

CCTV images must be good enough to enable positive identification of suspects

Proactivity is essential when it comes to bakery shop security, yet many business owners merely react to incidents as they arise. Andrew Don explains why a security audit, or risk assessment, is so important

## Don't be a victim

**W**hen it comes to security risk, a bakery retailer is not in the same category as a jeweller's and that is something to be thankful for. An armed robbery where rubies and diamonds are the rewards is a more attractive proposition to criminals than bread rolls and doughnuts, with criminals needing to be pretty hungry to go to those lengths.

Yet any business that handles cash is at risk of falling victim to crime, as are the staff who work on-site. So business owners in the bakery sector should not be nonchalant. Retail bakers, like any other shop, from hair salons to takeaways, are vulnerable to break-ins, theft and from personal attack and these are all reasons for having security solutions in place.

### Crime prevention

Canvey Island-based chain Grouit's The Bakers, for example, was targeted three years ago by burglars, who hit one shop twice in a month-and-a-half. It consequently takes security seriously. Giles Grouit, director of the company, says he takes a formal approach for his 12 shops. "A few years ago we took the decision that every time we did a shop refit, we would put roller shutters on the front and, in some shops, we have cameras at the back." Each store has reinforced floor safes and there are floodlights at the back of some stores. "We always continue to review," says Grouit.

Victoria Bakery in Barnet, Hertfordshire, with two shops that have used CCTV and alarms for at least 10 years, has experienced attempted break-ins and occasional shoplifting. It has also been targeted with fake £20 notes, but it uses an ultra-violet to check all notes regardless of denomination. Owner James Freeman regards security

as "highly important", but does not review it annually. Freeman says: "If anything happens, we do something about it and prevent it happening again."

Victoria Bakery has anti-climb products on the walls and bars on the windows, the business has rules about how cash is handled and banked and it tries to ensure its online shop uses PayPal for payment, so that its own bank details cannot be accessed from the site. Staff who come in to bake at 4am enter at the back of the shop, so they are not visible from the street. "When there is an incident we look at it, how it got as far as it did and what we can do about it," says Freeman.

The statistics speak for themselves: the total cost of retail crime in the UK, for the 12 months ending June this year, came in at £4.6bn, according to the Global Retail Theft Barometer 2010 from the Centre for Retail Research, in Newark, Nottinghamshire. Staff theft accounted for 35% and shoplifting 40.6%.

The report notes that police often give a low priority to crimes against retailers and not much happens to most people caught stealing from shops. This is why Tom Mulhall, director of security programmes at Loughborough School of Business and Economics, says a formal audit or risk assessment is so important. Apart from risk prevention, formal documentary evidence that such an assessment has taken place and is periodically reviewed carries great weight if ever a case comes to court. After all, employers have a legal duty under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to assess the risks to employees and make arrangements for their health and safety by effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review.



## Security tips

- Keep as little cash as possible in the shop
- Do not count cash within view
- Keep tills away from doors
- Move excess cash to a safe place
- Restrict access to behind the counter using lockable flaps or doors
- Pay staff by cash transfer or cheque
- Plastic till-guards can prevent till snatches
- Watch out for warning signals, such as hostile body language, nervousness or the smell of alcohol
- Avoid actions that may trigger violence, such as standing too close to people, pointing, touching, turning your back, swearing or making sudden movements
- Keep your distance from threatening behaviour. Get behind the counter and don't get involved in an argument
- Be aware of suspicious behaviour,

out-of-character shoppers or customers distracting staff

- Establish procedures for recording crime incidents, such as when to call the police, how to handle cash and how to use security equipment
- Prevent fraud by routinely checking credit and debit cards in line with guidance from card issuers
- Check bank notes for forgery
- Use mirrors to reduce blind spots and make it easy to see into your shop from the street
- Avoid lone working
- Take care when you recruit – get character references
- Limit the number of staff who have keys to your store

Source: Suffolk Constabulary, Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary

## Key legislation

- **The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974** – a legal duty to ensure health, safety and welfare at work of employees
- **The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999** – covers risk assessment
- **Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (a) and The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 (b)** – on informing employees and consulting with them in good time on health and safety matters
- **Section 24 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984** – covers citizen's arrest
- **Section 3 (1) of the Criminal Law Act 1967** – about the force that can be used in making a citizen's arrest
- **Forgery and Counterfeiting Act 1981** – how to deal with counterfeit currency

*"There is no excuse not to do an audit or risk assessment. The best way to do it is work from the outside in: what location are you in, is there CCTV on the high street"*

Tom Mulhall, Loughborough School of Business and Economics

Mulhall says a formal audit is "vital and fundamental", because without one you do not know what your losses are and which of the security precautions you have in place are effective. Yet he notes that while big chains, such as Greggs, will have formal procedures in place and their own security advisers, smaller shops and chains are more likely to have nothing in place. "Their idea of a risk assessment is a bit of CCTV. At the end of the day, it comes down to finance."

### Keeping staff alert

Mulhall says it is not just about identifying where you need CCTV, not forgetting it must be monitored and the images must be good enough to enable positive identification of suspects, but ensuring the staff are appropriately trained, too. "This includes how to behave in-store – for example, how to be more observant and vigilant."

An assessment might determine that there are vulnerable hidden areas of the shop or if staff frequently have to turn their backs to the front of the counter, the need for mirrors might be identified so they can see what is going on behind them, he says.

The till, if visible to passing traffic, could be vulnerable to a smash-and-grab. "There is no excuse not to do an audit or risk assessment and couple it with the health and safety audit," says Mulhall.

He adds that it should be reviewed every six months to a year, because the threats to a business change. "The best way to do it is work from the outside in. What location are you in? Is the shop isolated? Is CCTV on the high street? Is it a vibrant site? What is the outside footfall like? What is the local crime rate? Are there police on the street? At the end of the day, you are trying to defend space."

James Freeman, Victoria Bakery:  
'If anything happens, we do something about it'



Security measures can include bars across windows and doors