



College of Pharmacists of Manitoba

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Procedures in the Event of a Robbery or Burglary

Introduction

The following recommendations are recommended guidelines with the intent to keep everyone as safe as possible if a pharmacy is ever put at risk of a robbery. The primary focus of those involved should be the safety of all individuals. Always comply with the demands of the offender, as their actions may be unpredictable.

Preventing a robbery

Pharmacists should take the following steps to deter robberies:

1. Install and advertise silent alarm systems and/or cameras.
2. Consider offering rewards for information leading to a conviction and, if you do so, post this information in the pharmacy.
3. Reduce stock and post signs that certain drugs are not in stock or in very limited amounts.
4. Use the buddy system when opening or closing, and escort the staff with keys for the pharmacy to their vehicles at the end of the day.
5. Advise police of suspicious persons in alleys or streets near your pharmacy, especially during opening or closing times. (Call Crime Stoppers: Winnipeg 204-786-8477. Manitoba: 1-800-222-8477)
6. Be wary of last-minute customers; if the pharmacy is already closed, do not provide access if you are the only person left in the pharmacy.
7. Use window advertisements prudently to leave an open view into your pharmacy.
8. During high-risk periods, employ security personnel.
9. Keep back doors (rear entrances) locked at all times.
10. Various other procedures, reactions and tips on prevention are available from your local police department/RCMP detachment.

During the robbery

It is important to remember the following points if a robbery does occur:

- Comply with the demands of the offender, as quickly as possible.
- Do not provoke the offender in any manner.
- Watch what he touches and protect the items that have been touched until the police arrive.
- Limit eye contact with the offender. (Don't stare.)
- Do not take the chance of setting off an alarm until he has departed.
- Attempt to remember as much information about the offender as you can.
- If you recognize the robber, conceal your recognition during the robbery.

Remember four key points:

1. Comply with demands,
2. Get the offender out of the pharmacy as quickly as possible,
3. Keep staff and by-standers safe, and
4. Be a good witness.

The offender

People committing armed robbery of a pharmacy are usually interested in one of two things in the pharmacy — money and drugs. The offender is almost always male, mid-twenties to mid-thirties in age, and may be physically depressed or under the influence of drugs. He will sometimes be alone, but will often work with at least one other person who acts as a look-out. He often has predetermined his target, what he wants and where it is. He knows when customer traffic is low and when only a few employees are working. He knows if the chances of being seen in the act of robbery are good or bad, basing his opinions on street traffic flow, number of employees and customers, security measures and whether anyone can see inside the pharmacy. He has also determined how quickly he can complete the robbery and will become agitated and aggressive if it is taking longer than anticipated. He either shows a weapon such as a handgun, rifle, shotgun, or knife or will imply he has one. He is scared, nervous and in a hurry. He wants to get the crime over as soon as possible. He is very dangerous.

Procedure after a robbery

If your pharmacy has been victimized by an armed robbery, it is suggested that you follow the following steps:

1. Obtain the description of the offender's vehicle (once the offender has departed and it is safe to do so), lock up the store and place a notice on the door that the pharmacy is temporarily closed.
2. Telephone the police immediately upon the offender's departure, or use the "panic button."
3. While waiting for the police, fill out a criminal description sheet and make notes on the details of the robbery.
4. Ask other witnesses to the robbery to write down descriptions, etc., but do not discuss the details or description so as to alter other witnesses statements.
5. Report all loss of controlled or narcotic drugs in writing to Health Canada (forms available on Forms and Pharmacy Signs on www.cphm.ca).
6. Report the details of the robbery to the College office by phone at 204-233-1411, fax at 204-237-3468 or e-mail at info@cphm.ca.

Procedure when burglarized (after hours)

The following steps should be followed if your pharmacy or office has been burglarized:

1. Secure the premises from customers or patients.
2. Do not touch anything.
3. Call the police immediately.
4. Provide the police with an accurate list of what was taken and any useful identification codes or theft devices on the stolen items.
5. If you did not do so at the time, advise police of suspicious persons who were in your pharmacy or office previous to the theft.
6. Report all loss of controlled or narcotic drugs, in writing to Health Canada (forms available through www.cphm.ca).
7. Provide details of burglary to the College office by phone at 204-233-1411, fax at 204-237-3468, or email: info@cphm.ca.