

# CRIME ALERT

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## Business Robberies

October 14, 2009

### Facts:

Since September 16, there have been ten robberies in the Third and Fifth Precincts. Targeted locations have been small boutiques or service businesses (gift shops, jewelry stores, dry cleaners), with a single female working behind the register. The suspect was armed with a knife or Leatherman-type utility tool in all but one of the incidents. In two of the cases, the suspect mentioned a gun; no gun was seen. One employee sustained injuries during a struggle with the suspect. In most of these incidents, the suspect took cash and merchandise after ordering the victim to lie down on the floor.

### Suspect description:

Black male, 25-40 years old, 5'6"-5'10", medium to heavy build, brown eyes, short black natural hair, medium to dark complexion, wearing a white t-shirt with a flowered print or button-down short-sleeved shirt, different colored baseball caps, and black jeans or tan pants.

Or

Black male, 25-40 years old, 5'6"-5'10", thin to medium build, brown eyes, short black natural hair, light complexion possibly with scattered freckles, beard and/or mustache, wearing a skullcap or baseball cap, black or navy blue t-shirts, blue jeans.

The suspect was seen leaving the area in a vehicle after one of these instances. The vehicle was described as an older model, boxy, full-size van with two windows and doors on the rear. The vehicle was dull maroon with a red or orange painted near the lower portion and the right, rear door had a circular pattern, possibly where a spare tire was kept. The vehicle had Minnesota license plates.

If you have any information or may have seen something related to these robberies, please contact the Robbery Unit at 612/673-2941.

### What store owners can do:

- Remove any window obstructions. Large signs in the windows block the view of what is happening inside and outside the store.
- Maintain a list of emergency contact telephone numbers near the telephone. Have witness and vehicle description forms available for employees and witnesses to complete after a robbery has occurred.
- Employees should be trained to watch for and report suspicious actions of people inside and immediately outside the premises. Don't hesitate to call the police when worried about a potential risk. Should the person leave before the officer's arrival, write down the description of the suspect and their vehicle for possible police use. A suspicious person that is seen today may turn out to be the robber who returns tomorrow.
- Give every customer entering the business a friendly greeting. Look each customer directly in the eyes. A robber does not want to be identified and such human contact may deter some would-be robbers.
- The counter or work area should be cleaned regularly to remove old fingerprints. This increases the possibilities that a robber may leave a readable print behind. Oil or wax-based cleaners should not be used.

- Try to have at least two employees on duty at all times. Employing two clerks is a form of “target hardening” because it may make a robbery more difficult to complete and, therefore, more unsuitable to a potential robber.
- Publicize the fact that the business uses good cash protection techniques and good protection equipment. Let potential robbers know their profits will be small and their risks high by using signs to convey this message. These visual deterrents (decals, placards, signs, etc.) should explain what safe method is used (dual key, drop or time delay safe) in hopes of deterring a potential robber or explaining the method should a robbery occur.

## **What to do if you are robbed:**

- **Do not resist!** Cooperate with the robber. Do whatever he asks but don't volunteer to do anything else.
- **Remain calm.** You will be able to give police a better description. Observe the robber's physical appearance, mannerisms, scars or marks, peculiarities, clothing, jewelry.
- Try to give the robber marked money.
- Try to determine, from inside the store, direction of travel, accomplices, vehicle description.
- Lock the door. Don't let anyone in or out.
- **Call 911.** Don't hang up until 911 tells you to.
- While waiting for police, write down what you remember about the incident; description of robber, what was said, weapons, any other information. Do not discuss what you remember with anyone until the police arrive.

For more information about personal safety and other crime prevention techniques, contact the crime prevention specialist for your sector. If you don't know who your crime prevention specialist is, please visit:

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/police/outreach/safe-teams.asp>

