

Security at Hairdressing Salons

Introduction

Although hairdressing salons and barbers shops are not generally regarded as at a high risk of suffering crime, like many smaller business premises there is a background level of crime against which it is wise to take some general and specific precautions. All premises will have their own particular set of circumstances, such as location, size and internal layout. These should be taken into account when considering the risk of crime, and the nature of the security measures likely to be appropriate. This Hardfacts outlines a range of common security measures. In referring to these, you should also check whether your insurance policy has any particular requirements.

Premises Security – Physical Measures

As the first line of defence against forced entry, the perimeter of the premises deserves particular attention. Points to consider include:

Doors

- **Condition.** Doors and frames should be in good condition, of good fit and well secured to the building structure. Glazing needs to be well secured, i.e., no loose or perished putty or beading.
- **Construction.** Doors should be of external not internal grade. For doors of metal or plastic construction the manufacturer's intended use needs to be observed. For doors made of timber a minimum thickness of 45mm [1"] is 'standard', with hardwood being generally stronger than softwood. Thinner timber doors, doors with part cavity construction or even 'standard' doors in more vulnerable locations, can all usually be improved by fixing a steel sheet to their outer faces, using non-return screws. Many doors contain thin timber panels or glazing, and these are a point of weakness. Security can be improved by internally fixing a secondary panel, steel bars, grilles or mesh across them.
- **Door Hanging.** Inward and outward opening doors have different strengths and weaknesses. Security of the former can be improved by fitting a second lock, the latter by fitting two hinge bolts.
- **Glazing.** The glass installed may be toughened for safety reasons, but improved security can be achieved, while meeting safety requirements, by replacing it with laminated glass.
- **Locks and Padlocks.** A huge range of door locks and padlocks are available, with many types being manufactured to secure particular types of door. In general: On timber doors a single cylinder deadbolt should be fitted. On metal doors a pin cylinder operated

mortise swing [MS] lock is commonplace, with the lock bolt usually engaging in a cut away portion of a hollow door frame. Such frames can be fairly easily prised away from the lock bolt to release the door, but a locksmith will be able to improve security by fitting a reinforced striking plate. On plastic doors a wide range of locks are encountered, a pin cylinder operated set of multiple locking bolts being most common. Padlocks, where used, should be of the closed shackle type securing a heavy-duty padbar.

- **Double doors.** Where such doors form the final exit from premises, a close shackle padlock and heavy duty padbar is desirable. However, if conventional locks [see above] are used on the final closing leaf, then the first closing leaf needs to be secured by robust bolts at top and bottom. If the door contains glazed panels, rebate bolts or key operated bolts should be fitted.
- **Fire exit doors.** These doors are often the least well secured doors at premises, being usually secured by simple panic latches or panic bolts. Subject to strict management controls to ensure that any additional securing devices are removed or unlocked at all times when the premises are occupied, it is prudent to fit additional internally visible securing devices towards the top and bottom of the door. In case of doubt you should seek outside advice, (e.g., from the fire department or your insurers).

Windows

- **Condition and Glazing.** The points mentioned above apply equally to windows.
- **Locks.** Opening ground, basement and any accessible upper floor windows should be fitted with key operated window locks. Accessible upper floor windows are generally regarded as those that may easily be reached from lower storey roofs or adjacent walls, ledges and large drain/soil pipes. Windows with an opening edge greater than 1metre in length should ideally be fitted with two locks. If a window is never opened, it may be cheaper and easier to screw or nail it permanently shut. The screws/nails should be countersunk, pass through the window surround into the frame, and then be concealed with filler and painted over.
- **Fixed barriers.** Forced entry through windows can be greatly hindered by the installation of steel bars or grilles. These can be made and installed to many designs, and it is wise to contact your insurers for advice before proceeding.

- **Shutters.** Roller shutters/grilles are a good form of protection to windows, doors or a whole shop front, particularly against malicious breakage of glass. Planning conditions aside, shutters that allow passers by to view the inside of the premises can be more useful than solid shutters, particularly if the inside of premises are lit during the hours of darkness.

Premises Security - Electronic Measures

Given sufficient time and motivation, almost any reasonable physical security measure can be overcome. It is therefore prudent to make arrangements to deter and detect intruders by electronic means.

Intruder Alarms

- A simple intruder alarm having at least one high level external sounder can act as a significant deterrent to forced entry, and otherwise limit the time an intruder will be prepared to risk staying within the premises.
- More sophisticated alarms can be connected to an alarm-receiving centre, able to call out keyholders and the police in the event of alarm activation.
- If fitting an alarm, the use of installers subject to outside inspection is strongly recommended. This will ensure that the alarm is installed and maintained to appropriate standards and insurers, who may in some circumstances consider an alarm essential, will more readily accept the system installed.

CCTV

- CCTV systems vary enormously in complexity; from simple internal systems, viewing and recording activity in strategic areas, to continually monitored local authority or shopping centre funded systems, monitoring streets and other public areas. If wishing to rely to some extent on an external independently run system, you should check the coverage and operation of the system (e.g., you may find cameras only cover part of your premises).
- Internal systems can help deter, but otherwise capture evidence of, theft, robbery, acts of vandalism or aggression, etc. If using such systems, it is important to ensure that the equipment and tapes are regularly checked for correct operation, picture quality, and that the videotapes are re-used in strict date order.

Access Control

- Reduced numbers of staff working late, or young and inexperienced staff, can be or may feel vulnerable to violence, intimidation or robbery.
- The use of simple electrically operated access control locks on doors and careful attention to working arrangements and staff training, can all help reduce the risk.

Security Of Target Items

As well as security of the premises, measures to guard against loss of items commonly targeted by criminals should be considered.

Cash

- Cash is one of the most attractive items for burglars and therefore, wherever possible, should not be left at the premises outside business hours.
- For cash left at the premises, the best form of protection is to install a safe. A safe should be selected having regard to its designed 'cash rating', which will be indicated by the supplier and can be confirmed by your insurers. Most small safes must be internally bolted to the building structure to prevent the safe being removed.
- Change floats left at the premises should be removed from tills and placed in a safe or be hidden.

- To minimize the risk of damage to expensive tills should a break-in occur, the till cash drawer should be left open outside business hours.

The risk of a cash robbery, while usually low, can be further reduced by:

- Locate your cash tills carefully. A position next to the main door, or in a reception area away from most staff and perhaps infrequently manned, is not ideal.
- The installation of a proprietary till cash drawer guard, which will reduce the chances of cash being snatched while the till is open for use.
- Reducing the amount at cash at risk by regularly removing excess notes to another part of the premises or a safe.
- Cashing up only when the premises are locked, or if that isn't practical doing so in a locked room.

Computers

Some salons will have computers installed. Notwithstanding the value of the equipment its loss, together with the confidential information it may contain, can cause significant inconvenience.

- The attraction of computers to thieves can be reduced by 'security marking' them, i.e., applying an indelible mark that indicates ownership.
- Removal of equipment can be hindered by locating the processor unit in a locked cupboard or a room away from the monitor, securing it to a desk or wall using lockable steel cables (cable ties), or better still securing it within a proprietary steel security enclosure (entrapment device).

Other Factors

There are a few other common matters that can have a bearing on overall security, for example:

Site occupancy

- Occupancy of part of the site outside of business hours (e.g., in an apartment above the premises), is a useful deterrent to crime, or if it occurs can assist in prompt notification to you and the police. It is therefore desirable to foster a relationship with the occupiers of adjacent living accommodation, and ask that they contact you in the event of seeing anything amiss.

Lighting

- Lights left on within premises can aid natural surveillance by neighbours, members of the public and the police.
- Lights left on outside premises or activated by movement sensors can deter entry to, or malingering in, yards or doorways.

Staff Procedures

- Almost all security measures depend upon the diligence of those responsible for using them. It is therefore important to make sure that staff have a clear understanding of the reason for, and correct operation of, your various security measures.

Useful Contacts

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