

Pharmacy Safety



Reducing crime through partnership and prevention



Community pharmacy teams are sadly no strangers to witnessing crimes, from petty shoplifting and vandalism to violent crimes such as burglaries or attacks on staff.

By the virtue of their business, pharmacies have different parameters placed on them regarding their customers. This means that they will be exposed to more vulnerable people and people within addiction. This adds an additional layer of complexity to the security strategy.

What's in this guide

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TOP TIPS

- Assess the security of your premises, inside and out and have an up-to-date premises security risk assessment
- Consider CCTV and Alarms
- Advise staff to lock unused rooms and be vigilant
- Follow pre-planned open and close routines
- Ensure controlled drugs are locked away in a security rated cabinet

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Premises Security

To identify the risks to your business premises, think about the kind of incidents you may have experienced in the past. Walk around inside and outside your premises to identify where vulnerabilities are. In London, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime have produced a guide on how to carry out a security self-assessment. In other parts of the country, there is similar advice available, either through the local police force or the Police and Crime Commissioner.



Check security measures

Test your locks, shutters, grilles, windows and doors are working properly. If they are not working properly, get them repaired or replaced by an approved contractor who uses Police accredited products.



Vulnerable areas

Roof lights and windows are vulnerable points. Openings can be reinforced by fitting additional locks and supplemented with audible alarm sensors and glazing can be reinforced using a laminate film. There are various types of film offering different levels of security. Ensure lights are working and replace any bulbs. If you are considering installing external lighting, then dawn till dusk system is recommended.



Additional security measures

As you walk around your store, think about where your most secure area is. Then consider what additional security measures could be introduced. For example: fitting additional locks to existing doors, adding a second lock will improve the resistance of the door and will make it harder for someone to break in. There are products available, which can be fitted to the doorframe (London Bar) and hinges (Birmingham Bar), to reinforce them. Whilst a professionally installed and maintained alarm is desirable, there are also wired and non-wired audible alarms and sensors, which can be fitted to doors and windows



CCTV & Alarms



CCTV

The police are not able to provide information on companies who supply and install security systems such as intruder alarms, personal attack alarms, CCTV systems etc. We advise you contact the following independent inspectorate bodies who will provide you with the relevant details.

National Security Inspectorate NSI on www.nsi.org.uk or **01628 637512**

Security Systems & Alarms Inspection Board (SSAIB) on www.ssaib.org or **0191 296 3242**



Alarms

The presence of a security alarm also is a big deterrent, letting potential criminals know you take security seriously. If you opt for a system that lets you monitor the premises whilst you are at home, you will know if someone has entered your property and you will have peace of mind that your building and livelihood is safe.

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Public v Private

Keep doors to private areas or rooms, including those used for consultations, locked when they are not in use. Consider the benefits of a simple door contact alarm, to cabinets or doors, as they will sound if unexpectedly opened or not shut properly. Display signs to make it clear which areas are private and off limits to customers.

Keep the main desk or counter area free of personal belongings or valuables including mobile phones. Lock them away, or keep them out of sight.



Blind Spots and Vulnerable Areas



Improve blind spots

Try to avoid creating blind spots on the shop floor. Remove any obstructions and reposition merchandise, which may prevent your staff having a clear view around the shop, entrance door, and if possible, outside your premises.

If you still have blind spots, is there anything you can do to improve these areas such as repositioning a CCTV camera to cover it? Alternatively, can the area be sealed off from the public?



Increase visibility

Adding security mirrors will enable your staff to have more visibility around the store and may reduce blind spots.



Stock location

Ask your staff to pay attention to any areas of the shop you have identified as vulnerable, especially where high value or attractive stock is displayed. Alternatively move the stock to another location, or reduce the amount of stock you keep on open display.



Working Late



Communication

Stay safe when you are working late – always keep in constant communication with someone who knows you are there.



Emergency numbers

It may be an idea to draw up a contact list in case of emergencies at the premises, and have a plan in place for them to contact you during your shift.



Solo shifts

If you are the only person working, stay in touch with a colleague, your boss, or family members so they are aware of where you are and that you are safe.



Security staff

If there are security staff on duty, be sure to let them know you are in the building. You can also ask them to check on you every so often.

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Customers and Deliveries

Restricting the number of customers you allow into your premises is important and your staff will have a key role in managing this. Some businesses allow a limited number of customers in at a time to protect staff.



Communication

Placing a sign on the entrance door informing customers that you are operating a policy of restricting access will reduce customer frustration. If you have the ability to lock the door remotely or manually this will help control access to your premises.



Stay alert

Criminals and opportunist thieves are sophisticated in their ability to deceive staff. Remain alert and try not to stereotype what a criminal looks like, as they can take any appearance. Be mindful of criminal distraction techniques, especially during deliveries.



Prepare storage areas

In advance of deliveries try to prepare storage areas by relocating any stock that does not need to be within the secure storage area or are deemed lower risk.



Tidy areas

Keep the aisles or approach to the storage area clutter free allowing enough space for the delivery storage containers to be quickly stacked away, safely out of public view.



Paperwork

Keep the inventory or delivery paperwork separately, so you can accurately report any items to the police if they are stolen.



Public view

When dispensing controlled drugs, do so out of public view so the patient cannot see where you are getting them from.



Storage

Where possible ensure the door to the storage area is not left open apart from when entering and exiting the space.



Temporary closure

Do not be afraid to close to the public for a few minutes if you need to, just remember to place a note on the door for customers.

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Controlled Drug (CD) and Cabinets

These should not be used to store non-controlled drugs, such as prescription medication or cash. This effectively limits the reason for access, and the Responsible Pharmacist (RP) will then be the only person who requires access to the cabinet.



Keep Controlled Drugs out of sight of public counter areas



Do not inadvertently draw attention to additional quantities of drugs on the premises



Undertake random stock and balance checks, including methadone, Methylphenidate, Morphine and Fentanyl



Check the contents of the controlled drug cabinet against the register



Undertake random balance checks of out of date controlled drug stock and patient returned drugs to ensure they are stored securely



Do not leave unattended controlled drugs on work surfaces i.e. made up prescriptions awaiting collection/delivery. If controlled drugs are on a work surface the pharmacist must be standing next to them, and must be directly supervising them, otherwise they should be in the controlled drug cabinet.



Use electronic stock ordering systems to minimise the volume of drugs held on the premises at any one time.



Encourage patients to use the electronic prescription system wherever possible to restrict the number of patients entering the pharmacy



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Daily Supervision of Drug Taking (Methodone)

The decision to move away from Daily Supervision must be made by the patients' prescriber; this could be their key worker/nurse or General Practitioner (GP). This is not a decision for the pharmacist.

This brings the heightened risk of patients over consuming their medication and immediately seeking an alternative substance, there is also the heightened risk of patients falling off their programme of controlled substitute. This may have an impact on the safety of pharmacy staff, and on the wider community.



Where staff members feel that they are at risk of immediate harm, they should contact the police on **999**.



In all other cases, staff should report non-emergency incidents to the police via Single Online Home website **www.police.uk**



Where patient safeguarding issues arise, the pharmacist should signpost the patient back to their prescriber.



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Opening and Closing

Opening and closing your premises presents risks, so adapt your procedure. Stay alert and try to have a minimum of two members of staff at these times. Agree a memorable code word or signal to alert each other to potential threats. Trust your instincts and do not put yourself in danger, in an emergency **dial 999**.



Security cabinets

Ensure any drugs or high-risk medication is locked in a security rated cabinet (**BS 2881:1989**) which is either bolted to the floor or secured to a wall. The more layers of security you create between where the drugs are stored, the more difficult you will make the drugs to steal.



Additional security

Any additional measures you take to introduce more layers or barriers to protect your stock will help. For example, by storing fewer quantities together in the same place you are potentially reducing your volume of loss. If they can be hidden or disguised it will make it harder for the criminal to find.



Lights

Leaving the lights on inside the shop during the hours of darkness will maximise the visibility throughout the shop from outside.



Valuables

Keys and other valuables should be locked away or kept out of sight.



Alarms

Always set the alarm, lock up and leave the building secure.



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Always Report Crimes to the Police

Always report crime to police. This allows police to capture the data and understand the full scale of the crime, which in turn informs their resources and tactics to tackle it.



When a crime is taking place, dial 999 in an emergency.



You can also report to the Police on 101 or alternatively, you can report online at www.police.uk



Helpful resources

Police recommended security products can be found at www.securedbydesign.com

