

# Stopping Violent Crime at Work

**Violent crime is a very real hazard for shopworkers. Usdaw knows just how serious the risk of work-related violence can be. The Union campaigns to make work safer for all shopworkers.**

Every year thousands of retail workers are physically assaulted and hundreds of thousands are subjected to verbal abuse and intimidation whilst at work.

But there are things your employer can and needs to do to protect you. Many of these violent incidents could have been prevented.

## 10 Pointers to a Safer Workplace

Every workplace is different and there is no single simple solution in most workplaces. But here are some pointers:

1. **Be prepared** – Would you know what to do if you spot a shoplifter or credit card fraud or if there is a robbery? Your employer needs to have procedures in place to deal with incidents when they happen.
2. **Physical protection** – Security measures, alarms, CCTV, protective barriers and panic buttons can all help. Staff need to know how to operate security systems provided.
3. **Training** – Staff need to know what they are expected to do when an incident develops, how to follow safe working procedures, how to use security equipment properly.
4. **Cash handling** – Cash needs to be kept out of sight and not allowed to build up in the till.
5. **Banking** – Where possible, banking needs to be done by specialist security staff, needs to not be done alone and needs to not be done on foot or by public transport. Staff who are expected to do it need to be fully trained.
6. **Shoplifters** – Over half of the physical assaults are linked to attempted shoplifting. Employers need to make sure all staff know what to do if they see a suspected shoplifter. The policy needs to make it clear that no-one needs to risk personal safety to protect property.
7. **Armed robbery** – Employers need to train people to be prepared for armed robbery. Doing exactly what the robber tells you, not resisting, avoiding sudden movements and not raising the alarm until it is safe to do so all need to be part of the policy.
8. **Lone working** – Working alone at high risk times, eg late at night, needs to be avoided. Where staff are expected to work alone, eg in a petrol kiosk, extra precautions need to be taken.
9. **Reporting incidents** – Employers need to know exactly what risks their staff are exposed to. A reliable system for recording all incidents helps to build up the picture.
10. **Reviewing procedures** – To make sure that things are working properly, employers need to review their procedures on a regular basis in consultation with the Union Health and Safety Reps.



## Prevention

The best way to protect shopworkers against violence is to prevent incidents happening in the first place.

Your employer has a duty to make your work as safe as possible. Good trade union organisation reduces the risk.

Your Usdaw safety representative can check your employer's policy, raise any problems, and negotiate safer ways of working.

With your backing they can negotiate safer systems of work.

If you are concerned about the risk of violence talk to your Health and Safety Rep.

Nationally, Usdaw is working with the Government, the health and safety authorities and employers' organisations to make work safer and to tackle crime. For more information go to

[www.usdaw.org.uk/freedomfromfear](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/freedomfromfear)

## Call FirstCall Usdaw

If you are a victim of violence, under Usdaw Legal Plus we help members to claim compensation from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) which is a state-funded scheme.

Call FirstCall Usdaw on **0800 055 6333** to make a claim or complete the form on the Usdaw website: [www.usdaw.org.uk/FCform](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/FCform)

You can find out more information at: [www.usdaw.org.uk/FirstCall](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/FirstCall)