

# HAZARD ALERT

Industry: Retail

Experience: 3–6 months

Young worker

## Young worker injured while pursuing shoplifter

Two sales clerks were handling sales at a liquor store in the evening. A customer picked up two 40-ounce bottles, headed for the cash register, then suddenly ran to the exit. One sales clerk grabbed the shoplifter and was dragged outside the store. The shoplifter swung a bottle at the sales clerk, who received a cut requiring stitches.

### Safe work practices

#### *Workers:*

- Unless you are trained to intervene without risk to yourself or your co-workers, do not try to physically stop a shoplifter.
- Never lock the door to keep a shoplifter from leaving. A person who feels trapped is more likely to panic and become violent.
- Remain at least an arm's length away from the shoplifter.
- Do not chase the shoplifter. It will only invite violence.
- Try to remember the shoplifter's height, weight, hair and skin colour, features, clothing, and even their shoes.
- Immediately report the incident to your manager, security, or police.

#### *Employers:*

- Set up and implement a theft prevention plan for your business. Ensure the plan considers your hours of operation, store layout, and employees who work alone.
- Train employees to follow safe procedures if they see a shoplifter.
- Make your store unattractive to shoplifters. For example, have good lighting and visibility throughout the store.
- People who steal do not like attention, so train employees to make eye contact and greet everyone who enters the store.

For more information, see the publication *Preventing Violence, Robbery, and Theft*:  
[http://www.worksafebc.com/publications/health\\_and\\_safety/by\\_topic/assets/pdf/preventing\\_violence.pdf](http://www.worksafebc.com/publications/health_and_safety/by_topic/assets/pdf/preventing_violence.pdf).

