

COVID-19 BEST PRACTICE: HOW TO DEAL WITH OFFENDERS/ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

We all have responsibilities to lead by example.

This best practice is for all staff and security teams and will help guide them in cases of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and breaches of COVID-19 regulations.

Your business should have implemented new measures to promote social distancing with your customers and your employees (floor signs, posters, verbal commands). However, what if people do not respect your/the government guidance?

BREACHES OF CORONAVIRUS ACT AND SOCIAL DISTANCING RULES

Even if social distancing is not legally enforceable, we all have a social responsibility to ensure these measures are respected and we must lead by example.

METROPOLITAN POLICE 4 E'S - ENGAGE, EXPLAIN, ENCOURAGE, ENFORCE

As with the Police, a stepped approach is important when dealing with these issues with customers. Consider the use of the 4 E's by asking some of the questions below, or implementing some of the measures:

- Are you aware of the social distancing rules?
- Are you conscious that you are breaching them?
- This is what you can do to be compliant:
 - Stand on the red dot while queuing.
 - Wait for a customer to leave the store before attempting to enter it.
 - Don't touch items you do not intend to purchase.
 - Do you know you can shop online with us? (If applicable)

POWER OF BECAUSE

Someone is more likely to comply if you help them, by giving them a reason why they should comply and change their behaviour.

- We all stand a better chance if we help one another.
- Your freedom is very important to us, but right now health and people's lives take priority.
- This is very difficult, but it will not last forever.
- The more people that manage to stick to the rules, the sooner this will be over.
- Your family, friends, and the rest of society needs your help.
- We must all do our bit.
- The reason we are beating this virus is because we are all working together. Please do not spoil it now just as we are winning.
- Report breaches to your BCRP local officer if they are escalating.
- Report breaches by calling **101** if the behaviour of the individual does not change after your intervention.
- If a serious crime has been committed or you the offender is abusive you should call **999**.

APPREHENSION AND DETENTION OF OFFENDERS

The standards of professionalism displayed by security officers should be the same as they usually are, however, some extra measures can be taken to protect customers and staff from the virus.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

It is crucial your staff always wear protective equipment, especially when dealing with offenders. The level of PPE used should be risk assessed, and your team should be aware of how to conduct a dynamic risk assessment if there is a rapidly developing situation.

You should consider the use of:

- Disposable face masks
- Reusable face masks
- Disposable gloves
- Reusable gloves
- Hand sanitizer or gel (at least 60% alcohol)

BODY WORN CAMERAS

Body Worn Cameras are proven to protect staff, reduce conflict and are a great tool to collect evidence of breaches of regulations, criminal behaviour, or anti-social behaviour. However, in order to be effective, they need to be used correctly. If your staff are equipped with body worn cameras, they should consider the points below:

- Make sure they are charged and turned on for use if an incident occurs (some cameras pre-record and will automatically record 30 seconds before you press record – which often helps if it cannot be turned on immediately)
- You may choose to point out that the shoplifter is breaching the health protection regulations by not maintaining social distance.
- It is perfectly acceptable to explain that to them and the severity of the situation in the context of COVID-19, but they should be dealt with for the substantive offence of theft/ASB only. Breaches can be referred as part of the overall circumstances of the primary offence.

DE-ESCALATE CONFLICT SITUATION AND REDUCE THE NEED FOR PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

Incidents with those exhibiting criminal behaviour or conducting anti-social behaviour should always be approached with caution. Staff should approach situations in a way de-escalates a situation, which will reduce risks to them and customers.

- Escalating conflicts is a choice, choose not to
- Always remain calm and professional
- Leave emotions aside
- Talk the person down and limit your language
- Do not rise your voice tone – speak slowly
- Listen carefully
- Control your body language – choose to be open, relaxed, and non-threatening
- Allow space to the other person
- Do not attack people personally or make comments about them which are negative
- If necessary, switch - remove yourself from the situation and let your colleagues to deal with it
- If you have a holding room, make sure it is at least 4 square metres to ensure your safety

REPORT CRIME

It is now more than ever that we must act united against any criminal behaviour. Exploitation of the vulnerabilities caused by COVID-19 must not be tolerated

- Make sure you use your internal radio to establish CCTV coverage during an incident
- Make sure you are using your BCRP radio to alert neighbouring businesses
- Identification of suspects - it is not appropriate to ask anyone to remove their masks, however, you can always ask for a second form of identification (passport, driving licence, bank card...)
- Aggressive behaviour - talk them down, if the situation escalates let them go and alert CCTV, your neighbours and call the police
- Upload offenders onto DISC - be specific. If a shoplifter is also behaving disrespectfully and not following guidance, make sure you report it as part of the offence. Social-distancing breaches will not be treated as a crime alone, but they can add weight to the offence.

Disclaimer *This best practice is for information purposes and aims to increase your general knowledge in a particular subject area. Safer Business Network accepts no responsibility for how you use this information or actions taken by yourself based on your interpretation of this information.*