime more of the time. However, it may also suggest that cafés and bars are particularly risky facilities for this type of crime.

Analysis of 965 incidents of police-recorded crime data (January 2005-December 2006) concerning bag theft in a chain of London (U.K.) pubs conducted for this guide indicated that, in contrast to the pattern observed for theft, 85 percent of victims were female and most were between the ages of 21 and 25. Also, younger females (under 25) were at a greater risk of victimization than older females (26-50). For males the reverse was true. Additionally, forms of identification such as driving licenses or passports, were more frequently stolen from younger customers (presumably because they need these to enter the bar).

Harms Caused by Theft in Cafés and Bars

The most immediate impacts of this type of crime are borne by victims. Costs include the replacement of stolen goods[§], lost output due to time taken off work to report the crime and conduct related business such as canceling stolen credit cards, and coping with any injuries sustained. When personal identification is stolen, the risk



of identity theft may be significant.[§] To illustrate, in one study an interviewed offender stated: “Stolen handbags were the source (of personal identification stolen) I am afraid. Women are more susceptible than men because of where they carry their handbags... hot targets were shoe shops and coffee shops [because of the high tables].”¹⁶ Moreover, analysis of identity theft in the United States indicates that in about one-third of cases, the identification used in the offense was acquired from a lost or stolen purse or wallet.¹⁷ Given this link to identity theft (and credit card fraud^{§§}), what might be thought of as a trivial crime should perhaps be considered a more serious crime multiplier, where one crime facilitates others.

Thefts in cafés and bars can also affect business revenue. For example, in one study, one-quarter of theft victims reported they intended to avoid the venue in the future.¹⁸ Of course, as with any crime, there is also a cost to the criminal justice system.

Factors Contributing to the Problem

The following section outlines factors that contribute to theft in cafés and bars. Understanding these will help you frame your own local analysis questions, determine good effectiveness measures, recognize key intervention points, and select appropriate responses.

Location of Personal Property

Analysis of bag theft in bars in London (U.K.) indicates that where bags are placed influences crime risk.¹⁹ Bags left on the floor or on the back of customers' chairs are at about twice the average risk, whereas bags placed on tables or on the person were at a much lower risk (1/6th and 1/27th of the average, respectively). Obviously, the risk is highest for unattended bags; the study reported that in at least one-third of recorded thefts, the bag was unattended at the time of the offense. This suggests that (personal) guardianship of customers' property is often ineffective perhaps because the provision of suitable storage facilities (particularly for bulky items) is insufficient, forcing patrons to leave items in risky locations such as the floor.^{§§§}

[§] See Problem-Specific Guide No. 25, *Identity Theft*, for further information.

^{§§} See Problem-Specific Guide No. 21, *Check and Card Fraud*, for further information.

^{§§§} Other reasons could be that customers leave property unattended when they visit the bar or restroom. Also, because of legislation banning smoking in cafés and bars in many states in the United States and everywhere in the United Kingdom, customers may leave their property unattended when going outside for a cigarette.



§ Hot products are those items favored by thieves. They tend to have a high value-to-weight ratio and are easy to dispose of. Cash is the ultimate hot product as it requires no work before the offender can use it.

§§ See Problem-Specific Guide No. 25, *Identity Theft*, for further information.

§§§ Considering cell phone theft, there is little difference in the two figures (dipping versus theft of the entire bag). Cell phones are specifically targeted, but the results suggest they are not targeted as much as other CRAVED items during dipping offenses. However, the analysis focused only on theft of or from bags. Cell phones are not always in bags and are often left on tables in cafés and bars. Such incidents were unavailable for analysis.

§§§§ For more on this, see Kitteringham (2008).

Many establishments do provide some sort of storage for personal items. These range from coat and bag hooks in semi-secure storage such as bag/coat checks to secure storage such as lockers. The risk of theft is likely to be reduced when these are used; however, there is generally only anecdotal evidence to show this.

CRAVED Goods

Of course, an offender's readiness to offend is reduced when there is little to be gained. In the case of theft, at least some of the items that people routinely carry on their person—and hence found in high concentrations in cafés and bars—satisfy the acronym CRAVED, which defines a hot product[§]: Concealable, Removable, Available, Valuable, Enjoyable, and Disposable.²⁰ Three CRAVED items that most people have when frequenting cafés and bars are cash, credit/debit cards, and some form of identification. Cash and credit cards are CRAVED for reasons that require no explanation. Identification is valuable to thieves for the purpose of identity theft.^{§§}

Table 2—generated from a re-analysis of a London-based study²¹—indicates that items fitting the CRAVED profile are those most frequently stolen. The first two columns indicate whether an offender acquired stolen items by stealing a bag and all of its contents or by dipping into the bag and selecting particular items. The third column indicates how much more likely a particular item was to be taken when specifically targeted (i.e., dipped) than when stolen as part of the contents of an entire bag. It appears that four of the five^{§§§} CRAVED items shown in the table not only are likely to be stolen during thefts in bars, but are *more* likely to be specifically targeted, suggesting evidence of offender targeting decisions.

Laptop computers are another hot product that are often stolen but not necessarily stored in bags.²² The availability of wireless connectivity in many cafés, coffee shops, and bars means that laptops are routinely used at and found on table tops at these venues. Moreover, laptops make good targets for thieves as customers are often distracted in these environments and laptops are rarely secured.^{§§§§}



Table 2. Items Stolen in Bars as a Result of the Theft of the Entire Bag or Dipped from the Bag.

| | Bag Taken (%) | Items Dipped from Bag (%) | Ratio |
|--------------------|---------------|---------------------------|-------|
| Credit cards/Cash* | 30 | 53 | 1.77 |
| Passports/Visas* | 5 | 8 | 1.60 |
| Driving Licenses* | 5 | 8 | 1.60 |
| Purse/Wallet* | 39 | 51 | 1.31 |
| Cell Phones | 32 | 29 | 0.91 |
| Keys | 9 | 3 | 0.33 |
| Cosmetics | 2 | 0.3 | 0.15 |
| Optical Equipment | 2.4 | 0.3 | 0.13 |
| Audio Equipment | 3 | 0.3 | 0.10 |

* CRAVED items

Considering future trends, it is worth noting that cell phone functionality is continually advancing. Current models routinely feature MP3 players and high resolution cameras. However, the “smart wallet technology”²³, which will allow users to pay electronically for goods and services using their cell phone, is a significant change in functionality that is likely to appeal to thieves. If this technology becomes ubiquitous, cell phone theft is likely to increase and the types of associated multiplier crimes (e.g., identity theft) will become even more serious.[§] Other payment technologies that allow consumers to pay for goods wirelessly are also likely to make theft from the person an increasingly attractive crime.

Cafés and Bars as Generators and Attractors of Crime

Cafés and bars generate and attract theft^{§§}, perhaps more so than other facilities, due to:

1. **Density of static opportunities** – Large numbers of people congregating in cafés and bars *generates* opportunities for crime. Unlike on-street populations, patrons of cafés and bars are stationary for periods of time making them easier to target.

§ Some companies within the cell phone industry are developing software to secure cell phones in case of theft. Proposed remote functions include locking the cell phone, wiping sensitive information, and automatically sending text messages to pre-designated numbers if the sim card is changed without the owner's authorization. Similar technology exists for laptops (Brandt, 2006).

§§ Brantingham and Brantingham (1995) suggest that a high volume of crime may occur at certain facilities simply because large numbers of people congregate at them. A high density of people will create opportunities for crime that may be exploited by offenders who happen to be there, but who did not necessarily visit the facility to commit crime. At such facilities, referred to as *crime generators*, the volume of crime will be high, but the risk of crime (=volume/population at risk) low. In contrast, *crime attractors* are facilities that offenders know provide good opportunities for crime and they will travel to them to offend. At such facilities the risk of crime will be high, but the volume of crime need not be.



2. **Divided attention** – In both types of venues, the movement of people, noise, social interaction, and other factors mean patrons are distracted.²⁴ In licensed premises, the availability of alcohol, loud music, and the opportunity to dance might be particularly significant.
3. **Lack of cohesion** – Various groups of people tend to frequent cafés and bars (local taverns being an exception) meaning that community territoriality is unlikely, limiting any self-policing that might otherwise occur.
4. **Population turnover** – The population is often transitory, varying from one period to the next, meaning strangers and offenders are likely to go unnoticed.
5. **Valuable goods** – Patrons likely carry CRAVED goods. This may be particularly true in metropolitan areas, in large concentrations of shoppers, and when people are going to or from work.
6. **Stealth** – Busy venues provide the anonymity necessary to commit offenses.



Understanding Your Local Problem

The information provided above is only a generalized description of theft in cafés and bars. You must combine the basic facts with a more specific understanding of your local problem. Analyzing the local problem carefully will help you design a more effective response strategy.

Stakeholders

In addition to criminal justice agencies, the following groups have an interest in the problem of theft in cafés and bars and should be considered for the contribution they might make to gathering information about the problem and responding to it:

- Elected and appointed local government officials
- Community planning organizations
- Insurance companies
- City planning agencies
- Liquor licensing agencies
- Cell phone companies
- Agencies with an interest in identity theft
- Chains of and independent cafés, coffee shops, and bars
- Business associations and economic development organizations
- College and university campuses.

Asking the Right Questions

Following are some critical questions you should ask when analyzing your particular theft problem, even if the answers are not always readily available. Your answers to these and other questions will help you define and understand your local problem and choose the most appropriate set of responses later on.

Incidents

- Are incidents of theft in cafés and bars recorded in a way that aids analysis of your local problem?
- Are there alternative administrative means of logging minor crime reports that might cause you to be unaware of them?



- How much of the problem goes unreported or unrecorded?
- What is stolen during thefts? Does this vary by time of day? Are identification cards “hot”? Do thieves discard certain items? If so, is it clear what they *are* targeting?
- What is the financial value of recorded losses?
- Are stolen ATM cards used post-offense? If so, how quickly are they used? Where are the ATMs that thieves use? Are they near offense locations?
- What perpetrator techniques are common? Do they vary by venue type or location?
- Is the theft of entire bags a substantial problem? If so, where were the bags placed (e.g., table, floor) when they were stolen?
- Do cafés and bars themselves record incidents of theft? If so, are the data available?

Victims

- Who is harmed by theft in cafés and bars (e.g., customers, business owners)?
- Are there any noticeable patterns in victim demographics? Age? Gender? Occupation?
- Are women at a greater risk than men?
- Are particular individuals repeatedly victimized? If so, why?
- At the time of theft, are victims intoxicated? Are they in large groups?
- Are victims sitting or standing at the time of the offense?
- In nightclubs, are victims on the dance floor at the time of the offense?
- Are different types of items stolen from different types of victims (e.g., males and females, younger and older)?



Locations and Times

- Are some types of venues riskier than others?[§] Are certain venue chains riskier than others? Are particular venues repeatedly victimized?
- How do high-risk facilities differ from low-risk venues? Are bags/items frequently left unattended? Is there a lack of secure storage? Are there few capable guardians empowered to act? Do they have a higher volume of patrons?
- Are there spatial hotspots? Does the area have a feature, such as a large number of ATMs, that attracts thieves?^{§§}
- Are there spates of incidents at bars and cafés that are near each other?
- Are there theft hotspots within cafés or bars (e.g., near the door or at the bar)? Why do thefts occur at these locations?
- What type of clientele frequent risky locations (by time of day)? Workers? Shoppers? Students? Young people? Mixed groups?
- When do most thefts occur (by time of day, etc.)? Is the timing related to the number (or crowding) of customers in the café or bar?^{§§§} Do patterns vary across different types of venues?
- Are there local seasonal variations in the problem?
- Are discarded (stolen) items routinely recovered at particular locations? For example, are they found in restrooms? If so, this may provide insight into the sequence of steps thieves take, which may inform crime reduction.

[§]See Problem-Solving Tools Guide No. 6, *Understanding Risky Facilities*, for further information.

^{§§}Anecdotal evidence suggests that some thieves watch people at ATMs (sometimes referred to as shoulder surfing) to acquire their PIN number and then later attempt to steal their purse or wallet when, for example, they leave their bags unattended or in vulnerable locations in cafés and bars.

^{§§§}Smith et al. (2006) found that thefts in a chain of bars tended to occur when the bar was at around 60 percent capacity or above (as estimated by the victim), at around 6:00 p.m., and within 75 minutes of the victim visiting the bar. Where there are hot times, an increase in guardianship at that time of day is more likely to be effective than when the risk of crime is more uniform over the course of the day.

^{§§§§}See Problem-Solving Tools Guide No. 3, *Using Offender Interviews to Inform Police Problem Solving*, for further information.

Offenders

- How many offenders work alone? How many co-offend? How do co-offenders work together? Why do they co-offend? (Arrested offenders are a good source of information, but they may differ from active offenders in important ways and may be reluctant to talk.)^{§§§§}
- Do they prefer overt or covert methods of committing thefts?
- Do the same offenders commit multiple crimes (are they repeat offenders)? If so, how prolific are they?



Current Responses

- What types of storage facilities are available?
- Is there an active registration scheme for cell phones? What proportion of stolen phones is registered?
- What proportion of and types of items are recovered?
- What proportion of offenses results in arrest?
- Is lighting sufficient at high-crime venues?
- What proportion of thefts is recorded on Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)? Do cameras cover venues' high-risk locations? Is the lighting at those locations adequate for identification purposes? Are cameras overt or covert?
- Is anything being done to encourage patrons to secure bags and other items? Are patrons encouraged to avoid leaving bags unattended?
- Does the establishment post signs advising patrons to guard personal property?
- Is there any post-event advice or care for theft victims? How do staff respond to victims? Are door staff trained and expected to identify vulnerable property and suspicious persons?

Measuring Your Effectiveness

Measurement allows you to determine to what degree your efforts have succeeded, and suggests how you might modify your responses if they are not producing intended results. You should take measures of your problem *before* you implement responses to determine how serious the problem is, and *after* you implement them to determine whether they have been effective. All measures should be taken in both the target area and the surrounding and/or non-target area. For detailed guidance on measuring effectiveness, see Problem-Solving Tool Guide No. 1, *Assessing Responses to Problems: An Introductory Guide for Police Problem-Solvers*.



The types of data collected will depend on the particular problem to be addressed and the intervention(s) implemented. For example, if the aim of intervention is to change the way customers secure bags and other CRAVED goods, then in addition to measuring what was implemented (process measures) and any changes in theft rates (outcome measures), a useful intermediate outcome measure would be the degree to which changes have been observed in the way customers secure their property.

To measure potential success, you should establish the following measures.

Process Measures

- What was implemented? Where, when, and with what intensity (e.g., how many CCTV cameras were installed)?
- If staff training is part of the intervention, when did this occur? Were all staff trained? Was training repeated to accommodate staff turnover?
- Which stakeholders were involved? Did they achieve specified objectives?
- If publicity was used, what form did it take (e.g., news articles, venue-specific media)? How widely was it distributed?

Intermediate Outcome Measures

- Increased use of storage facilities
- Increased degree to which any publicity reached intended audiences (e.g., measured by a customer survey)
- Fewer bags and CRAVED goods left unattended
- Increased staff awareness of safe-storage practices and their involvement in crime reduction activity
- Increased number of cell phones formally registered with authorities by café and bar patrons, where appropriate (see *Responses to the Problem of Theft in Cafés and Bars*).



§ For more detailed explanations on the concepts of displacement and diffusion, see Problem-Solving Tools Guide No. 1, *Assessing Responses to Problems: An Introductory Guide for Police Problem-Solvers*, and No. 10, *Analyzing Crime Displacement and Diffusion*.

Ultimate Outcome Measures

- Fewer reports of theft in cafés and bars to police
- Fewer reports of theft in cafés and bars to place managers (although this may increase if bar staff take the problem more seriously and record thefts more systematically)
- Increased number of stolen goods recovered and/or returned to their owners
- Decreased severity of incidents (e.g., stolen property less financially valuable).

Displacement and Diffusion§

- Increased or decreased number of thefts at other facilities (crime may be displaced, leading to an increase in other areas or nearby venues)
- More or fewer crimes of other types at the same facility
- Displacement of perpetrator techniques or targets (different items stolen)
- Changes to the spatial and temporal distribution of crime within the bar
- Offender replacement—new offenders committing theft in bars and cafés.



Responses to the Problem of Theft in Cafés and Bars

Analysis of your local problem should give you a better understanding of the factors contributing to it. Once you have analyzed your local problem and established a baseline for measuring effectiveness, you should consider possible responses to address the problem.

The following response strategies provide a foundation of ideas for addressing your particular problem. These are drawn from a variety of research studies and police reports. Several may apply to your community's problem, but it is critical that you tailor responses to local circumstances, and that you can justify each response based on reliable analysis. In most cases, an effective strategy will involve several different responses. Law enforcement responses alone are seldom effective in reducing or solving the problem. Do not limit yourself to considering what police can do; carefully consider whether others in your community share responsibility for the problem and can help police better respond to it. The responsibility of responding, in some cases, may need to be shifted toward those who can implement more effective responses. (For more detailed information on shifting and sharing responsibility, see Response Guide No. 3, *Shifting and Sharing Responsibility for Public Safety Problems*.)

General Considerations for an Effective Response Strategy

In one form or another, crime reduction strategies are likely to build on one of the following techniques: target hardening, concealment or removal, access control, natural and formal surveillance, anonymity reduction, place manager utilization, guardianship extension, and benefit reduction or removal. These strategies naturally overlap. For example, by increasing natural surveillance, guardianship is likely to be enhanced.



§ For an example of how layout can impact thefts that depend on quick and easy escape routes, see the Tesco case study (Design Council, 2003).

In many cases, solutions will involve working with place managers or owners of high-risk venues. In such cases, readers are advised to consult Problem-Solving Tools Guide No. 6, *Understanding Risky Facilities*, which focuses on understanding risky facilities and how to work with place managers to reduce crime.

What follows should help you consider what might be appropriate in your area and help you identify some of the issues associated with implementing such interventions. In many cases, the responses discussed have not been subjected to rigorous evaluation, but are included to illustrate the range of tactics possible.

Specific Responses to Reduce Theft in Cafés and Bars

The intervention's effectiveness may depend on identifying and manipulating the aspects of the venue that are most likely to impede perpetrators' preferred Modus Operandi; therefore, it is important to carefully investigate these. For example, in a venue where snatch theft is prevalent, changing the venue layout to make escape routes less convenient to thieves *may* reduce offenses.§ In contrast, if most thefts are due to patrons leaving items unattended, the solution might be to improve secure storage facilities.

Appropriate responses will vary across different types of establishments. For example, coffee shops and fast food chains are quite different because of the likely variations in clientele and hours of operation. Moreover, the risk of victimization may vary by time of day even within the same type of facility. Different problems will require different solutions.

A further consideration is a venue's geographical context. Effectiveness may depend on whether the venue is isolated or within a larger entertainment district. For example, considering detection strategies, an offender may be more likely to linger in an entertainment district than in other areas.



Improving Opportunities for Secure but Convenient Storage

§ Designed by Jackie Piper, Marcus Willcocks, and Lorraine Gamman.

As discussed, the theft of property in cafés and bars often occurs when items are left unattended. This suggests that secure storage facilities are either inadequate or inconvenient. In this case, the provision of convenient secure storage facilities may help reduce theft.

Many different types of secure storage exist, but they should be tailored to the particular environment. To illustrate, *cloakrooms* are useful and provide high levels of security in clubs or bars with a dance floor. However, in coffee shops where customers may spend only 10 minutes drinking coffee, cloakrooms would likely be underused and inconvenient and, therefore, cost-ineffective. Examples of storage solutions have been identified by the Design Against Crime Research Centre at Central Saint Martins College, London (DACRC) and include (also see Appendix B):

1. **Providing anti-theft furniture.** Where customer turnover is high, using furniture designed for crime prevention may be cost effective and practical. A number of examples of anti-theft furniture exist. Those below were commissioned as part of a design project at the Design Against Crime Research Centre (DACRC). For each design—the range reflecting the need to have different types of designs for different types of venues—the anti-theft feature is integral. For example, a chair[§] shown at both ends of the figure allows customers to secure their bags off the floor enhancing their role as capable guardians. The chair designs are intended to be attractive and to reduce opportunities for theft.

Source: www.inthebag.org.uk.



Examples of anti-theft furniture.



2. **Providing retro-fitted secure storage.** Facilities that already have furniture should consider installing to tables and chairs retro-fitted bag clips, on which customers can hang their bags. When positioned near customer seating, these may enhance natural guardianship and secure bags. In many venues throughout the UK, commercially available clips can be fitted to tables and chairs. However, these clips are underused by customers²⁵ often because clips are installed out of sight or are breakable (or appear to be), which could damage bags. Some clips fit only certain types of bags; hence the needs of typical victims should be considered (often this means designs that accommodate women's handbags). Thus, if used, careful consideration should be given to which design to install and how to publicize them.

The DACRC is currently testing new designs and ways to increase customer use. Following is one new design, along with an image of a publicity approach.

Grippa (Source: DACRC, London).



An example of a Chelsea clip which can be attached underneath tables to secure customers' bags.

Major coffee shop chains and fast food outlets have shown interest in design solutions such as bag clips and anti-theft furniture, but, at the time of writing, are not yet using them.



- 3. Providing lockers.** Lockers are an alternative method for storing customers' valuable items. Keys may be provided for free or for a small deposit, or combination locks may be used. Lockers should be located in areas that staff can observe to reduce the likelihood of thieves tampering with them.

§ In some ski resorts, customers are asked to keep bags off the floor so they aren't dampened by melting snow. In restaurants in Mexico, customers are sometimes invited to store bags on a bag tree next to the table. The degree to which such measures reduce theft is unknown.

Careful consideration should be given to publicizing anti-theft furniture. The challenge is to raise awareness of storage facilities so they are used but not raise the fear of crime unnecessarily. A risk in publicizing anti-theft furniture is that if patrons use the furniture but theft still occurs, victims may pursue legal action against venues for providing ineffective security.

An alternative approach is to publicize furniture with an emphasis on other issues, such as health and safety. For instance, place managers could encourage, or require, customers to keep their bags off the floor. According to the American Occupational Safety and Health Act (1970)²⁶ (see also the U.K. Health and Safety at Work Act 1974²⁷), it is the employer's duty to ensure employees, as well as customers, are protected from health and safety hazards. Bags on the floor can be a trip hazard; hence an argument could be made that bags should be kept off the floor.[§]

Grippa (Source: DACRC, London).



Examples of alternative table clips.



Registration, Recovery, and Removing Benefits

§The effectiveness of such schemes is unknown, but car registration has been mandatory in most countries for some time, so a consideration of its effectiveness may be instructive. In a review, Webb (2005) concludes that registration schemes' potential impacts on crime have been hampered by problems that include database inaccuracies and inadequate enforcement. It is possible that other registration schemes could experience similar problems. Important to this kind of scheme are coverage and continuity. If records are not maintained or coverage is limited, then such schemes are unlikely to have positive impacts.

§§Blocked phones can be reprogrammed for use. However, police can detect unblocked phones (visit www.immobilize.net).

Registering CRAVED items such as cell phones could help prevent theft by making it easier to identify stolen property and return recovered items to rightful owners. This may deter thieves as registered items would be more difficult to dispose of, and with registered cell phones, inoperable if stolen.[§]

4. **Providing online registration programs linked to police.** One existing scheme implemented in the United Kingdom and United States is Immobilize (www.immobilize.net). This is a free service that encourages owners to register details of their cell phones and other CRAVED goods. Cell phone owners must register their phone's make and model and its International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number. The latter allows the phone to be blocked if it is stolen, rendering it unusable^{§§} (although this can be circumvented through reprogramming²⁸). When registered items are lost or stolen, registered owners can inform Immobilize, which means police and other agencies can use the database to identify stolen goods. For a small fee (\$2.99 at the time of writing; visit www.checkmend.com/us/), owners may also search the database to check that secondhand goods they wish to purchase are legitimately owned by the seller.

According to Immobilize, in the United Kingdom, information collected assists in more than 250 cases each week. As with all property registration schemes, the effectiveness of the scheme depends on subscription levels; if few people register property, success will be limited. It is therefore essential to heavily publicize such schemes, if adopted.

5. **Sending text bombs to stolen phones.** A tactic that has been used in Holland and will be used in Australia involves repeatedly sending messages (text bombs) to stolen handsets rendering them unusable.²⁹ The effectiveness of this type of intervention has not been evaluated. Moreover, the cost of implementing this type of scheme should be considered. If cell phone network service providers support the initiative, costs



may be minimal. Otherwise, the cost of sending the messages may outweigh potential benefits.

6. **Providing traditional property marking.** The rationale of this scheme is that if desirable goods are marked and registered, thieves will be deterred from stealing them, and would experience difficulties selling them if stolen. This type of scheme may differ from the Immobilize registration scheme because the property is often overtly marked (which Immobilize does not require). Despite their popularity, the effectiveness of property marking schemes is unknown, and research suggests that any positive effects may be better attributed to the scheme's publicity rather than the property marking itself.³⁰ If a market disruption approach is implemented with the goal of hindering the disposal of stolen goods, crime reduction agencies such as the police need to work closely with store owners. They should implement any existing local ordinances that require stores to establish proof of ownership for used goods they purchase, and they should encourage stores to publicize their involvement in the scheme.³¹ § The success of such schemes will, of course, be a function of how many secondhand goods stores and pawn shops participate, how many people mark their property, and how quickly updated lists of stolen goods are distributed to participating stores.
7. **Educating victims about the rapid cancellation of credit and debit cards.** When thefts are reported, the opportunity exists to educate victims about the risks of further crimes, such as identity theft. As part of a project conducted by the authors and the Metropolitan Police in London (U.K.), victims who reported thefts in participating bars or at local police stations were given a leaflet that explained how to protect themselves from a range of crimes (e.g., credit card fraud) and listed relevant phone numbers (e.g., credit card companies). The aim was to empower victims to take swift action rather than simply raise their fear of crime. If victims' keys are stolen, it is wise to provide advice about how to replace their locks.

§ See Problem-Specific Guide No. 57, *Stolen Goods Markets*, for further information.



Raising Awareness of Risk and Personal Solutions

- 8. Publicizing the use of safer storage by customers.** To encourage customers to secure their bags in a series of bars in London (U.K.), the Safer Southwark Partnership provided bag clips under bar tables and publicized their existence using “talking signs.” Placed in the ladies’ restrooms, the signs are triggered by motion sensors and convey the following message: “This is a message on behalf of Safer Southwark Partnership: we hope you are having a good evening; please, however, take care of your bag.” No formal evaluation of the scheme exists, but some feedback suggests positive impacts. The use of talking signs requires careful consideration. For instance, the signs may require continued maintenance, and they may annoy customers if they are constantly activated.

Because victims are likely to be younger, it may also be useful to reinforce messages about personal responsibility for safety in areas such as college campuses. Publicity may be used to encourage those at risk to store property more responsibly and to take simple measures such as zipping up or locking bags.

- 9. Promoting personal security measures.** There are a number of products available designed to enable patrons to better secure valuable goods in risky environments, some of which are discussed below and an extensive review of which is available at www.inthebag.org.uk. As part of a campaign to reduce theft

Source: DACRC, London



Examples of anti-theft bags. These designs are made of hard materials to prevent slashing and incorporate other design features such as having an inward facing zip to prevent dipping.



and robbery and to promote the use of this type of product, British Transport Police recently gave away a range of anti-theft products.³²

Lanyards are another way to secure personal items such as cell phones and laptops. Secured to valuable items, an audible alarm is activated if someone attempts to steal them (low-tech solutions exist). Educating the public about the availability of such products may be useful if common perpetrator techniques are likely to be disrupted by their use. It might be particularly effective to promote products that appeal to women if they are the primary victims.

Source: DACRC, London



Example of a lanyard.

Other examples include personal table clips that customers can carry with them for use at any location, and solutions that aim to camouflage or conceal valuable items such as laptops. Although police agencies are unlikely to distribute or endorse these products, educating the public about their existence may be helpful.

Source: www.inthebag.org.uk



Example of a portable bag clip that attaches to a table.



Increasing Guardianship and Surveillance

§ See Problem-Specific Guide No. 49, *Robbery of Convenience Stores*, for further information.

10. **Improving natural surveillance.** Increasing the visibility of theft in cafés and bars is possible by improving natural surveillance, which can be achieved by considering crime prevention in the design of new cafés and bars or by retrofitting solutions to address identified problems. A study of the effectiveness of security in convenience stores suggests that impact is greater where a store's internal configuration facilitates unobstructed surveillance.^{33, §} Although the influence of internal layout on the risk of theft in cafés and bars is unknown, it is worth considering in any analysis of the problem. Points to consider include:

- Staff should have an uninterrupted view of the establishment from the service counter or bar area. Avoid obstructions such as unnecessary space dividers or corridors leading to restrooms. It may also be useful to raise the service area, giving staff a better view.
- Furniture placement is important. For instance, locating tables too close to doors might encourage snatch thefts.
- Policies can help change behavior. For example, a bar with table service should have less customer movement than one without.
- Additional lighting at the entrance and at restrooms preserves ambience while providing increased visibility.
- A facility's internal layout influences the type of movement that would appear legitimate to patrons and staff. Some features can create excuses for thieves to look for property to steal (e.g., a path to the restrooms that passes tables).
- The number of entrances and exits may affect crime risk. Two or more entry points provide multiple escape routes and exits for staff to observe. Moreover, where venues span two or more floors, there may be different risks between floors.



The central point is that if offenders are more likely to be seen (or perceive they will), they may be discouraged from undertaking thefts. In fact, actual intervention by staff or customers may be unnecessary as long as offenders' perceptions are influenced by the layout.³⁴

11. **Using CCTV.** Depending on the specific problem, the use of CCTV may be beneficial. However, it may not reduce crime if it requires constant monitoring and staff are unable to do this. Where CCTV is used successfully, convictions should be publicized to ensure that offenders' perceptions of risk are affected.^{35, §}
12. **Employing door staff in bars.** Properly trained door staff can keep a watchful eye on people entering and exiting bars and act as a deterrent to would-be thieves. This could be an expensive option unless crime is a substantial problem or door staff can fulfill other useful roles.

§ See Response Guide No. 4, *Video Surveillance of Public Places*, for more information.

§§ See Problem-Solving Tools Guide No. 6, *Understanding Risky Facilities*, for more information.

§§§ Even staff that collect and clean glasses can play a role.

Licensing, Management, and Staffing

13. **Training staff.** Also key to improving surveillance is staff training. Staff who can act as place managers need to know what is expected of them. Staff may consider crime prevention to be beyond their responsibility³⁶ or be unaware of how they might contribute to the problem and solution.^{§§} Where policies (or lack of them) contribute to the problem of theft, successful and sustained solutions may require their revision or an approach that leverages the action of place managers and staff.^{§§§} Simple measures would include training staff to be vigilant and to encourage customers to secure property on their person or to use anti-theft furniture. Leverage from the police, in terms of publicizing venues with good or bad track records, could provide an incentive for establishments to involve staff in crime prevention.



14. **Requiring theft prevention through licensing.** Making certain crime prevention practices mandatory (such as training new staff in security procedures) prior to license provision could be a useful leverage tactic. Anything in the manager's economic interest could be effective; for example, increasing customers' comfort and safety or avoiding liability. In a 'Café Watch' case study in Westminster (U.K.), which aimed to combat violence and other problems in cafés, ways that interested parties could work together were explored, along with the statutory powers available to them. As part of the response, targeted inspections by Crime Prevention Officers and Environmental Health Enforcement Officers were carried out using Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance as a baseline. The study concluded that there was a 50 percent reduction in crime in participating premises within a year.³⁷

Other related strategies can be found in Problem-Specific Guide No. 1, *Assaults in and Around Bars*. This guide also discusses licensing laws in more detail.

15. **Screening staff.** Although we have not focused on theft by employees, it is worth mentioning that internal theft could be a cause for concern, particularly in establishments where the labor pool is highly transient and skill level requirements are minimal. This may ultimately lead to hiring correctional clients and other high-risk employees. In such situations, it may be advisable to use staff screening or a background check to ensure employees are unlikely to contribute to an internal theft problem. Research on the effectiveness of pre-screening is mixed. One study demonstrated a 40 percent shrinkage loss reduction for five major retail chains two years after pre-screening tests were used. However, outcomes appear to depend on the business type, and this strategy raises concerns about ethics and staff morale.³⁸



Detection Strategies

16. **Undertaking sting operations.** Sting operations, in which bags are left unattended but are watched covertly by plain-clothed police officers, may be used.[§] A complementary approach would be to place a concealed GPS transmitter in unattended bags.^{§§} A change in the position of the GPS transmitter would signal the bag is moving. In addition to helping to detect crimes in progress, analysis of where thieves go post-offense may provide useful intelligence on, for example, potential locations of stolen goods markets. Although there is no formal evidence of the effectiveness of such strategies or published examples of their use, the Metropolitan Police (London, U.K.) have used this type of strategy.

[§]See Response Guide No. 6, *Sting Operations*, for further information.

^{§§}See Problem-Specific Guide No. 52, *Bicycle Theft*, for further information.



Appendix A: Summary of Responses to Theft of Customers' Personal Property in Cafés and Bars

The table below summarizes the responses to theft of customers' personal property from cafés and bars, the mechanism by which they are intended to work, the conditions under which they ought to work best, and some factors you should consider before implementing a particular response. It is critical that you tailor responses to local circumstances, and that you can justify each response based on reliable analysis. In most cases, an effective strategy will involve implementing several different responses. Remember that law enforcement responses alone are seldom effective in reducing or solving the problem.

| Response No. | Page No. | Response | How It Works | Works Best If... | Considerations |
|--|----------|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| <i>Improving Opportunities for Secure but Convenient Storage</i> | | | | | |
| 1 | 21 | Providing anti-theft furniture | Provides customers with opportunities to store bags securely | Furniture is both attractive and convenient for customers | May be expensive unless furniture needs replacement for other reasons |
| 2 | 22 | Providing retro-fitted secure storage | Allows customers to hang bags underneath tables, keeping them off the floor | Clips are visible to customers and appear sturdy | This is less costly than using anti-theft furniture but may not be as robust or as effective |
| 3 | 23 | Providing lockers | Provides customers secure storage facilities for items they are unable to watch over | Lockers are visible to staff and others; customers expect to remain in establishment long enough to justify using lockers; customers are aware of lockers | Designated space(s) for the lockers will be required; locks should be secure but easy to use and require minimal maintenance; lockers should be large enough to allow customers to store bags and items (e.g., laptops) of different sizes |



| Response No. | Page No. | Response | How It Works | Works Best If... | Considerations |
|--|----------|--|---|---|--|
| <i>Registration, Recovery, and Removing Benefits</i> | | | | | |
| 4 | 24 | Providing online registration programs linked to police | Facilitates reporting theft to police and increases chances of recovering stolen property; some registered electronic devices can be disabled, rendering them useless | There is a high adoption, victims report thefts swiftly, secondhand goods shops cooperate and advertise their involvement, and the scheme is widely publicized periodically | May require laws that encourage secondhand goods shops to check for proof of ownership when they purchase secondhand goods |
| 5 | 24 | Sending text bombs to stolen cell phones | Irritates thieves and renders cell phones inoperable | Phones are unlikely to be exported to other countries or rapidly reprogrammed; cell phone service providers support the initiative | Financial costs of running the intervention may be high |
| 6 | 25 | Providing traditional property marking | Deters thieves by increasing risks of detection; increases difficulty of disposing of stolen property | Scheme is widely publicized and widely used, and detections are publicized | Unproven effectiveness; may require laws that encourage secondhand goods shops to check for proof of ownership when they purchase secondhand goods |
| 7 | 25 | Educating victims about the rapid cancellation of credit and debit cards | Reduces victims' risk of further victimization by credit card fraud and identify theft | Victims are provided with timely, comprehensive, and detailed information; message empowers victims rather than simply raising their fear | Some program costs to produce up-to-date information materials |



| Response No. | Page No. | Response | How It Works | Works Best If... | Considerations |
|--|----------|---|---|---|---|
| <i>Raising Awareness of Risk and Personal Security Solutions</i> | | | | | |
| 8 | 26 | Publicizing the use of safer storage by customers | Encourages customers to secure personal items | Secure storage is possible and practical; message is positive and empowering and does not increase fear of crime | Signs may be costly or annoying to some customers |
| 9 | 26 | Promoting personal security measures | Increases difficulty in stealing valuables | Products highlighted are readily available, discounted, aesthetically appealing, and functional | Recommendations should be impartial, accurate, and suitably comprehensive; may require extensive marketing |
| <i>Increasing Guardianship and Surveillance</i> | | | | | |
| 10 | 28 | Improving natural surveillance | Increases offenders' perception that they will be observed | The facility's original layout promotes natural surveillance; there are enough staff to keep a watchful eye on customers and their property | May be expensive to redesign layout; other customers may be reluctant to intervene; may require staff training and policy on theft intervention |
| 11 | 29 | Using CCTV | Deters thieves by increasing likelihood of detection | Crimes occur in areas with little natural surveillance and are obscured from the direct view of staff; CCTV is monitored | Costs for equipment and monitoring; privacy concerns |
| 12 | 29 | Employing door staff in bars | By screening exits, and observing customer behavior, door staff may prevent thieves from entering or deter them from stealing | Staff are well trained and visibility is good within the venue | Can be expensive and may be unlikely to work where thieves are skilled at stealth offenses |



| Response No. | Page No. | Response | How It Works | Works Best If... | Considerations |
|--|----------|--|---|--|--|
| <i>Licensing, Management, and Staffing</i> | | | | | |
| 13 | 29 | Training staff | Increases likelihood of detecting thieves and vulnerable property | There are formal, recognized procedures in place for security practices | Costs to train staff |
| 14 | 30 | Requiring theft prevention through licensing | Improves routine security practices | Compliance is ensured; security measures are in establishments' financial interests | May be opposed by hospitality industry; licensing issuance and compliance costs |
| 15 | 30 | Screening staff | Decreases likelihood of hiring thieves | Screening measures are in establishments' financial interests | May cause staffing problems by discouraging applications; unproven effectiveness |
| <i>Detection Strategies</i> | | | | | |
| 16 | 31 | Undertaking sting operations | Increases likelihood of detection | Prolific offenders are known to target particular locations, venues targeted are crime hotspots, CCTV cameras can be used to monitor offender activity | May require authorizing legislation; enforcement costs |



Appendix B: Websites Featuring Products Designed to Reduce the Risk of Theft in Cafés and Bars

Editors' Note: This list was compiled to offer examples to help readers implement ideas included in this guide. The appearance of this list is not to be construed as endorsement by the U.S. Department of Justice or the authors of this guide. This list is non-exhaustive; we encourage you to research other products and services that may be of use to you in theft prevention. All website URLs are accurate at the time of writing.

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Bags | BagMate by Hookit: www.hookit.net.au/home.html Chelsea Clip: www.selectadna.co.uk/chelsea-clips.html?gclid=CPvLjbfq65ACFQFaMAod0RATPA SecureKlip: www.secureklip.com/index.php Prensus - Portable Hanging Device: www.prensusphd.com/ |
| Purses | Chatt Plus: www.chattplus.com/index.php HangBag Company: www.hangbagcompany.com/ Handbag Hangers: www.handbaghanger.com.au/ Hooky Handbag Hook: www.quirkybags.co.uk/products.php?cat=31&gclid=CMq6zJfe65ACFQHolAodSzWZtA Hot HangUps: www.hot-hang-ups.com/ KeepKlose: www.keepklose.com/ The Little Hooker: www.cwdesignllc.com/servlet/StoreFront?gclid=CIu-kfXi65ACFQIKMAodwGFKQQ MyBagHanger: www.mybaghanger.com/ Pretty Pink Toes: www.prettypinktoes.co.uk/handbaghanger.aspx Purse Angels – The Handbag Guardian: www.purseangels.co.uk/?gclid=CLfLhL7d65ACFQ7tlAodlTqkrA Purse Hanger.com: www.purse-hanger.com/ Purse Hanger.net: www.pursehanger.net/ PurseSitter: www.pursesitter.com/ so Hooked: www.so-hooked.com/ |
| Suitcases | Pacsafe – Travel Security: www.pacsafe.com/www/index.php TamperSeal TSA-Approved Luggage Straps: www.tamperseal.com/tsa-luggage-straps-c-28.html?osCsid=41d0aa911a8f0eaff3cf31752d73bdb1 |



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