

Robbery Preparedness Guide

Americans for Safe Access (ASA) offers a variety of trainings for staff along the cannabis supply chain through our Patient Focused Certification (PFC) program. In light of a series of recent robberies targeting cannabis businesses, we have adapted materials from our PFC Business Operations Training.

No one wants to think about robberies and burglaries, but they are a reality for all businesses, particularly retail operators. Even if your staff or fellow employees are not talking about robberies, they are thinking about them. Most robberies are premeditated and depend on an element of surprise and confrontation. This means that robbers are looking for weaknesses in a business' security that would make the operation a tempting target.

The following has been created to aid businesses in developing plans to stay safe during robberies and adopt policies to help prevent robberies and burglaries. Not all information in this document is applicable to every operation, but the information below is a useful guide to an internal conversation with partners, managers, and staff.

It is common knowledge that cannabis businesses have issues with traditional banks, which already makes them targets, but robbers also look for easy getaway potential, employees working alone, and businesses that are isolated. Robberies happen quickly, so it is important that all staff know what is expected from them during and after an event.

Preparation:

- Never open the facility before or after the normal hours of operation.
- Develop and enforce policies for checking all doors and windows before opening and after closing.
- Check all hatches and vents after closing to make sure no one can enter the building.
- Make security cameras visible.
- Make sure employees can see customers and vendors at all times, and address any blind spots with additional security cameras, mirrors, or security personnel.
- Create alarm activation policies.
- Implement cash and inventory control policies. Frequently change the time(s) at which cash is removed from the facility.
- Implement strict access control policies.
- Participate in neighborhood watch programs.
- Create policies for reporting suspicious behavior to staff and/or police.
- Create an emergency action plan and practice.
- Implement a security maintenance plan that ensures that routine maintenance will be carried out for all security equipment and includes regular verification that the equipment is in good working order.
- Develop a post-robbery plan.



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ASA is the largest national organization of patients, medical cannabis providers, medical professionals, scientists and concerned citizens promoting safe and legal access to cannabis for therapeutic use and research with over 150,000 supporters in all 50 states.



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During a Robbery:

- Remain calm and avoid panic.
- Cooperate with the robber with the goal of getting them out of the facility as quickly as possible – e.g., open doors and safes, etc.
- Alert other staff that a robbery is happening, if possible.
- Do not attempt to fight, overpower, or otherwise physically interfere with the robber.
- Do not attempt to negotiate or bargain with the robber.
- Press the panic button *only* if you can do so without being seen.
- Notice and remember important details for the subsequent investigation – e.g., faces, names used by robbers, clothing, type of vehicle, license plates, etc.

After a Robbery:

- Call 911.
- Make sure everyone is safe.
- Lock the doors and wait for the police.
- Remain at the facility until law enforcement arrives.
- Do not disturb the crime scene or touch any surfaces that might have fingerprints.
- Fully cooperate with any subsequent investigation.
- Implement your company's post-robbery plan

In Case of Burglary:

- Refrain from entering any unsearched area of the facility, until it has been checked and cleared by law enforcement or Security Contractors.
- Notify law enforcement of the incident.
- Notify the Manager immediately.
- Prevent others from entering the facility to preserve any evidence.
- Follow the instructions from law enforcement or security personnel, including instructions about when to enter the facility.
- Fully cooperate with any subsequent investigation.

Other Considerations: Providing Sufficient Security

Keeping the customers and the communities they serve safe should be cannabis operations' top priority. To ensure safety, well-run facilities must adopt a security plan consisting of a set of practices and strategies that work together to maintain safety and community standards. An operation's security plan may involve the following elements:

- Employing trained professional unarmed security personnel.
- Restricting access to the facility to authorized persons.
- Monitoring visitors to prevent loss and diversion.
- Using appropriate security technology and equipment to monitor and secure the facility (video surveillance, panic buttons, safes, locking doors, etc.).
- Maintaining communication with local law enforcement.
- Training staff to prevent and respond to emergencies.
- Educating staff and members as to their rights and responsibilities under the law.

Most retail businesses do cash drops throughout the day, removing excess money from the cash register and securing it in a safe away from where it is collected. Risk can be further managed by making bank deposits on a schedule that varies to ensure that no one will become familiar with the deposit schedule. Cash should always be removed from buildings and transported discreetly (e.g., in a purse or backpack, tucked under a coat, etc.). Operators may also make use of secured armored transport companies to transport cash to banks as well. Businesses may also be able to minimize risk by accepting credit card payments in lieu of cash.

Keeping a minimal amount of inventory on hand is also a good precaution. Products not displayed for purchase or being packaged should be stored in a locked safe. The combination should be carefully guarded to prevent unauthorized access. However, there should always be at least one person on site who can open the safe. This will facilitate smooth operations and may be imperative for preventing trouble in the event of an armed robbery. Alternatively, facilities may opt for a time-lock safe, which will only open after a predetermined amount of time. Time-lock safes are common tools for stopping or preventing robberies.



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Americans for Safe Access Foundation created the **Patient Focused Certification (PFC)** program to address issues of quality control and product safety in the cannabis industry to ensure patients, consumers, and their healthcare providers can rely on high-quality cannabis products and services. ASA has been advocating for safe and legal access to cannabis for therapeutic use and research on behalf of patients for over a decade. Founded in 2002, ASA developed a vision for safe access that includes a legal and regulatory framework that has shaped the medical cannabis industry we see today.

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