



RETAIL'S SECURITY CRISIS

Understanding and Mitigating the Risks

The retail industry is becoming increasingly dangerous and volatile, especially for workers.

Employers are finding it harder to protect their employees from general workplace violence and as a result, retail employees are leaving the field in droves. So what exactly is making these common spaces unsafe, especially when compared to recent years? And what can retailers do to improve conditions?

THE RETAIL INDUSTRY

According to the International Trade Administration, “the U.S. retail industry is the largest private-sector employer in the country, directly employing about 32 million people and

supporting more than 52 million jobs.”¹⁰ Statista cites a total of 1.06 million retail establishments throughout the U.S. in 2022.¹¹ The two most common employee roles in the retail industry are as a salesperson or a cashier.¹⁰

The retail industry encompasses food and grocery, clothing stores, department stores, health and beauty, home goods, drug stores and pharmacies, discount stores, and many more.

The prevalence of retail spaces and the value they circulate makes them easy targets for all types of retail crime like shoplifting, property crime, parking lot incidents, and violence. According to a new study released by the National Retail Federation (NRF) and Loss Prevention Research Council (LPRC) sponsored by Sensormatic, external shoplifting and merchandise theft incidents increased by 19% from 2023 to 2024.⁷



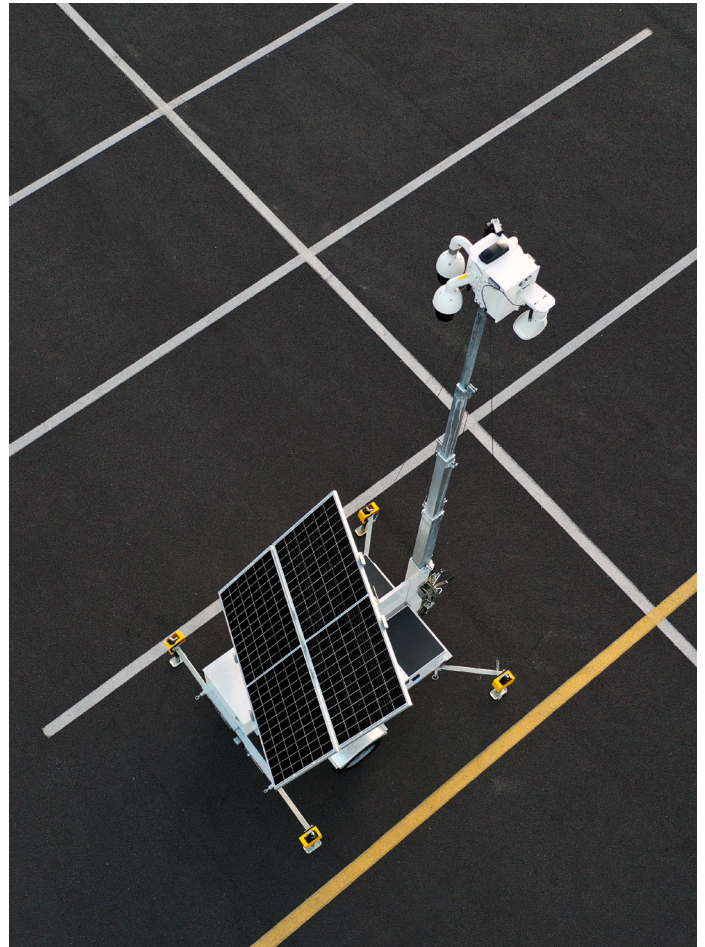
RETAIL EMPLOYEES EXPERIENCE FEAR AT WORK

Retail workers are experiencing a greater risk of threat and violence in the workplace in recent years. Teatro's 2024 Retail Worker Safety Survey reported that 86% of retailers say they are "scared every day" at work.⁴ In 2022, reporters at The New York Times analyzed FBI data and found that from 2018 to 2020, assaults in grocery stores rose by 63%.² In the report titled "The Impact of Retail Theft and Violence" by NRF and LPRC, nearly half of retailer respondents saw increases in guest-related violence and violence during a crime.⁷ For workers who are trained to work a cash register, stock shelves, and aid customers, the possibility of having to defend oneself from a violent patron makes the entry-level job seem not-all-that-worth-it.

From dealing with rude customers to living with the threat (or reality) of active shootings, retail workers are becoming fed up, and for good reason. According to an FBI report from 2021 on active shootings, 32 out of 61 incidents occurred in commercial areas.¹² A study by Harvard Business Review

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found that 78% of retail employees think that customers' rude behavior towards workers has increased significantly over the past five years.⁸ The reasons for these unsettling changes are hard to pinpoint, but the reality of them stays the same—workplace violence is more prevalent than ever. Aside from one-off negative customer interactions, organized



retail crime is on the rise and affects retailers in similarly detrimental ways.

WHAT IS ORC?

Organized retail crime (ORC) involves professional criminal groups targeting retail stores for theft, fraud, and other illegal activities. These groups operate with precision and sophistication, making it difficult for retailers to prevent and combat these crimes.

According to research on retail data from Trevor Wagener, Chief Economist at the Computer and Communications Industry Association, organized groups were likely responsible for about 5% of stolen merchandise between 2016 to 2020.⁵ In the annual report on retail crime from NRF and LPRC, retailers reported that ORC-related theft and



frauds have either stayed the same or increased over the past year. The most prevalent methods of ORC crime are phone scams and frauds, digital and ecommerce frauds, and shoplifting/merchandise theft.⁷

More important than the financial losses, though, are the safety ramifications of ORC for people who get caught in the fray. When retailers were polled about ORC in 2022, they reported:

81% of ORC offenders have become more violent⁶

67% more violence at retail locations when compared to even a year ago⁶

28% of active-shooter incidents happen at locations of commerce¹²

53% of fatalities at retail locations happen in the parking lot³

While ORC might seem like a problem that only affects business, the reality is that actual people are being harmed in the middle of it all.

UNSEEN COSTS OF RETAIL CRIME

According to the CDC and the National Security Council, retail work is one of the highest-risk jobs for workplace violence, making it more challenging to hire and retain employees. This issue, compounded by post-pandemic staffing difficulties, is intensified by the fact that 73% of retail workers are considering other employment options.⁴ The cost to hire and train new employees is much higher than to retain current employees, so retailers are suffering financially as a result.

While the retail industry as a whole pushes forward with new businesses and growth 3,193 retail locations closed their doors in 2023, proving that many retailers are seeing a loss of profits, increased ORC, more violence, and new shopping trends that are affecting their businesses.⁹

LVT PROVIDES A SOLUTION

Retailers are looking for a solution to the problems they're facing. Continuing to lose employees, customers, and profits is unsustainable for a business and is a sign that safety may

not be up to par for those employed by retailers. LiveView Technologies (LVT) has worked with retailers across the country to improve conditions and bring greater safety and security to their retail locations.

LVT makes safety and security proactive through an end-to-end solution. With a combination of proprietary software and hardware, LVT goes beyond traditional security systems to actively deter crimes. It is a completely mobile, cloud-based security system that does not require external power or internet hookups, can be set up in minutes, and can be deployed anywhere in the world. With the deployment of LVT Units, retailers have seen:

70% decrease in parking lot incidents

43% reduction in trespassing incidents

In 2022, LVT created the [ACCESS Taskforce](#), or Alliance of Companies and Communities to Enhance Safety and Security. Two American cities joined forces with LVT and the Loss Prevention Research Council (LPRC) to deploy 49 Live Units across Opelika, AL and Paducah, KY for a six month period to help reduce the amount of retail crime they were experiencing. The results of this project were astounding, and further proof that retailers benefit from the technology that LVT has to offer. These two cities saw the following:

40% decrease in shoplifting

54% decrease in burglaries

15% reduction in property crime

80% drop in weapons violations (Paducah, KY)

10-13% overall reduction in crime

To learn more about the LVT solution and how it can help increase safety and security in the retail industry, visit lvt.com.



SOURCES

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