

SOP Template: Handling Suspected Shoplifting or Suspicious Behavior

This SOP details **handling suspected shoplifting or suspicious behavior** by outlining steps for identifying potential theft, observing and documenting suspicious actions, approaching individuals discreetly and professionally, coordinating with security personnel, and following legal and company protocols to ensure safety and proper resolution while minimizing disruption to customers and staff.

1. Purpose

To outline a standardized procedure for staff and security to follow when responding to suspected shoplifting or suspicious customer behavior, ensuring a consistent, legal, and customer-friendly approach.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all retail employees and security personnel on store premises.

3. Responsibilities

- **All staff:** Remain alert, report suspicious activity, and follow this SOP.
- **Store management:** Respond to reports, coordinate with security, and ensure compliance with policies.
- **Security personnel:** Assess and address situations as outlined below.

4. Procedure

Step	Action
1. Identify Suspicious Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be alert to actions such as: frequent looking around, concealing items, loitering, avoiding staff, or tampering with packaging.• Do not stereotype or profile based on appearance alone.
2. Observe and Document	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discreetly observe the individual.• Record details: description, actions, items involved, time, and location.• If possible, ask another staff member to observe as witness.
3. Notify Security/Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inform manager or security with your observations.• Maintain confidentiality and avoid raising alarm among customers.
4. Approach the Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If theft is suspected and procedure permits, approach with another staff or security present.• Be polite and professional; avoid confrontation. For example: "Can I assist you in finding something?"• Do not physically detain or accuse without evidence.
5. Handle Escalation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the individual attempts to leave with unpaid items, follow company policy (e.g., notify security, do not pursue outside store).• Contact law enforcement if required by policy/law.
6. Documentation and Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete an incident report with all relevant details as soon as possible.• Provide information to management and authorities as needed.

5. Legal and Company Protocols

- Always follow applicable laws regarding detention, search, and privacy.
- Never use force unless authorized and trained in accordance with law and company policy.

- Respect the rights and dignity of all customers at all times.

6. Safety and Minimizing Disruption

- Prioritize the safety of staff, customers, and the suspected individual.
- Handle situations discreetly to avoid escalation and maintain a positive environment.

7. Review and Training

- This SOP should be reviewed annually.
- Training on these procedures should be provided to all new and existing staff.

Note: *Company policies may vary based on location and legal requirements. Always consult management or legal department if uncertain about procedures.*