



With the holidays approaching and the majority of businesses locked down for the Summer break, business owners are awash with feelings of relief as well as unease. Despite the holiday ahead, worrisome thoughts about the safety of the business and employees can play on the mind. “Can someone break in? Will the electricity circuit black out? and will the team stay safe?” are some of the questions business owners tend to think about during this period. Depending on the business, there are a number of things that can go wrong without anyone there to manage the problem. Security expert and founder of Australia’s highest rated security monitoring centre, Calamity, Daniel Lewkovitz shares five tips on how to keep businesses safe over the Christmas holidays.

1. Identify risks with your unique business

When I speak to a number of business owners I hear a similar comment: “We’ve got nothing anyone would be interested in stealing”. This comes from a belief that criminals are only interested in cash and valuables. However risk goes beyond simple theft and any incident which affects your business could have a far greater impact than the cost of the goods alone. A butcher showed me his cool room holding nearly \$200,000 worth of meat and assumed nobody would steal half a cow. I pointed out that a fridge failure over the weekend could write off his entire stock (and a monitored alarm system can alert you to temperature changes). The consequences of a loss far outweigh the modest cost of preventing it.

2. Protect workers wherever they roam

Most businesses address Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) but have a natural tendency to confine this to the office or headquarters rather than any place workers could actually be. Not only does the employer carry a legal responsibility for their safety, an injury to an employee (even while off-duty) can have a serious impact on a business's operations. As well as wishing everyone a happy and safe holiday, employers should take a few moments to talk to staff and remind them how to be careful in a season of drinking and partying. Calamity's Fearless mobile safety app is a useful way for employers to provide lone worker protection using the location tracking, camera and microphone of a standard mobile phone. As a perk, staff can also use the technology when they're off-duty as well, on a night out or vacation, knowing that if they get in trouble or fail to check-in they can still summon help from a 24/7 monitored service, paid for by their employer.

3. Test your systems

Although Australian Standards specify security systems should be tested regularly (at least once a year for most commercial premises) very few people do it. It's not uncommon for us to

How to Keep Businesses Safe Over Christmas

Written by Daniel Lewkovitz

find a business owned by someone who was security conscious and put in an alarm system that was ahead of its time 20 years ago. However now it's 20 years old and hasn't been serviced for years.

4. Upgrade your security before, not after you need it

Most people's natural behaviour is to ignore security until after they've suffered loss. Calamity is constantly contacted by people who've just been robbed and want to discuss alarm installation and monitoring. This is too late! It's much better to implement security proactively, before you suffer a loss in the first place. Don't leave it to the last minute. We get so many people who ring every year just before Christmas worried about security over the holidays. However criminals work all year round. Security is just as important in February as it is in December.

5. Plan for a safe, secure 2017

Many businesses use the quiet January period to plan for their year. Start to include safety and security in these plans each year. Assess your overall risk (or seek assistance from someone who can help with this). Encourage staff to be a part of this exercise. If they own it they will implement it. Security only works when it's everyone's responsibility - not just the owner's, managers' or security contractor's.

Quick things to consider:

Locks and Key Issue. Is it time to consider auditable electronic access control?

Alarms and Monitoring. Check the [ASIAL Website](#) to see if your security company is a 'graded' monitoring centre. If not, move.

Window protection. Transparent window films can improve security without affecting aesthetics.

Switch to IP Monitoring of alarms instead of costly, insecure phonenumber based monitoring.

Security policies and procedures. Are all staff aware of their responsibility?

Patrols. Many businesses hire patrol companies to check on their premises. This is outdated and modern video patrols can achieve the same or better results, often at significantly less cost. Obviously this requires a capable CCTV system.

Fire Safety. Are your smoke detectors less than ten years old? Are they monitored?

Insurance. Your business may have grown since you started your policy. Check that it's up to date with your current list of assets and operating environment.

For more information please visit www.calamity.com.au