



# MERCHANT PUBLIC SAFETY TIP SHEET

## TOPIC: SAFETY INSIDE AND OUT: CREATING A SAFE EXTERIOR SPACE

### Pedestrian Safety:

- Ensure the outside of your business is safe by keeping the walkway and entrance to your business clear of debris and potential hazards.
- While sandwich boards and street level marketing can be effective in attracting potential customers, be sure it doesn't create potential tripping hazards or impede pedestrians, including those in wheelchairs or with strollers, who may need a wider path.

- For those with a trench drain cover in the sidewalk in front of your business, the property owner (you or your landlord) is responsible for their maintenance. If left unrepaired, they can cause a serious injury hazard for which the property owner is responsible. The City of York can also impose fines. This not only eliminates a potential tripping hazard, it makes the exterior more welcoming. Downtown Inc periodically runs trench drain replacement projects to assist merchants with replacing damaged trench drains at a reduced cost. If interested in replacing a trench drain, please reach out to Downtown Inc at [info@downtownyorkpa.com](mailto:info@downtownyorkpa.com).

### Storefront:

- Properly merchandise your storefront windows to represent your brand and your merchandise without blocking sight lines. If your windows are too full, people cannot see in. Should an incident arise, pedestrians and reporting police officers may not be able to assess the situation.
- Putting your most desirable items in the storefront window might be the best way to get customers into your store, but make sure to take them off display in the front window when closed. A criminal could see an opportunity to make a quick break-in and steal an expensive item on display in the window front.

- Camera systems are now much more affordable in today's market and allow 24/7 access through a smartphone or computer. They allow you to monitor what is happening in and around your store. Some can even be set up to alert you when someone comes within close proximity of the camera sensor. They can act as a deterrent and be used for evidence should a crime be committed.
- Lighting can be a very important part of your exterior safety in addition to making your storefront more welcoming and accessible. Some individuals may have a vision or mobility impairment that requires adequate lighting to ensure safety while walking and shopping. Good lighting can also make your store more inviting and can better advertise what you are selling.

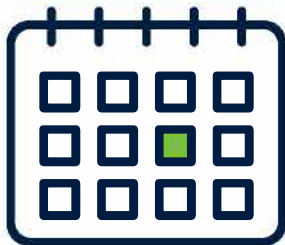
## Know Your Neighbors and Your Surroundings:

- Knowing the neighboring business owners around you allows you to better keep an eye out for suspicious activity. You can get to know one another's schedule and recognize if something happening is expected or out of the ordinary. It creates an informal community watch among those around you.
- Working with your local police department can keep you updated with important information. With the CRIMEWATCH website and app, you can stay up to date with what is happening around you and make necessary adjustments if needed. It will give you up-to-date information regarding arrests and incidents in your area that can keep you safe. It also allows you to submit an anonymous tip regarding suspicious, nuisance, and criminal activity.
- If you have security cameras at your business, you can register them with the York City Police Department, which lets them know where they could potentially find cameras that can aid with active investigations and deter crime.
- When dealing with those loitering or potentially homeless, it can be a tough decision to know when it is appropriate to call the police. A good rule of thumb is to go off instinct. When something seems to be beyond your control and an initial confrontation escalates to a point of feeling unsafe, that would be an appropriate time to call the police.



Scan to Download  
the CRIMEWATCH App

## Schedule a Safety Audit



The York City Police Department offers free safety audits for businesses in York City. A YCPD officer will do a one-on-one walk-through of the inside and outside of your business and advise you of what changes and improvements can be made to keep you and your customers safe. Most often the suggestions provided in their report are no cost or low-cost items. YCPD officers have experience and education in safety by environmental design. If you would like to schedule a safety audit, [please email Gene Fells at jfells@yorkcity.org](mailto:jfells@yorkcity.org) or call 717.916.0174.

## MEET THE DOWNTOWN OFFICER

**Gene Fells** became a fixture of Downtown York throughout his long career with York City Police Department. After retiring from YCPD to lead public safety at Penn State York, he returned to YCPD to act as Downtown Public Safety Liaison, building on his lifetime of experience in Downtown York.

**If you have any questions or concerns, you can reach out to Gene at [JFells@yorkcity.org](mailto:JFells@yorkcity.org) or 717.916.0174**

