

Loss Prevention Solutions Red Flags & Indicators of a Shoplifter

What exactly defines a shoplifter? We see so many videos online of smash and grabs, large groups looting specialty stores, but what about your casual shoplifter? How do you identify the individual looking for an opportunity to steal?

Unfortunately, there is no singular way to identify a shoplifter. This is why we must pay attention to the red flags of shoplifting behavior. When shoplifters operate on their own, or in small teams, it's imperative to have a watchful eye.

When we define shoplifting, it's quite simple. A person enters a store, conceals merchandise (under clothing, in a bag, etc.) and exits the store without paying for the merchandise.

BEST PRACTICE:
Always use great customer service to DETER shoplifting.
Most company policies prohibit apprehension.



Shoplifting is a crime

Your safety is important, so always deter shoplifting when possible. If you encounter a grab & run or smash & grab, resist your temptation to pursue. Stay back at a safe distance and try your best to remember the details of the incident.

If you actually see and witness a person conceal merchandise, you should follow these steps:

-> Deter the theft by suggesting another item to go with the concealed merchandise. Such as:

-> That top you chose is one of our best sellers! Did you see the other colors we have it in?

-> Would you like me to hold your (name concealed item) at the register?

* The idea is to let them know you know what they have, WITHOUT accusing them of theft*



Shoplifting Red Flags & Indicators

The shopper is...

- > looking everywhere, but not all of the merchandise.
- > makes numerous trips to the same area without buying anything
- > always in the store, but never buying anything
- > selects merchandise and enters areas that are out of view
- > drops items repeatedly on the floor
- > has quick, jerky motions of the hands or body
- > removes merchandise from a rack and turns back on the associate
- > covers merchandise on top of a counter or table with a coat or jacket
- > wearing inappropriate clothes – a rain coat when it is hot and sunny, clothes that are large and bulky
- > carries wrinkled, empty or folded shopping bag, large handbags, empty plastic bags, school bags, packages or boxes
- > has a baby stroller or carrier, and lingers in an area
- > holds a bag open near a table or under a rack of clothing
- > visibly familiarizes himself/herself with the locations of the mirrors or camera equipment or staring at the ceiling
- > removes clothes from the hanger
- > frequently an “early bird” or “last minute shopper
- > with bags that are not from a store in the mall
- > ducking behind poles or racks
- > not looking at sizes or prices of merchandise
- > playing with inventory control sensors
- > hanging around the front of store
- > shoppers visibly trying to locate all the associates in the store
- > entering the store in groups and splitting up to different areas of the store
- > coming in the store together and pretending that they don't know each other
- > coming in the store in groups and all needing attention at the same time
- > dropping change or some other item under racks of merchandise to identify that they have removed inventory control sensors for an accomplice to later conceal