

# Security Spotlight

*An informational Guide for Securitas Canada Clients and Employees*



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## Keeping Safe from Office Creepers



**Heading out to lunch, Sally began to push open the security door when a well-dressed man, carrying a large briefcase, grabbed the door handle from the other side and held the door open for her. "Have a nice lunch." The man said as Sally smiled and strode past him. "I guess chivalry is not dead after all," she thought cheerfully. After a pleasant lunch at the local café, Sally returned to her office in good spirits; only to discover that her laptop computer was missing. Remorsefully, Sally realized she had been the unwitting accomplice of a 'chivalrous' thief.**

### **Who Are the Office Creepers?**

Office creepers are persons who enter buildings to steal from the company or individuals. These thieves do not limit themselves to office buildings. They have invaded schools, warehouses, high rise buildings, and even hospitals where they steal from helpless patients! They are devious and adaptable thieves who usually do their best to blend into the surroundings. They may disguise themselves by dressing like a typical business person, office worker, sales person, maintenance personnel, cleaning staff, repair person, or delivery person. They can be male or female and of any race or ethnicity. The one thing they all have in common is their desire to take what is yours. Vigilance and strict adherence to company rules can keep the creepers out of the cubicles. A person you do not recognize may be a creeper if they are exhibiting any of these behaviors:

- entering and exiting multiple offices, cubicles, or rooms, usually for only a minute or two

- waiting near a security entrance, especially when it is close to lunch time, or the start or end of the work day
- peeking into multiple offices, cubicles, or rooms and not entering if they are occupied.

This person may be stealing, or looking for unoccupied areas from which to steal. If you notice any suspicious person, alert the security office immediately.

### **Security Can Thwart Creepers**

A security guard's job is to protect the client's property and personnel against harm. The guard has three "tools" that have proven beneficial in the prevention of criminal activity. They are detection, deterrence, and reporting.

### **Detection**

By remaining alert and vigilant, a security guard should be aware of any strangers entering the premises. The vigilant guard should pay special attention to any stranger at the job site. The guard should observe the person's behavior and appearance, looking for signs of:

- uneasiness or uncertainty
- lack of proper identification (insofar as Post Orders permit ID inspection), or fake IDs
- loitering near security barriers
- "tailgating" (tailgaters can bypass a security barrier by closely following an authorized person through it)

- “shoulder surfing” (trying to see a security code an authorized person is entering on a keypad)

### **Deterrence**

The presence of an alert, uniformed, security guard is often enough to deter a criminal from attempting to invade the premises, but not always. That is why it is very important that the guard knows the Post Orders and the client’s security procedures. The guard should always strive to enforce the security rules of the site. Depending on Post Orders, a guard might control access in these ways:

- Request that visitors sign the “Visitor Log.” This lets the strangers know that you are alert to their presence.
- Politely ask if you can assist them in finding their way. This will give you the opportunity to ask them about the purpose of their visit and who they are visiting.
- Confirm that the visitor is expected by contacting the receiver of the visit.
- Request to see ID badges or other ID (i.e. driver’s license, business card, etc.), if your Post Orders permit ID inspection. Verify that any ID badge is authentic.
- Verify any requests for repairs if the stranger claims to be a repair person.
- Verify that a delivery, or removal, is expected if the person claims to be a delivery person or a professional mover.
- Securely store all keys, ID badges, and visitor passes.
- Do not allow anyone, even persons you recognize, to “tailgate” through a security barrier.
- If authorized by the Post Orders, request that the person allow a visual inspection of any bags, unsealed boxes, briefcases, or other containers they carry. If they are carrying an empty container into the facility, they may be planning on filling it with the client’s property!

### **Reporting**

Reporting serves to alert others about a creeper and can lead to the arrest and conviction of creepers. Because a guard’s report may be used in a court of law, it is extremely important that the report be complete and accurate. A vigilant security guard will include as many of the following facts in their reports as possible.

- Who is the person? Give a detailed description. Get their name and address. Describe the person’s clothing, appearance, height, weight, hair and eye color, age, race, sex, and any distinguishing characteristics (i.e. facial hair, tattoos, piercings, scars, moles, warts, etc.).
- What did the person do? Describe their actions and behavior. Did they sit in a lobby chair and read a magazine or did they wander around the lobby and rush towards doors that were opened? Did the person appear nervous or confident? Were they furtive or rowdy? In what way did they pass through a security barrier? Did they have a security barrier key or key code? Did they “tailgate” through the barrier behind an authorized person? Were they seen carrying any property out of the premises? Try to give a clear picture of their actions.

- Where was the person? Were they only seen in the lobby or were they observed entering a doorway or walking down a corridor? Perhaps they were seen walking down a hallway and entering an office? Whose office? At what spot in the hallway were they first seen? Be precise. The exact location can be vital to a criminal investigation.
- Notify neighboring facilities if a thief has struck at your facility. Cooperation counts in capturing a Creeper.

These are a few of the important observations that a good guard will record in a report. The Securitas Report Writing course has more advice on good report writing techniques.

### **How You Can Thwart Creepers**

A Creeper might target any building, anywhere. As a worker in the building, it may seem that you are powerless to defend yourself against this sneak thief. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, you are the person with the most power to defeat this criminal. By following a few simple precautions, you can frustrate a Creeper’s attempts at theft. Use these tactics to stop a Creeper cold.

- Do not share keys, access cards, or access codes and never leave them lying around unattended.
- Do not open an access barrier for unauthorized persons.
- Report lost keys and access cards.
- Keep purses or wallets with you or locked in a drawer.
- Lock your door when you leave the office.
- Secure laptop computers and other devices to your desk with security cables or lock them in a drawer.
- Mute your telephone or have your calls forwarded to you when you are out of your office (a ringing telephone can tip off a Creeper that your office is unoccupied).
- Report suspicious strangers to your supervisor and/or security personnel.
- Keep company information secure. Lock up data storage devices. Never share passwords or leave written copies unsecured (taping your password under your keyboard is a bad idea – it is one of the first places a thief will look).

### **What to Do If You Find a Creeper**

If you see a crime being committed, do not attempt to apprehend the criminal. Your safety is far more valuable than any object. Follow these guidelines.

- Do not confront or challenge the Creeper.
- Retreat to a safe area.
- Contact your supervisor and/or security personnel.
- As soon as possible, write down everything you saw; describe the event, the items stolen, and the thief in as much detail as you can.