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Robbery Prevention & Active Shooter Response

A robbery is the taking of money or goods by force, threat, or intimidation, in the presence of a person. It is one of the most common violent crimes faced by stores, banks, restaurants, delivery and service workers, and anyone whose job involves cash, valuables, or being alone with the public in the early or late hours. An active shooter event is different in kind: an attack intended to harm people, not to take property. This lesson set teaches both, side by side, because the same workplaces must prepare for each — and because confusing the two responses can be deadly. In a robbery, the taught response is to comply, observe, and not resist: property can be replaced, people cannot. In an active killing, the taught framework is Run–Hide–Fight, because the danger is to life itself and escape or hiding is the priority. Knowing which event you are in, and therefore which teaching applies, is the first skill this set builds.

Most of this set is about the long, calm work that happens before anything goes wrong, because robbery is unusually preventable. Robbers, unlike most offenders, choose their targets by reading them: they look for cash that is visible and plentiful, for counters hidden behind posters and clutter where no one outside can see in, for a lone worker, a dark parking area, a back door standing open, a routine so predictable that the day's takings can be timed to the minute. Every one of those signals can be changed by design, by habit, and by routine — usually cheaply, and without turning a welcoming shop into a fortress that frightens its own customers. Prevention is the heart of this training. The during and after lessons are shorter because, if they are ever needed, they must be simple enough to follow in the worst minutes of a working life: comply, observe, do not resist; then lock down, call 911, preserve evidence, and support the people who lived through it.

Who does this help? It helps the shop owner setting up a first store and deciding where the counter, the safe, and the cameras go. It helps the manager writing opening and closing routines that do not leave one person alone in a dark building with the day's cash. It helps the cashier, the night worker, the pharmacist, the jeweler, the delivery driver — anyone whose ordinary shift carries this risk and who deserves more than a shrug and a hope. It helps the team that has already lived through a robbery and wants to rebuild its routines and its confidence on evidence rather than fear. And because the active-shooter framework is included in full, it helps every workplace that needs both responses taught clearly, in one place, without confusion between them.

Why does it matter now? Because small workplaces carry a growing share of this risk with the fewest resources: independent stores, small restaurants, community services, and sole workers in the early and late hours, often handling cash in neighborhoods where help is minutes away and habits have never been reviewed. The good news inside that hard fact is that the measures in this set are proven, practical, and mostly inexpensive: visibility, cash discipline, varied routines, trained responses, and cared-for staff. None of them requires special equipment or expertise to begin. By the end of this set you will know how to design and run a workplace that discourages robbery, how to behave during a robbery to protect life, how to act afterward to help police and preserve evidence, how to support staff through what follows, and how the

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active-shooter response differs and applies when an attack — not a theft — is what is happening.

What You Will Learn

- The difference between a robbery and an active shooter event, and why the correct response to each is different — comply in a robbery; Run–Hide–Fight in an active killing.
- How robbers choose targets, and how environment design — visibility, lighting, layout, and signage — makes a workplace a harder, less attractive target.
- Cash handling habits that reduce what a robbery can take and what it can reward: limits, drops, safes, and never resisting over money.
- Opening, closing, and banking routines that remove predictability and never leave a person alone at the vulnerable moments.
- Exactly what to do during a robbery: comply, observe, do not resist, note details safely, and let the person leave.
- What to do in the minutes after: lock down, call 911, protect witnesses' memories, and preserve evidence for police.
- How to support staff after an event — practically, emotionally, and through the days and weeks that follow.
- The active-shooter response framework and workplace preparedness that holds both kinds of event without confusing them.

Lesson 1 — How Robbery Is Prevented: Reading Your Workplace as a Robber Would

Prevention begins with a change of eyes. Walk into your workplace as a stranger would, from the street, and read it the way a person planning a robbery reads it. They are asking a short list of questions. Can I see cash, and does there look like a lot of it? Can I act unseen — are the windows covered, the counter hidden, the area deserted? Can I get in and out quickly, and is anyone likely to challenge or even notice me? Is there one person alone? Is the routine so fixed that I know when the money moves? A workplace that answers those questions badly — little visible cash, clear sightlines in and out, staff who notice and greet, no one alone at the risky hours, routines that vary — is a workplace most robbers will pass by for an easier target. Prevention is not about making robbery impossible; no honest training promises that. It is about removing your workplace from the easy list, and it works because robbers, choosing under time pressure, overwhelmingly choose ease.

Visibility is the strongest single preventive tool, and it is mostly free. Windows should let people outside see the counter and register area: keep posters, displays, and shelving low or away from the glass, especially at the payment point, so that a passerby, a patrol car, or a neighboring shop can see in. The counter area should be visible from the street and lit like it matters. Inside, arrange layout so staff can see the door and customers can be seen as they enter; a small bell or chime on the door, and a staff habit of greeting everyone who enters — "Hello, I'll be with you

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in a moment" — does double duty: it is good service, and it tells a would-be robber that they have been seen, noticed, and can be described. Lighting extends the same principle outward: the entrance, the parking area, the path staff walk to their cars, and the rear of the building should be lit and kept lit, with burned-out bulbs treated as a safety defect to be fixed promptly, not a cosmetic one. Rear and side doors stay closed and locked during trading, deliveries are received by arrangement rather than through a propped door, and no one works in a back room with an unsecured exterior door behind them.

Signs and signals, used honestly, reinforce the design. Signs that state true facts — that cash on the premises is kept low, that staff cannot open the safe, that the premises are recorded — reduce the expected reward and raise the expected risk in a robber's calculation. Cameras, where a workplace has them, prevent best when they are visible, maintained, and actually recording, with signage saying so; a camera that has silently failed is worse than none, because it has replaced real habits with false comfort. Height markers discreetly placed at exit doors help witnesses judge a person's height as they leave. None of these measures should be faked: a sign claiming a safe system that does not exist, or a dummy camera presented as real, teaches staff to rely on protection they do not have, and dishonesty in safety systems always surfaces at the worst moment.

The human layer completes the design. Staffing is a preventive decision: the riskiest configurations — one person, alone, at night, with cash — should be engineered away wherever the business possibly can, by scheduling, by task design, or by closing procedures done in pairs, which Lesson 3 covers in full. Attention is a preventive habit: staff who look up, greet, and make brief eye contact are performing prevention with every customer, and workplaces should say so in training, so that attentiveness is understood as part of the job rather than a distraction from it. And the neighborhood is a preventive asset: know the businesses around you, agree to watch each other's premises informally, share warnings about suspicious behavior through proper channels, and build the ordinary relationship with local police — community officers who know your layout and your routines are worth more after an incident than any piece of equipment, and the relationship must exist before the incident to be worth anything on the day.

The Steps

1. Walk in from the street as a stranger and read your workplace as a target: visible cash, hidden counter, lone staff, dark areas, predictable routines. Write down what you find.

2. Clear the sightlines: keep windows at the counter and register area free of posters and tall displays so people outside can see in, and staff can see out.

3. Fix lighting as safety work: entrance, parking area, staff paths, and rear of building lit, with failed bulbs reported and replaced promptly.

4. Keep rear and side doors closed and locked during trading. Receive deliveries by arrangement; never trade through a propped back door.

5. Build the greeting habit: a door chime plus a spoken greeting and eye contact for everyone who enters, trained as prevention as well as service.

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6. Post only true signs: low cash kept, staff cannot open the safe, recording in use. Maintain cameras so they actually record, and place height markers at exits.

7. Engineer away lone working at risky hours wherever possible, and build watching relationships with neighboring businesses and local police in advance.

A Worked Example

A family bakery opens at 6 a.m. and, for its first year, runs on affection and habit: the early baker works alone in the dark for the first hour, the front windows carry a cheerful wall of posters and children's drawings at adult eye height, the register accumulates the morning's cash because the safe feels far away in the office, and the back door stands open on its latch for the flour delivery whenever it arrives. A nearby shop's robbery prompts the owners to do the Lesson 1 walk, and they are unsettled by how their own shop reads. Their fixes take two weeks and cost very little. The posters move to an inside wall, leaving the windows clear at the counter; drawings stay, lower down, where they block nothing. A second person is scheduled for the first hour — a change made affordable by shifting one afternoon hour — and the back door is fitted with a bell and kept locked, with the delivery firm given an arrival window and a knock code of the ordinary, practical kind. Cash drops to the safe begin after every few sales in the early rush, under the rule in Lesson 2. The parking area's dead bulb is replaced and put on a monthly check. Nothing about the bakery feels less warm; regulars notice only that they are greeted the moment the door chimes, every time. The owners cannot know whether a robbery was ever planned against them. They know their shop no longer advertises itself as an easy answer to a robber's questions — which is all prevention ever claims, and it is enough.

Common Mistakes

- **Covering the windows at the payment point.** Posters and tall displays at the counter hide exactly the area that most needs to be visible from outside.
- **Treating lighting as decoration.** A dark parking area and a dead bulb at the rear door are safety defects. Report and fix them with the urgency of a broken lock.
- **Faking safety systems.** Signs claiming protections that do not exist, and cameras that do not record, replace real habits with false comfort and fail at the worst moment.
- **Accepting lone working at risky hours as unavoidable.** It is a scheduling and design choice in most workplaces. Engineer it away first; manage what genuinely remains with the routines in Lesson 3.
- **Relying on equipment instead of habits.** Cameras and signs support a preventive workplace; they do not create one. Greeting, noticing, and clear sightlines do the daily work.

Lesson 2 — Cash Handling: Making Robbery Unrewarding

If visibility is prevention's shield, cash discipline is its second wall: a robbery that can only ever take a small amount is a robbery less worth planning. Most robberies of small workplaces are quick, opportunistic crimes aimed at the register. The habits in this lesson — taught in retail and banking for decades — reduce the cash exposed at the counter, move money out of reach on a

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rhythm, and make the limits visible and known, so that the calculation a robber makes before entering keeps failing. They also protect staff in a second way: a worker who truly cannot access more than a small amount can say so truthfully during a robbery, and truth, in that moment, is protection.

The foundation is a register limit: a set maximum amount that may be in the till at any time, chosen by the business, known by all staff, and enforced without exception during busy periods, when it matters most and is most often forgotten. When the till reaches the limit, the excess is removed — a drop — to a safe, following the workplace's fixed procedure: drops made promptly, not accumulated; made discreetly, without display or announcement; and recorded with the simple accuracy the business's accounting requires. Large bills go under the till or straight to the drop by the same rule, rather than building up in the drawer where they are visible to anyone at the counter. The register is never left open and unattended, never counted in view of customers, and never used as a storage place for the day's takings "until close." Counting and reconciliation happen in a secure area, out of public sight, ideally with the door locked.

The safe itself must be part of the system rather than furniture. The strongest arrangement for staff safety is a safe that staff on the floor cannot open at all, or can open only with a time delay that cannot be overridden — and a sign saying so, truthfully, where customers can see it. Time-delay and staff-cannot-open safes convert the most dangerous demand in a robbery ("open the safe") into a fact the robber must accept, and they should be explained in training exactly that way: the safe protects you by removing your ability to comply beyond a point. Keys and combinations are held to the minimum number of people, changed when holders leave, and never shared casually or written where they can be found. Where a workplace handles significant cash — a busy store, a restaurant with a cash-heavy trade — the rhythm extends outward: takings are not carried to a bank by a lone worker on a fixed route at a fixed time, which Lesson 3 addresses, and many small businesses reduce their exposure at the root by encouraging card and contactless payment, keeping the cash share of their trade — and therefore the amount on the premises overnight — as low as their customers allow. Cash kept overnight should be the minimum possible, in the safe, with the premises' signage honest about that fact.

Two rules bind the whole lesson together, and they outrank every other instruction in this set. First: no amount of money is ever worth resistance. Every habit here exists to make money scarce, visible as scarce, and not worth a robber's effort — and if a robbery happens anyway, the money is given, fully and without argument, as Lesson 4 teaches. A workplace that drills cash limits but praises a worker who "saved the takings" has taught the opposite of safety, and its training will be believed accordingly. Second: habits must be habits, not performances for inspections. A drop routine that happens only when the manager is present is not a routine. Build the limits into the physical setup — the drop safe's position, the under-till rule, the counting place — so that the safe way is also the easy way, and audit gently and regularly, because cash discipline decays quietly in busy seasons exactly when takings, and risk, are highest.

The Steps

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1. Set a register limit — a maximum amount in the till — known to all staff and enforced most strictly at the busiest times.

2. Drop excess cash to the safe promptly at the limit, discreetly and without announcement, following one fixed procedure every time. Large bills go under the till or to the drop, never building up in view.

3. Never leave the register open and unattended, never count cash in view of customers, and never store the day's takings in the till until close. Count in a secure area with the door locked.

4. Use a safe staff on the floor cannot open, or one with a non-overridable time delay, and say so truthfully on signage. The safe protects staff by limiting what they can hand over.

5. Hold safe keys and combinations to the minimum number of people, and change them when a holder leaves.

6. Keep overnight cash to the minimum in the safe, and reduce cash exposure at the root by welcoming card and contactless payment.

7. State the binding rule in training and mean it: money is always given in a robbery. No worker is ever praised for protecting cash at risk to themselves.

A Worked Example

A convenience store with a busy evening trade reviews its cash habits after its insurer asks a pointed question: how much could a robbery actually take at 9 p.m. on a Friday? The honest answer embarrasses the owner — by Friday evening the till, never dropped during the rush because "there's no time," could hold most of a day's cash takings, with large bills visible every time the drawer opened. The rebuild is procedural, not expensive. The till limit is set and written on a card inside the counter where only staff see it. A drop safe is positioned so a drop takes twenty seconds without leaving the counter area, and the rule becomes: at the limit, drop — the queue waits twenty seconds, and staff are explicitly backed by the owner to let it wait. Large bills go under the till tray on receipt. Counting moves to the back office with the door locked, and the Friday count happens twice rather than once, halving what accumulates. The safe is replaced, at the next planned upgrade, with a time-delay model, and the truthful sign goes in the window: safe cannot be opened by staff; low cash kept. Three months on, the owner's Friday-evening exposure is a fraction of what it was, staff report the drop rhythm feels ordinary, and the insurer's question has a documented answer. The store was not robbed in that period and may never be — the point of the system is that if it ever is, the loss will be small, the staff will be practiced in limits they can state truthfully, and nobody's safety was ever staked on a drawer of notes.

Common Mistakes

- **Letting the till limit slide at busy times.** The rush is when takings — and risk — peak. A limit enforced only when quiet is not a limit.
- **Counting cash in view, or storing takings in the till until close.** Both advertise exactly what prevention exists to hide, and concentrate the loss in one drawer.

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- **Giving floor staff the ability to open the safe.** Every person who can open it can be forced to. A staff-cannot-open or time-delay safe protects staff, not just money.
- **Sharing combinations widely and never changing them.** Hold access to the minimum, and change it the week a holder leaves — not at the next convenient moment.
- **Praising resistance.** Any hint that a worker who protected the money did well undoes the entire system. Money is given, always; praise belongs to compliance and calm.

Lesson 3 — Opening, Closing, and the Journey Between: Routines That Remove Opportunity

Robberies cluster at the predictable edges of the working day. Opening and closing concentrate every risk factor at once: a lone worker, a dark or deserted street, a door being unlocked, cash being counted or moved, alarms being set or unset, attention fixed on a task rather than the surroundings. Banking runs carry the same pattern into the street: the same person, the same bag, the same route, the same time, advertising when the week's money moves. This lesson rebuilds those edges into routines — shared, varied, and rehearsed — because a routine done properly is a form of armor: it removes the lone moment, the predictable moment, and the distracted moment that robbers wait for.

Opening, done safely, begins before the door. Two people open together wherever the business can possibly arrange it; where it genuinely cannot, the risk must be managed deliberately with the measures below and reviewed honestly rather than simply accepted. Arrive observantly: as you approach, look at the premises before you are at the door — anything out of place, damage, a person loitering with no purpose, a vehicle that does not belong. If something looks wrong, do not enter: withdraw to a safe place and call the manager or, if a crime may have occurred, the police. This single rule — never walk into a scene to check it — prevents the nightmare variant of opening, in which a worker interrupts a burglary in progress. The agreed all-clear signal (a blind raised, a sign turned, a light pattern known to the second opener or a neighboring business) tells others the premises were entered and found normal; if the signal does not appear within the agreed minutes, the second person knows to call, not to enter. Inside, the door is locked again behind the opener until opening time, lights go on fully, and the first walk-through covers the whole premises, including back rooms and toilets, before tills, safes, or the day's work are touched.

Closing mirrors opening with its own details. The last customers are managed so the door can lock on time without a straggler in a back aisle or restroom: a closing announcement, a full check of the premises — every room, fitting room, and toilet — before cash work begins, because a person concealed inside at closing converts a routine into a hostage risk in the worst tellings of these events, and the check takes three minutes. Cash counting and reconciliation happen only after the premises are confirmed empty and locked. No worker leaves alone into the dark with the takings, and no worker leaves alone at all where it can be avoided: staff leave together, watch each other reach their cars or transport, and park, where they can choose, in lit areas near the door rather than the far corner of an empty lot. The person setting the alarm and locking is not also the person standing with the cash bag. Small separations of task, at the tired

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end of the day, are what routines are for — nobody has to be brave or brilliant; they have to follow the order the calm version of the team wrote down.

Banking and cash movement deserve their own rules, and they are mostly about refusing to be a timetable. Vary the day, the time, and the route; never carry takings in a branded or obvious cash bag; never make the run alone with significant amounts — two people, or a professional cash-collection service for businesses whose volume justifies it, which many insurers will require or reward; never discuss the run's timing in public areas or with casual questioners; and never let the run become so routine that staff perform it on autopilot past a loiterer they would have noticed on day one. At home-based and mobile work the same principles translate: a sole trader finishing a market day, a tradesperson carrying the week's payments, a delivery driver with a float — vary, conceal, avoid lone predictable movement with money, and treat the walk to the vehicle, in the dark, with hands full, as the risk moment it is, deserving a lit route, a companion where possible, and keys ready rather than buried. Predictability is the gift robbers most value. Routines should be predictable to the team and unpredictable to everyone else; that sentence, understood, is most of this lesson.

The Steps

1. Open in pairs wherever possible. Approach observantly: if anything looks wrong — damage, signs of entry, someone loitering — do not enter; withdraw and call the manager or police.
2. Use an agreed all-clear signal after a safe entry. If it does not appear on time, the second person calls — and does not enter to check.
3. Lock the door behind the opener until opening time, turn lights fully on, and walk the whole premises before touching tills or safes.
4. Close in order: announcement, full check of every room including restrooms and fitting rooms, door locked, then — and only then — cash work.
5. Leave together at close. Watch each other to cars or transport, park in lit areas near the door, and separate the roles of locking up and carrying cash.
6. For banking: vary day, time, and route; use an unmarked container; go in pairs or use a collection service for significant amounts; never discuss timing publicly.
7. Review the edges honestly each season: dark hours shift, staffing changes, and routines rot. Rewrite the routine when the facts change.

A Worked Example

A small restaurant group examines its closing routine after a late-night robbery at a similar restaurant across town, in which a worker leaving alone was forced back inside. Their own routine, written down for the first time, shows the same shape: one supervisor closes, counts alone, and leaves by the back door into an unlit service yard carrying the evening's cash to a car parked at the yard's far end, at roughly the same time every night. The rewrite costs scheduling effort and one light fitting. Closing becomes a two-person task, achieved by overlapping the last kitchen shift by thirty minutes. The premises check — dining room, restrooms, store room, office

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— is done together before the door is locked for cash work, and given a place on the closing checklist so it survives tired nights. Counting happens in the office with both present; cash goes to the time-delay safe overnight rather than traveling nightly, and the banking run moves to daytime, twice a week, at varied times, by car, with two people and an unmarked bag, on one of three routes. The service yard gets a working light on a sensor, and staff park at the lit end from the start of the evening shift. The supervisor's verdict, a month in, is the one good routines produce: closing feels less lonely and less rushed, not more burdensome — because the routine carries the vigilance, so the people no longer have to carry it alone in their heads at midnight.

Common Mistakes

- **Entering premises that look wrong "to check."** A worker who walks into a burglary in progress has converted property crime into personal danger. Withdraw and call.
- **Counting cash before the premises are checked and locked.** A concealed person at closing is a known pattern in serious robberies. Empty, checked, locked — then cash.
- **The lone, fixed banking run.** Same person, same bag, same route, same time is a published timetable for your own robbery. Vary everything, and pair up.
- **Letting closing staff drift out one by one into the dark.** Leaving together, watching each other to transport, is a two-minute habit that removes the loneliest risk of the day.
- **Writing a routine once and never revisiting it.** Dark hours, staff, and premises change. A routine describing last year's team protects no one on this year's team.

Lesson 4 — During and After a Robbery: Protect Life, Then Protect the Evidence

If a robbery happens despite prevention, the teaching for the event itself fits in one breath, and it must be learned in advance because there will be no time to learn it then: comply, observe, do not resist. Give the money and goods demanded. Do not argue, plead, delay, or attempt to protect property. Do not make sudden movements; narrate your necessary actions calmly if you can — "I am opening the register now" — and keep your hands where they can be seen. Do not volunteer more than is demanded, do not offer to open what you cannot open (state the safe's limit truthfully and briefly), and do not follow, chase, or attempt to detain the person as they leave. Every one of these rules serves the same master: the event should be as short and as uneventful as possible, because injuries in robberies happen overwhelmingly in the moments someone resists, surprises, or pursues. Property is insured, replaceable, and — under Lesson 2's discipline — limited. People are none of those things. A workplace's training, its manager's words afterward, and its culture for years afterward must all say the same sentence: the worker who handed everything over did exactly right.

Observation is the one active task during a robbery, and it is done quietly, without staring or anything that could be read as a challenge. Notice what can be noticed naturally: the person's approximate height (against the exit height marker as they leave), build, clothing, anything distinctive, the direction of travel on leaving, and whether a vehicle was involved — its type,

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color, and any part of a registration you can honestly recall. Do not write anything down during the event, do not reach for a phone, and do not activate anything that makes a sound or draws attention unless your workplace system has a silent alarm that can be triggered without movement or risk — and even then, only if it can be done without being seen to move. Exact words the person used matter to police; hold them in memory as best you can. Fear will scramble details, and that is normal and expected — which is why the after-steps below include writing everything down immediately, separately, before witnesses compare accounts and blend them.

The minutes after the person leaves are a procedure, and rehearsing the order prevents the two classic errors: contaminating the scene and losing the accounts. First, lock the doors: lock the premises as soon as the person has gone, so they cannot re-enter and no new customer walks into a scene, and do not open up again until police direct it. Second, call 911 immediately: give the address, what happened, when, any injuries, the description, and the direction of travel; ask witnesses to stay. Third, care for people: first aid for any injury, a seat and water and quiet for anyone in shock, and a call to the manager or owner if they are not present. Fourth, protect memory and evidence together: ask each witness to write their own account at once, alone, without discussion — independent accounts are what police need, and memories genuinely change within the hour once people talk. Touch nothing the robber touched: the counter, the note if one was passed, the door handle — leave the scene exactly as it is for forensic examination, and if anything must be moved for safety, note what and by whom. Fifth, preserve recordings: secure camera footage from being overwritten, note the exact time window, and hand it to police rather than circulating it. Finally, expect the practical tail: police attendance and statements, the premises closed for a period, insurer notification, and staff who should not simply finish their shift as if an ordinary thing occurred — which is where Lesson 5 begins.

The Steps

1. During: comply fully. Hand over money and goods. No arguing, pleading, delaying, or protecting property. No sudden movements; narrate necessary actions calmly.
2. Observe quietly what comes naturally: height, build, clothing, distinctive features, exact words used, direction of travel, and any vehicle details.
3. Do not chase, follow, or attempt to detain the person as they leave. Let them go; a short, uneventful event is the goal.
4. After: lock the doors immediately once they have gone. Do not reopen until police direct it.
5. Call 911 at once with address, what happened, injuries, description, and direction of travel. Ask witnesses to stay for police.
6. Have each witness write their own account immediately and separately, before any discussion. Memories blend within the hour.
7. Touch nothing the robber touched, and secure camera footage from being overwritten. Preserve the scene exactly for police.

A Worked Example

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A pharmacy is robbed ten minutes before closing by a person who passes a note demanding money from the register and medication, keeping one hand in a pocket. The pharmacist on duty has done the training, and the team afterward describes her as "strangely calm," which is what preparation looks like from outside. She narrates as she complies — "I am opening the register" — hands over the till's limited contents, states truthfully and once that the safe is on a time delay she cannot override, does not argue when the demand is repeated, and watches the person leave by the main door, noting against the height marker and the direction turned on the street. The second staff member, from the dispensary, has not approached or intervened — exactly as trained — and the moment the door closes she locks it and turns the sign. The pharmacist calls 911 with the address, the description, and the direction; both staff members write their accounts separately at the back counter, without comparing a single detail, including the note's exact wording as each recalls it; the note itself, left on the counter, is not touched again. The manager arrives, sends both staff members home with a colleague driving each, and stays for the police. In the police interview, the independent accounts agree on the description and differ on one detail of clothing — which the officers say is normal and useful, because accounts that match perfectly after discussion are worth less. The medication and money are losses the business absorbs. The staff are unharmed, the evidence is clean, and the investigation has everything a workplace can give it. Every part of that outcome was decided in training, months before, on a calm afternoon.

Common Mistakes

- **Resisting, arguing, or protecting property.** Injuries in robberies concentrate in moments of resistance and pursuit. Everything demanded is given; nothing is chased.
- **Sudden, unnarrated movements.** Reaching, ducking, or moving fast can be misread in a fraction of a second. Move slowly, hands visible, and say what you are doing.
- **Letting witnesses talk it over before writing accounts.** Discussion blends memories within the hour and weakens every account. Separate, immediate, written — in that order.
- **Tidying the scene.** Touching surfaces, picking up the note, wiping the counter — each destroys evidence police could have used. Lock, call, and leave everything as it lies.
- **Reopening quickly to "get back to normal."** The premises stay locked until police direct otherwise, and staff care comes before trade resumes, as Lesson 5 teaches.

Lesson 5 — Supporting Staff, and the Active Shooter Response: Two Duties That Must Not Be Confused

A robbery ends twice: once when the person leaves, and once, much later, in the minds of the people who were there. This final lesson covers the employer's and the team's duty in that longer ending — and then sets out, clearly separated, the active shooter response, because a workplace that teaches robbery response must also teach how an attack differs, and staff must never have to work out the difference in the moment. The two teachings sit side by side in this set precisely so they can be distinguished: robbery — comply, because the aim is property; active killing — Run, Hide, or as a last resort disrupt, because the aim is people. A worker who

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has learned both, with the distinction named aloud in training, carries the right map for either terrible day.

Support after a robbery begins with permission to react. People respond to being threatened in every way humans respond to fear: some shake, some cry, some go numb or oddly cheerful, some are angry, some cannot stop replaying the moment they are proudest or most ashamed of — often the same moment. All of these are normal, and the manager's first job is to say so, plainly, and to back the words with practical acts: nobody who was in the event finishes the shift as though nothing happened; everyone is offered a way home that is not driving themselves in shock; a family member or friend is called if the person wants it; and the offer of time — the rest of the day, the next day, a phased return — is made by the employer first, not extracted by the employee. Statements to police are supported, with a colleague or representative present where the person wishes and procedure allows. In the following days, watch for the slower reactions: sleep broken, dread of the shift or the street where it happened, startling at the door chime, a wish to leave the job entirely. These deserve the same seriousness as a physical injury, because that is what they are. Where the workplace has access to counseling or an employee assistance program, connect people actively — a name, a number, an appointment made with them — rather than handing over a leaflet. Where it does not, help the person find their own doctor or a local support service, and keep checking in at a week, a month, and beyond, because anniversaries and court dates reopen what seemed settled.

The workplace also learns, carefully. A review after an event — held when people have rested, led without blame — asks what the routines did well and what should change: a sightline, a staffing pattern, a drop habit that had decayed. Changes are made visibly and explained to staff as their protection, never as criticism of anyone's conduct during the event; the sentence "you did exactly right by complying" should be repeated until it is believed, because robbers' most durable theft is often a worker's confidence. Some staff will want to return to the counter quickly as their way of recovering; others will need longer and a different first shift back. Both are honored. A workplace that supports its people well after an event keeps them, and keeps the culture in which prevention habits — the greeting, the noticing, the reporting of concerns — survive, because staff who feel protected protect the place in return.

Now the second duty, stated in its own terms. If the event is not a robbery — if a person begins actively attacking people, with no demand, no interest in property, no negotiation — the framework is Run–Hide–Fight, in that order. Run: if a safe escape path exists, leave immediately, away from the danger, by a known exit; leave belongings; help others only without endangering yourself; warn others away; call 911 from safety. Hide: if escape is impossible, lock and barricade a room, lights off, phones fully silenced including vibration, out of sight, away from the door, quiet, and do not open the door for any voice — law enforcement will reach you and identify themselves properly. Fight, only as an absolute last resort when confronted directly, escape impossible, and your life in immediate danger: act together where possible, with total commitment, to disrupt the attacker using whatever is at hand, to create the chance to escape. When law enforcement arrives — fast, loud, focused on stopping the attack — keep hands raised, visible, and empty; put everything down; follow instructions exactly; do not run toward officers or reach toward pockets or bags. Preparedness for this event is the same infrastructure

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as the rest of this set, extended: reporting channels for concerns, exit knowledge, a written plan with assigned roles, plain-words alerts, coordination with local police, and gentle, announced practice of decisions and routes — never frightening simulations. The two responses are taught together, distinguished by one question a worker can ask in any event: is this person here for property, or are they harming people? Property — comply. People — run, hide, last resort. That question, and its two answers, are the whole map, and a workplace that has taught them clearly has done the most important safety teaching there is.

The Steps

1. After a robbery, act on support immediately: end the shift for those involved, arrange safe travel home, offer time away before being asked, and support police statements.
2. Normalize reactions in plain words and repeat the core sentence: complying was exactly right. No one is ever criticized for handing over property.
3. Connect people actively to support — counseling, assistance programs, or their own doctor — and check in at a week, a month, and around court dates or anniversaries.
4. Review routines once people have rested, without blame, and make protective changes visibly. Frame every change as protection, never as correction of conduct during the event.
5. Teach the distinction aloud in every training: a robbery aims at property — comply, observe, do not resist. An active attack aims at people — Run, Hide, last-resort disruption.
6. For an active attack: run by a known exit if safe, leaving belongings; hide and barricade if not, silenced and out of sight; act to disrupt only when confronted with no escape and immediate danger to life.
7. When officers arrive in an attack: hands raised, visible, and empty; everything put down; instructions followed exactly; no running toward officers and no reaching for pockets or bags.

A Worked Example

A small hotel's night receptionist is robbed at the desk in the early hours by a person demanding the float and a guest's deposited valuables. She complies completely, observes what she can, locks the lobby when they leave, and calls 911 — a textbook Lesson 4 response. What the hotel does next is this lesson. The duty manager, called at home, comes in rather than managing by phone; the receptionist's partner is called at her request and collects her; she is told before she leaves, by the manager in person, that she did exactly right and that the money is not a conversation anyone will be having with her. Her next two shifts are covered without her having to ask, and her return is to a daytime shift alongside a colleague, at her own choosing. The hotel connects her with its assistance program by sitting with her while the first appointment is made. The after-review, held the following week, finds two system lessons — the night desk's cash float had crept above its limit over the season, and the lobby's side window blind had been left closed at night, hiding the desk from the street — both fixed, both announced to staff as protection. Two months later, the same receptionist trains a new starter, and the manager overhears her teaching the distinction in her own words: "If they want the money, they can have the money — that's the job. If someone ever starts hurting people, we don't hand over anything; we get out, or we lock in. Different day, different rules — and I hope you never see either." A

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workplace's culture is what its people teach each other when the manager is not speaking. By that measure, the hotel's system had fully arrived.

Common Mistakes

- **Expecting staff to finish the shift or "shake it off."** Shock is an injury. Time, travel home, and support are the employer's first duties, offered before they are requested.
- **Letting any blame attach to compliance.** A single remark about what was handed over can undo a worker's confidence for years. Complying is the trained, praised, correct act.
- **Handing over a leaflet instead of making a connection.** People in shock do not book their own support. Sit with them, make the call, write down the appointment.
- **Confusing the two responses in training.** Robbery and active attack must be taught together and distinguished explicitly, or a frightened worker may comply in an attack or resist in a robbery — the two most dangerous errors possible.
- **Skipping the after-review, or running it as blame.** Reviewed kindly, an event improves the system. Blamed, it teaches staff to hide the next concern — and hidden concerns are how preventable events happen.

Try It — The One-Week Workplace Reset

Take one week, in pieces of no more than half an hour a day, and run your workplace through this set in order. On day one, do the robber's walk: enter from the street as a stranger, note visible cash, covered windows at the counter, dark areas, propped doors, and lone working — and write the list down. On day two, fix the free things: clear the sightlines at the payment point, report every failed bulb, close and lock the rear door routine, and start the greeting habit with the whole team, explained as prevention. On day three, set the cash system: choose the register limit, place the drop procedure where staff can follow it in twenty seconds, move counting out of public view, confirm who can and cannot open the safe, and put the truthful signage up. On day four, write the edges: the opening routine with its all-clear signal, the closing routine with its premises check before cash work, the leaving-together rule, and the varied banking run — then walk each one with the team, at learning speed, in daylight, as the Practice Simulators system teaches. On day five, teach the two responses in one short session, aloud, with the distinction named first: during a robbery — comply, observe, do not resist, then lock down, call 911, separate written accounts, touch nothing; in an active attack — Run, Hide, last-resort disruption, hands visible and empty when officers arrive. Have every staff member say both sequences back in their own words, and write the after-support steps — who is called, who goes home, who makes the support appointment — on the same card, so care is part of the procedure and not an improvisation.

Close the week by putting the whole system on one page at the counter and one page in the office: prevention list, cash rules, opening and closing routines, during-and-after steps, support steps, and the active-attack framework, with your workplace's real address printed at the top for the 911 call. Set a date, three months out, to walk the list again — because every habit in this set decays quietly, and the reset only works if it repeats. What you will own at the end of the

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week is not a guarantee; no honest training offers one. It is a workplace that a robber reads as hard work, a team that knows the worst minutes by heart, and a promise, made in advance and in writing, that in this place people come before property, every time.

Call 911 in an emergency, this is awareness only. Not legal advice. Check with a lawyer before signing. Not medical advice. Check with a doctor or qualified professional. Fortress shares what I learned, not professional advice.

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