

PREVENTING LOSSES DURING THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY

It seems hard to believe but it's Christmas time once again. And for those of us who work in retail, this is a time of increases: sales, customer traffic, workload and, of course, theft and fraud. As if we didn't have enough going on in our stores already... Nevertheless, if we keep a few simple rules in mind, we can help our store reduce its losses during the upcoming Christmas season.

Credit card fraud is one of the costliest forms of shrink that retailers face, but if sales associates take time to remember a few simple rules, they can help their store reduce this type of fraud. For example, prior to completing a transaction, always ask your customers for identification. Make certain you compare the signature on the ID with the one on the receipt. Also, be certain to check that the last four digits that print on the receipt match what's embossed on the front of the card.

Keep in mind that customers who engage in credit card fraud often purchase multiples of the same item; rapidly select large amounts of merchandise without looking at the price or they choose very expensive items. Always be

courteous but cautious when handling these types of transactions.

When it comes to cash transactions, your dishonest customers will do all they can to create losses. Counterfeit currency is passed more often during Christmas time, but if we're aware of the risks we can do much to thwart the thieves. Always be certain to use your counterfeit pens, but don't stop there. You'll also want to make certain that the faces in watermark and the front image match. If you're still suspicious, you can examine the color-shifting ink, micro-printing or look for the red and blue threads embedded within each denomination. Remember, if you ever suspect a customer of trying to pass a counterfeit, be courteous but simply ask them for another form of payment.

Another variety of theft we have to be on the lookout for is the quick-change artist. This type of thief will make every attempt to confuse the unwitting sales associate. Often times, the quick-change artist will make a large purchase using a small bill, or "change up" numerous small bills for a single large one. One might make a small purchase using a fifty,

but then after receiving the change, he will "buy back" his large bill. Or one might ask to change five, twenties for a one-hundred dollar bill, but then claim you only gave him a ten. Remember, if you get confused, immediately call for a manager.

Even during the slowest of times we have to be on watch for shoplifters, but more so during the Christmas holidays. Shoplifters like to take advantage of the extra foot-traffic and the frenetic pace in your stores, so all of us have to ensure that we're on the sales floor and available for our customers. A good part of preventing shoplifting is ensuring that you and your coworkers are watchful, that you know who's in your store and that you're on the sales floor providing excellent customer service.

As with any loss prevention initiative, its effectiveness is dependant upon the people who work in the stores. Adhering to accepted practices and paying attention will greatly help to reduce inventory loss. Please see a manager or your LP representative if you need assistance.



TIPS FOR PREVENTING INVENTORY LOSSES DURING THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS:

- Ask every customer for ID whenever processing a credit card transaction.
- Check to ensure that the last four digits of the credit card match what's printed on the receipt.
- Customers who engage in credit fraud often rapidly select items, buy many of the same item or very expensive items.
- Use your counterfeit pens, but also be sure to learn the security features in all US bills.
- Remember that quick-change artists will use confusion to ply their trade.
- Use superior customer service to reduce shoplifting in your store.