

Warehouse and Distribution Centre (Internal Theft)



Distribution Centres and Warehouses are more liable to employee theft than any other business. While you may focus on keeping criminals out of your warehouse, internal theft by company employees and contractors should also be considered.

Sometimes, theft is committed by an employee you would never suspect, as it can be common place for inventory to go missing if employees feel under appreciated, underpaid, or perhaps just feel that the occasional product is a fringe benefit of working in your Distribution Centre.

What's in this guide

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TOP TIPS

- Limit access to the warehouse.
- Specifically limit access to shipping and receiving areas.
- Monitor CCTV.
- Screen employees.
- Secure valuable items.
- Be visible and present.

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Limit Access To Your Warehouse

Access control systems should be used on all external entrances and exits to the warehouse, including car parks for added security, parts of the internal warehouse can also be controlled by the use of access control, this should be in conjunction with CCTV / Intercoms so you can see the people entering and exiting the areas.

It is possible to restrict the times people can enter the warehouse but this may not be practical for busy warehouses where people work overtime as this would cause lots of admin changes for the system, which would not be cost effective.

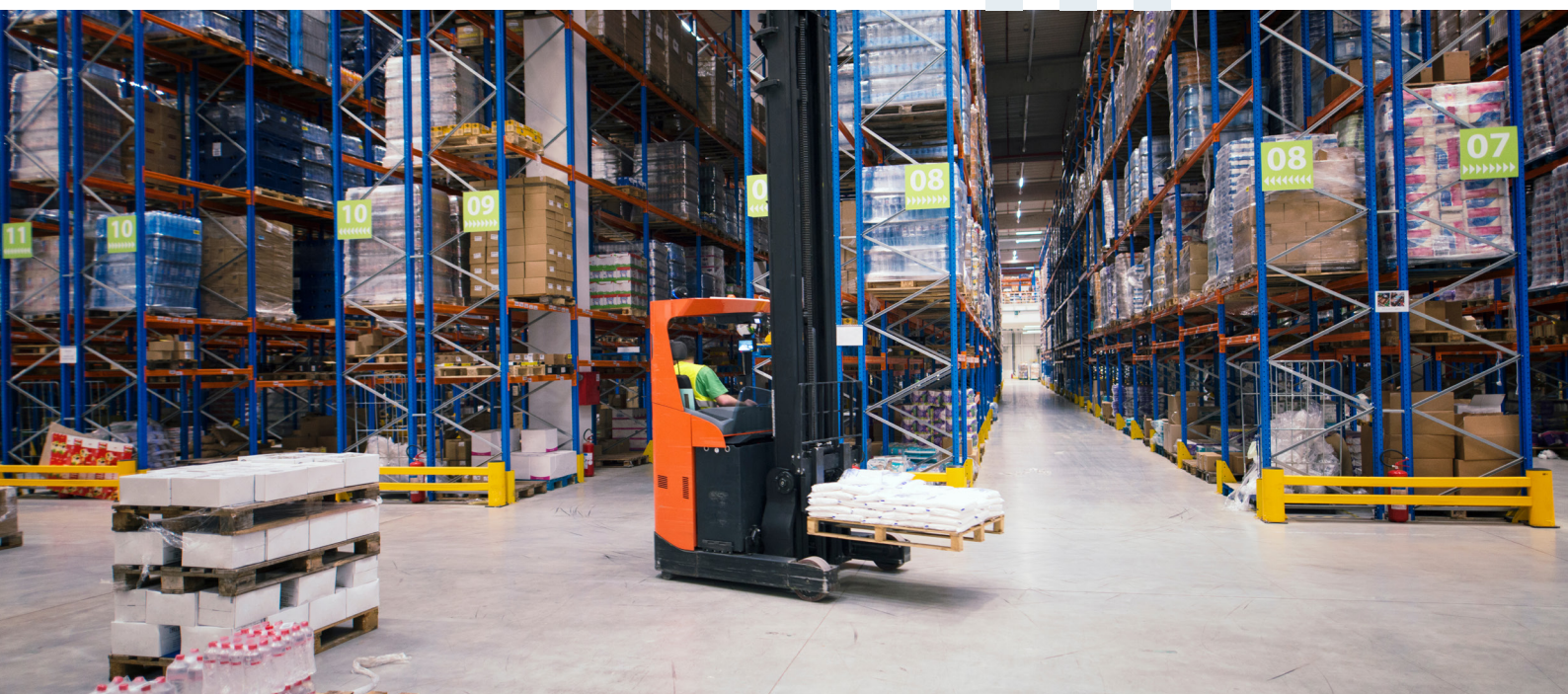
Breaking the building up into sections and limiting access to areas based on job description / job grade is another way, such as office staff not being allowed access to the warehouse.



Specifically Limit Access To Your Shipping And Receiving Area

Theft often occurs in the shipping and receiving area, since it provides the opportunity to move product into personal vehicles, or in partnership with the driver, quickly and undetected. Protect your inventory by limiting which employees can access this area, and also by separating the shipping and receiving areas.

Personal vehicles should not be allowed in service yards, any vehicle using a service yard should be subject to a random search. Drivers should have a waiting / rest area close to the transport office, access should not be allowed into the warehouse.



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Monitor Your CCTV Surveillance

If you have already installed a CCTV surveillance system, be sure you are also monitoring it on a regular basis. Make sure you have multiple Video Screens around your facility; in the lunch room, general office etc, so there are many eyes watching what is going on around the facility and this way thieves don't know who is watching.

The value of a video system is having many people watching all the time.

Thieves will be quick to discover an outdated monitoring system, its weaknesses, blind spots, or one that is not monitored often. When your facility is closed, we strongly recommend using a verified audio and video security system with live monitoring from a central monitoring station. Not only will you be protected 24/7 without having to regularly monitor video yourself, you will also be protected from external threats after regular business hours.



There is value in having your monitoring services off site and independent of your business. Large organisations tend to have a central CCTV control room that monitor various sites 24/7, this allows them to flag issues to the site team when they occur.



Out of Hours CCTV can be supported with 'Safe Zone', CCTV cameras can be programmed to monitor sterile areas and if something appears in the view around a set time an alert is sent to the CCTV monitoring centre.



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Screen Your Employees

Conduct employee screening prior to hiring, including a criminal background check. Using a professional company to do background checks will help you discover any high-risk applicants with a history that could contribute to inventory theft. It immediately takes out some of the risk. A thorough background check will also verify employment history, education and references, effectively removing any distrustful job candidates from the running.

DBS checks can be carried out but there is a delay in getting them back and it's not practical to screen all Warehouse operatives. Some businesses save time by screening certain job roles such as Loss Prevention, HR & Drivers.

It would be good practice to screen warehouse workers if you deal with high value commodities in your warehouse.



Secure Valuable Items



In a modern warehouse, storage locations controlled by robots are best for a secure storage system, where goods come out of automation to a picker in a static location covered by CCTV. Once the item is picked the tub returns to the high bay storage location via automation.



Smaller scale businesses that do not use systems described on the left, you can keep "hot products" or "in-demand" items of higher value, in a separate and secure area. You can also restrict access to these items by using the same managed access system in a lockable area and also ensure you are closely monitoring this area on a regular basis.



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Be Visible And Present

Becoming personally involved in the processes of your warehouse and building relationships with your employees can have a huge impact on theft prevention. Building a positive relationship with staff can lead to higher motivation and a feeling of appreciation. Being visible and present will also reduce opportunities for theft. If you are not available, ensure some level of management is on the floor.

Those managers who are working with your employees should be well trained in leadership and also aware of what signs to look for that could indicate theft. Some businesses employ internal and external patrols by loss prevention officers, their role is to patrol aisles where staff pick items from, looking for empty packaging and interacting with the teams in the warehouse.



Consider showing new starters what your CCTV cameras can see as part of their induction. (It's like saying its not worth it, don't steal as we will catch you)



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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

