



ACS Crime Guidance 2018

A report by the Association of Convenience Stores

#ACSCrimeReport

ACS | the voice of
local shops



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08		STAFF THEFT	This advises retailers on preventing incidents of staff theft, how to identify staff theft and how to deal with offenders.

INTRODUCTION

ACS has developed a package of guidance which aims to support retailers in assessing and managing the crime threats that their businesses face. The guidance focuses on partnership working as well as how to mitigate crimes including: robbery, violence and verbal abuse, staff theft, and best practice around preventing theft at self-scan tills.

Every local shop is different and requires an individual assessment for what action they need to take. The guidance includes information on crime prevention equipment including CCTV, external security measures and location high value products in sight of the till.

Alongside this year's report, ACS has developed a new training animation which looks to help retailers train their staff on how to manage violence in their stores. The animation explores how to manage the triggers of violence and verbal abuse including: challenging shop thieves, enforcing age restricted sales, refusing to serve someone who is intoxicated, and armed robberies. Retailers and their staff can download or view the animation here: <https://www.acs.org.uk/advice/crime-prevention>

KNOW WHO TO CONTACT

A great opportunity to highlight the impact of retail crime on your business, understand the best way to report crime, and communicate the challenges faced by your business is by building

relationships with your local policing team, PCSOs and Police and Crime Commissioner. Fill in the name and contact details for your local police contacts below.

Local police officer / police community support officer:

Name: _____

Contact details

Email: _____

Phone: _____

To look up your local police contact, visit www.police.uk

Local Police and Crime Commissioner:

Name: _____

Contact details

Email: _____

Phone: _____

To look up your local PCC, visit <http://www.apccs.police.uk/find-your-pcc/>

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Working in partnership with your local police force, Police and Crime Commissioner, other businesses, and the community, is the most effective way to prevent and challenge crime in your business.

The National Business Crime Centre was set up by the Home Office to help businesses tackle crime through partnership working and sharing best practice. The NBCC has three aims which include:

- Improve partnership with the business community and raise national police standards to accurately understand reduce the impact of crime.
- Improve business crime intelligence and information exchange to disrupt organised criminality throughout the UK.
- Prioritising prevention, by being a conduit of best practice and a centre of excellent support all business throughout the UK.

Every police force has a nominated single point of contact (SPOC) that liaises with the business community on business crime, which is a great opportunity to address strategic issues with police response to incidents in your store. Contact ACS on 01252 515001 to find out who your business crime single point of contact is.

To get involved or to find out more information about the National Business Crime Centre, visit: <https://nbcc.police.uk/>



POLICE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

There are two ways to complain about the conduct of your local police force:

- **Contacting your local Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).**

Each police force has a Police and Crime Commissioner that is democratically accountable for your local police force's performance. If you have a complaint about how your area is policed or the policing budget, you should consider writing to your local PCC.

- **Making a complaint through the Independent Police Complaints Commission.**

You can complain about how your local police force is run, for example about policing standards or policing. For more information, visit www.ipcc.gov.uk/complaints



VIOLENCE AND VERBAL ABUSE



Outlined below are the top three triggers for violence and aggression in-store. Managing and preventing these circumstances will help you and your staff avoid abuse in-store.

CHALLENGING SHOP THIEVES

In attempt to prevent shop theft offenders from fleeing the store, retailers can experience verbal abuse and violence from the offender.

The best way to prevent shop theft is by being attentive, meeting and greeting all customers as they enter the store, so that potential thieves know you are watching them.

Ensure that you put your own safety first. Keep a safe distance when engaging with potential shop thieves.

REFUSING TO SERVE INTOXICATED PERSONS

Retailers are legally obligated to refuse an alcohol sale to someone who is intoxicated. If you have to refuse to serve a customer who is drunk, stay calm and polite. For example, "Sorry we cannot serve you today" – do not say that they are drunk.

If they become aggressive, keep at least an arms-length distance between you and the customer and seek help from other colleagues.

ENFORCING AGE RESTRICTED SALES

Making sure that staff enforce age restricted sales such as alcohol and tobacco is important but can often lead to confrontation.

Retailers and their staff should consider using the following techniques to stop confrontation when asking customers for their ID when purchasing age restricted products:

- **Deflect** – Move the blame onto the law, by explaining that retailers are required by law to ask for ID.
- **Flattery** – Be complimentary, for example, by telling the customer they look good for their age.
- **Be constructive** – Help the customer understand what ID they need to bring.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

For more guidance on ways to manage the triggers of violence and verbal abuse, please see ACS' training animation video on 'Managing Violence and Abuse in Convenience Stores' which is available to download or view here:

<https://www.acs.org.uk/advice/crime-prevention>

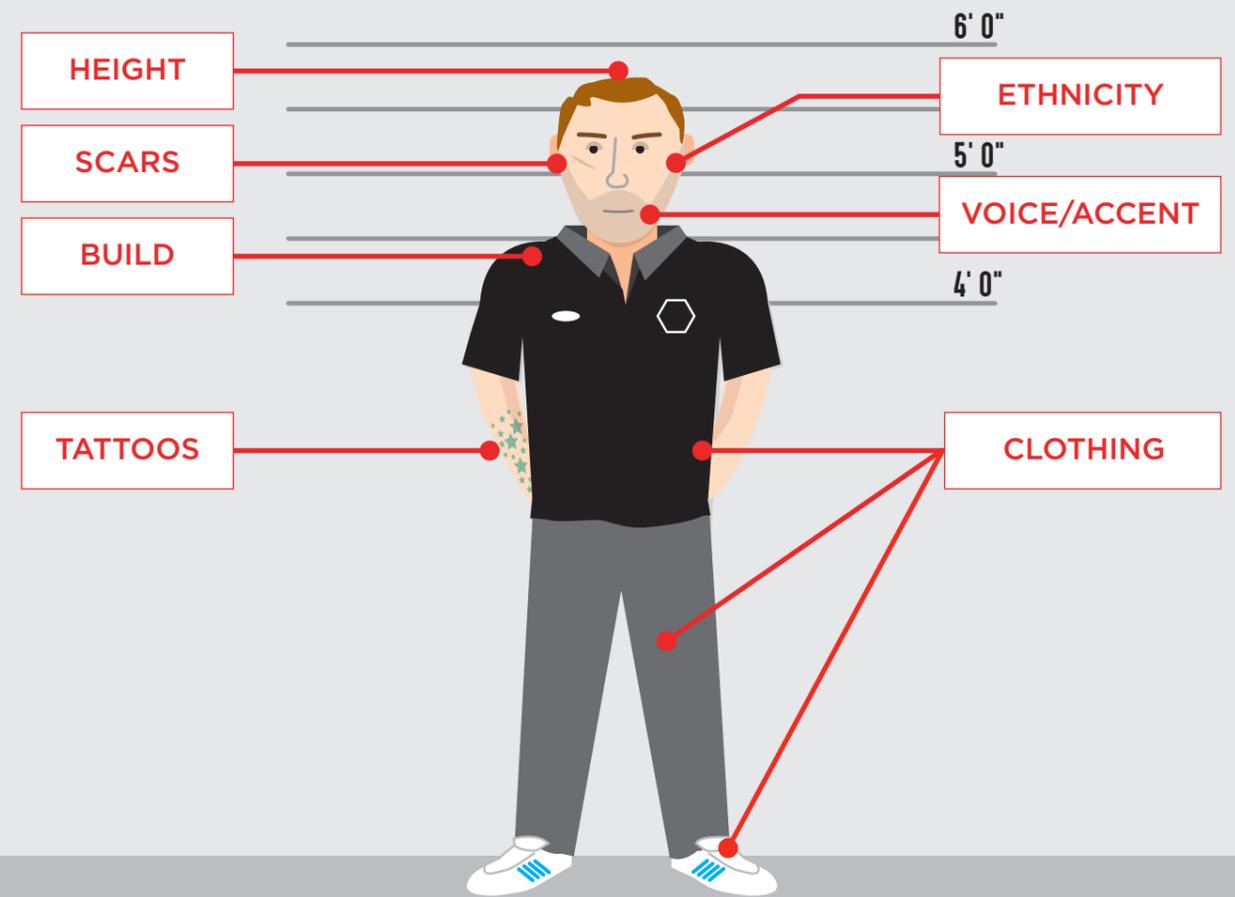
TOP TIPS

- 1 Make sure your staff are aware of the triggers of abuse and are trained to deal with difficult customers.
- 2 Have a clear policy for reporting abuse by customers internally and externally to the police.

ROBBERY

With the number of robberies increasing, retailers should think about how they can prepare and respond in the event of a robbery. Make sure you are utilising existing security measures to prevent your premises becoming a target for robbers. Assess your risk by following these steps: identifying the hazards, deciding who might be harmed and how, evaluating the risks and deciding on precautions, recording the findings and implementing them, and regularly reviewing your policies.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS POLICE REQUEST FOR CRIME REPORTS



TOP TIPS

- 1 Remain calm and follow the robbers' instructions.
- 2 Raise the alarm if it is safe to do so and get yourself to a safe place.
- 3 Never chase after robbers. When safe, call 999 immediately.
- 4 Close the store and write down a description of the robbers and any information about their getaway vehicle.

MANAGING SELF-SCAN TILLS

Self-scan tills are commonplace in many convenience stores and an important aide to reducing queuing times for 'time-poor' customers. Self-scan tills need to be managed carefully to ensure the customer has a positive experience and, as far as possible, reduce any shrinkage issues through theft of customer error.

Retailers should consider location, management and IT competencies of self-scan tills before installing them in-store and be aware of the opportunities they present to shop thieves. Whilst the majority of issues at self-scan tills are linked with operational

challenges and genuine customer error, shop thieves may see self-scan tills as a new avenue to steal goods.

This guidance aims to support retailers to think about the risks and difficulties that self-service tills present and best practice that retailers can use to mitigate losses.

Common operational challenges and scams used by shop thieves at self-scan tills include:

! SWAPPING BARCODES



LOOK OUT FOR

- Shop thieves often change the barcodes of high value products so they can scan through high value products at cheaper prices.
- Staff should be vigilant of consumers removing or tampering with barcodes.

! VARIABLE WEIGHT BARCODES



LOOK OUT FOR

- Products with variable weights, such as fruit and vegetables, can be incorrectly processed at the tills to reduce the prices or process higher value items.
- Checkout staff should be vigilant of variable weight products being scanned at the till and support customers to process them correctly.

! WALK THROUGH



LOOK OUT FOR

- During busy periods checkout staff should be vigilant for customers that queue at self-scan tills but make no effort to pay.
- Maintaining staff levels to support customers at self-scan tills during busy periods is essential.

SELF-SCAN TILLS LAYOUT

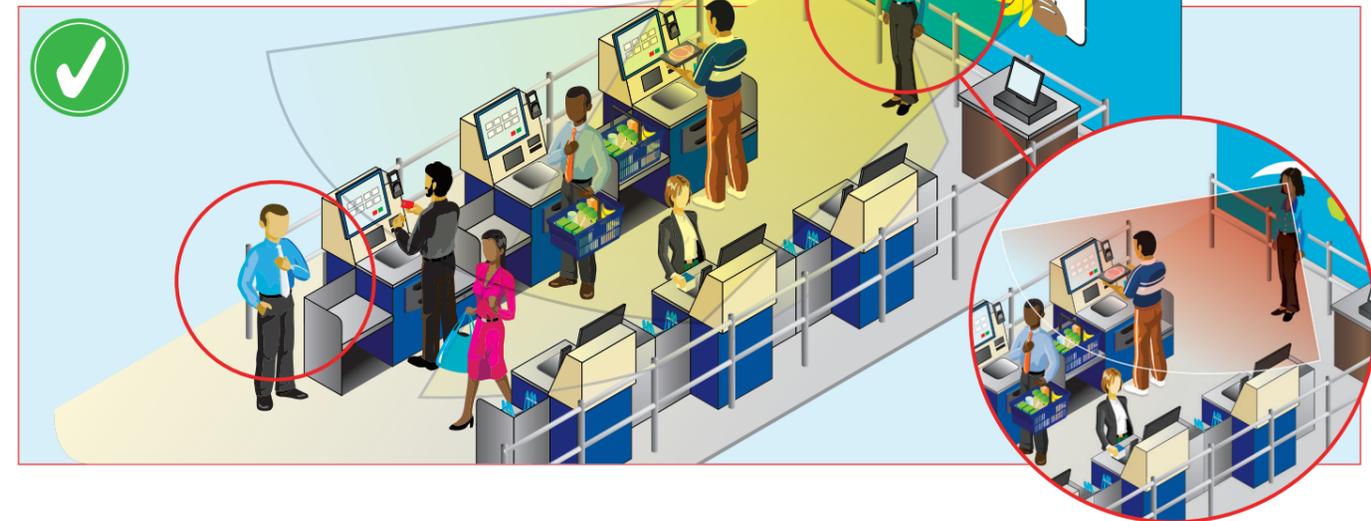
Retailers should consider the layout of self-scan tills and the allocation of staff to self-scan tills to prevent opportunities for shop thieves and to deliver good customer service.

The layout of the store and staffing allocation will depend greatly on the format of your store, but it's recommended good practice to have one to two members of staff per six self-scan tills.

In convenience stores, it's good practice to position self-scan tills to be easily accessible from manned till points and where possible, dedicated members of staff supporting customers on self-scan tills during busy periods.

LARGE STORE FORMAT

Ensure members of staff position themselves correctly to see all of the tills and for there to be sufficient CCTV coverage of the banks of self-scan tills.



SMALL STORE FORMAT

Make sure staff have a clear vantage point of the self-scan tills and can get quick access to tills to support customers.

During busy periods there should be dedicated staff to support consumers at self-scan tills.



STAFF THEFT

PREVENTING STAFF THEFT

- Check references of any new employee.
- Highlight internal investigation procedures in staff meetings or staff newsletters.
- Implement training processes for Store Managers and Supervisors to help them identify staff theft.

IDENTIFYING STAFF THEFT

- Monitor till processes carefully and review individual end of day reports
- Use till overlay systems to allow CCTV to combine with 'real-time' till receipt images.
- Monitor voids and refunds transactions closely
- Analyse till, cash management and inventory data to identify trends – look for anything out of the ordinary.
- When carrying out internal theft investigations, ensure you establish how and why the offence happened. This enables you to tackle the motive and presents an opportunity to prevent future incidents.

REPORTING STAFF THEFT

- Report incidents to the police using the 101 number.
- Only using civil action means that the offender can move into another business and repeat the offence.

HOTSPOTS

- 1 Cash directly from tills
- 2 Consumption of products in-store
- 3 Lottery process
- 4 Partial scanning of products
- 5 Bill payment process
- 6 Fraudulent refunds
- 7 Price overrides
- 8 Double ordering of stock

CONTACT

For more details on this guidance, contact Julie Byers at ACS by emailing Julie.Byers@acs.org.uk

To find out the questions asked in the crime survey, visit: <https://www.acs.org.uk/research/crime-report-2018>

For more details on ACS:

Visit: www.acs.org.uk

Call: 01252 515001

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