

Holiday Theft: What You May Be Missing from Your Security Checklist



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With the holiday shopping season approaching, retailers face what may be considered their most challenging time of year for theft prevention. While increased foot traffic brings welcomed sales, it also creates unprecedented security challenges requiring more than traditional measures.

By the Numbers

According to the Council on Criminal Justice, theft during the 2024 holiday months increased 14% compared to other times of the year, the most significant difference observed during the analyzed time frame.

While clothing and accessories remain top targets, retailers and grocers also experience significant spikes in theft of everyday items. The trend encompasses traditional shoplifting, pushout theft, and an alarming increase in organized retail crime (ORC). These continued trends helped make October 24 National Fight Retail Crime Day, as recognized by the [National Retail Federation](#).

Why Holiday Theft Intensifies

Several factors converge during the holidays to create a perfect storm:

- **Increased Foot Traffic:** Crowded stores create chaotic environments that complicate detection and provide cover for theft activities.
- **Operational Strain:** Seasonal staffing challenges result in fewer experienced personnel on the floor, and temporary employees may lack the necessary training to identify suspicious behavior.

A Layered Approach to Holiday Security

Effective holiday theft prevention requires multiple layers of technology working together. Traditional measures, such as cameras and exit monitors, remain important, but they're reactive. By the time a bad actor is spotted, merchandise may already be out the door. Modern loss prevention demands proactive solutions.



Combating Pushout Theft with Gatekeeper Systems' Purchek® Solution

Pushout theft, when unpaid merchandise is wheeled straight out the doors, is a fast-growing category in retail theft.

"All grocers are at risk. Pushout theft is real and is a major vehicle for organized retail crime," states Caroline Kochman, president of the Loss Prevention Foundation.

The challenge with pushout theft is that it often looks completely ordinary. A typical cart, filled with typical merchandise, is pushed by someone who blends in with other shoppers, making it harder to detect in real time until it's too late. Pushout theft is a tool used by both ORC rings and opportunistic shoplifters who realize how easy it can be to walk out with unpaid items.

The Purchek solution uses discreet SmartWheel® technology that communicates with strategically placed sensors. If a cart attempts to exit without payment, the wheels lock automatically, stopping the theft without confrontation. The system works quietly in the background, allowing store teams to focus on customers rather than suspects.

"In my years leading loss prevention for a major national retail chain, I've never seen a single solution deliver as immediate and measurable an impact on shrink as Gatekeeper Systems' Purchek® solution," said a loss prevention executive.

"The ROI was both meaningful and sustained, proving its value far beyond the initial deployment," continues the LP executive.

Another retailer loss prevention executive made similar comments about the results being immediate. "Gatekeeper's Purchek solution has been a game-changer in reducing pushout theft,". "The measurable results and strong support from their team have made a real difference in our operations. From implementation to ongoing service, their support has been exceptional, making them a trusted resource for our operations."

During the holiday season, retailers face increased exposures, from higher customer traffic to expanded inventories, which makes them especially vulnerable to pushout theft. In addition, shopping events such as Black Friday bring larger-than-usual crowds to retailers that can sometimes overwhelm staff and resources. Gatekeeper's Purchek® is critical during this period, helping loss prevention teams manage the heightened risks and protect operations when the stakes are at their highest.

Proactive Security with FaceFirst® Face Matching

FaceFirst's face matching technology provides retailers with proactive tools against repeat offenders and organized retail crime rings.

During the chaotic holiday season, the FaceFirst solution operates silently in the background, instantly identifying individuals on watch lists as they enter. This gives loss prevention teams a warning, allowing them to:

- Alert staff to the presence of known shoplifters who are enrolled in the database
- Enhance investigations, aiding loss prevention experts to locate patterns of theft and link multiple stores
- Provide real-time alerts that deliver insights to help inspire action for loss prevention

The technology is particularly valuable during holidays when stores are packed and traditional observation methods become nearly impossible. FaceFirst can identify threats in crowds that would overwhelm human monitoring capabilities, essentially giving your loss prevention team enhanced situational awareness when they need it most.

Holiday Safety

Ultimately, the most valuable assets to protect are people, including both shoppers and employees. Ensuring your loss prevention team has the right tools can help not only provide an overall layer of protection but also help loss prevention teams gain insight into patterns that can help prevent theft in the future.

The holiday season doesn't have to be synonymous with increased losses. With the right combination of physical deterrence and intelligent recognition, retailers can protect their people, products, and profits during their most critical sales period.

For more information, please visit [gatekeepersystems.com](https://www.gatekeepersystems.com).

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About Gatekeeper

Gatekeeper Systems' expanded product suite of intelligent cart solutions offers solutions for EVERY retailer's needs to minimize merchandise loss, reduce asset and labor expenditures. Gatekeeper's loss prevention and cart containment solutions utilize patented locking technology to put an end to cart-based shoplifting, shopping cart loss, and uninformed decision-making. Cart management solutions increase safety and reduce labor costs by maximizing productivity while simultaneously resulting in a positive store image. Intelligent pushout theft prevention solutions stop thieves and their cart full of unpaid merchandise from leaving the store. Customizable technology allows retailers to defend their entire store or just a high loss department based on the store's unique layout. Business Intelligence solutions provide increased visibility for informed decision making. Increase efficiency, optimize fleet size, and perfect the entire customer shopping experience with store and enterprise-level analytics.

