

2025

The Impact of Retail Theft & Violence Report

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Introduction

Letter from National Retail Federation

Retail theft continues at high levels, while violence, often associated with theft or criminal activity, remains of great concern to the retail industry. The evolving crisis of organized retail crime has expanded in its breadth, both in methods and overall reach. Collectively, these issues continue to present a significant threat to the retail industry, the U.S. economy and public safety.

The Impact of Retail Theft and Violence 2025 report documents the persistent and growing threats facing the retail sector, including daily events involving theft, fraud and acts of violence. These events disrupt the shopping experience, jeopardize the safety and morale of employees, and impact communities with lost tax revenue, jobs and a safe retail environment. Whether directly or indirectly, organized theft groups also cause substantial financial losses and endanger the lives of employees and customers.

The findings within this report serve as a call to action for a united, multi-level response. Local, state and federal governments must recognize the severity of these crimes and provide the necessary support. By strengthening legislation, allocating more resources for task forces and fostering a collaborative approach with the retail industry, we can transition from a defensive posture to an offensive one. A failure to address this escalating crisis will not only harm the retail economy; it will also compromise the safety and security of our communities across the country.

The retail industry plays a critical role in local communities and the nation as a whole. The National Retail Federation and Loss Prevention Research Council are the leading voices for their members, who consist of retailers and industry partners across all segments and sizes. We appreciate the retailers who participated in this year's survey and will continue to advocate and collaborate with the retail industry and the public sector to provide a safe and secure retail environment.

David Johnston

VP, Asset Protection & Retail Operations, NRF

Letter from the Loss Prevention Research Council

The Impact of Theft and Violence 2025 report provides the retail industry with essential insights into some of the most pressing challenges facing retailers, employees and customers today. This year's findings highlight troubling trends across shoplifting and fraud-related theft, as well as growing concerns around workplace and customer violence.

Reliable, industry-wide metrics are critical to addressing these challenges. Without shared data, it is difficult to fully understand the scope of theft, fraud and violence, or to measure the impact of prevention efforts. By establishing clear benchmarks, this report enables retailers to identify the most urgent risks, prioritize resources and design evidence-based programs.

Equally important, these metrics help communicate the nature and scale of the problem to policymakers, public officials and the public. They highlight why coordinated action and legislative support are necessary alongside retailers' own investment in prevention strategies and community partnerships.

Through ongoing collaboration between the National Retail Federation, the Loss Prevention Research Council and our retail members and industry partners, we can ensure that research-driven insights translate into meaningful action to safeguard people, protect assets and sustain the health of the retail industry.

Read Hayes, PhD

Executive Director and Founder,
LPRC

Cory Lowe, PhD

Director of Research,
LPRC

Christina Burton, PhD

Research Scientist,
LPRC

Letter from Sensormatic Solutions

I am grateful for the work the National Retail Federation and Loss Prevention Research Council do to shine a light on the challenges retailers face while mobilizing us to act. I am also thankful for the retailers, private- and public-sector partners, and other supporters who have answered the call for change by working toward our collective mission to make the retail experience safer. We should be proud of the progress we've made together.

However, this year's report is a reminder of just how much we all still have to navigate when it comes to the growing and evolving issue of retail theft and violence. That's why it's so important that we understand where and how vulnerabilities happen and develop solutions to help thwart or capture them every step of the way. Retailers continue to focus on prevention and detection, with the support of new technologies and stronger partnerships with industry partners and law enforcement.

Together, we will lay the groundwork for the success and future of retail.

Tony D'Onofrio

President, Sensormatic Solutions

Key Takeaways

Retail crime continues to grow in sophistication and complexity, with fallout for retailers, employees, customers and communities as a whole. Within this shifting landscape, there's a resounding rally for collaboration, focus and resources. The Impact of Retail Theft and Violence 2025 report explores retailers' concerns, experiences, expectations and responses.

- Retailers report increases across various methods of external theft (cargo/supply chain theft, shoplifting and walkout/pushout theft) as well as digital and online fraud (phone scams, ecommerce fraud and repeat offender theft). The survey showed a combined 19% increase in external shoplifting and merchandise theft incidents from 2023 to 2024.¹
- Retailers say they're most concerned about organized retail crime, shoplifting, repeat offenders, phone scams, return fraud and credit card-related theft.
- Retailers report the same or higher instances of violence-related events in their organizations in 2024. Top concerns include violence during a crime, mass violence and guest-related violence. Almost half of respondents (46%) saw increases in guest-related violence and violence during a crime (including shoplifting).
- Retailers are enhancing their safety measures in a variety of ways; 63% report increased training for management on handling threats or violence, for example, and 60% report increased training for employees on workplace violence prevention. Other efforts range from increased threat identification processes, structures or procedures (59%) to increased global or travel-related threat or violence processes, structure or training (50%).
- Loss prevention efforts increasingly include interior and exterior security measures; alterations to store design or layout and removal of certain products; and exploring/investing in technology.
- Investigation and prosecution of ORC remain challenging for both retailers and law enforcement, due to limited law enforcement resources; limited asset protection resources; lack of prosecutors' willingness to prosecute higher levels of crime; and other factors. Progress is being made, yet more is needed, from federal ORC legislation to ORC taskforces and partnerships.

Methodology

The survey was conducted online among senior loss prevention and security executives in the retail industry from June to August 2025. A total of 70 retail companies responded to the survey, representing 168 brands across a variety of retail sectors:

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Apparel and footwear (33%) | • Specialty retailers and hobbies (7%) |
| • General merchandise (14%) | • Drug, health and beauty (6%) |
| • Food retail and grocery (10%) | • Entertainment and recreation (4%) |
| • Home and garden (10%) | • Consumer electronics and office supplies (3%) |
| • Jewelry, accessories and optical (10%) | • Restaurant and convenience (3%) |

In terms of total sales volume, these brands represented \$1.3 trillion in annual sales for their 2024 fiscal year or 25.1% of total retail sales. The majority (63%) have over 10,000 employees, and more than half (56%) operate at least 500 stores.

¹ In this year's report, shoplifting and merchandise theft were separated to better capture the full extent of external theft occurring within stores. This year's survey showed an 18% increase in external shoplifting and a 12% increase in merchandise theft incidents from 2023 to 2024. The overall increase in incidents was calculated by taking the average increase in both shoplifting and merchandise theft among retailers that track such data.

Increasing Threats and Concerns

It's clear that criminals are becoming more sophisticated and looking for new ways to exploit both retailers and their consumers. These criminals, including organized crime groups, target merchandise and monies (gift cards, credit card data, cash) across retail stores, supply chains and online environments in a variety of ways.

- When it comes to external theft, 54% of retailers surveyed reported an increase in repeat offender theft over the previous year. Cargo/supply chain theft increased for 48% of retailers, and shoplifting (concealment and exit) for 46%.
- Among fraud-related theft and crime events, retailers report that phone scams (62%), loyalty fraud (46%) and quick-change schemes (41%) were the most likely to have increased in frequency.

Retailers identified their top three concerns looking forward over the next 12 months:

External theft priorities *(next 12 months)*

- Organized retail crime
- Shoplifting
- Repeat offenders

Fraud-related theft priorities *(next 12 months)*

- Phone scams
- Return fraud
- Credit card-related fraud

See the appendix for a list of external theft and fraud events and the frequency of these events as reported by retail respondents.



External Theft and Loss

Retailers have experienced increases in shoplifting and merchandise theft for the past several years. Last year's study found that retailers that track such incidents experienced an average 26% increase in overall shoplifting and merchandise theft incidents from 2022 to 2023. More recently, respondents found another 19% increase in these events from 2023 to 2024.¹

This year, the study took a deeper look at shoplifting and merchandise theft events separately.

Shoplifting events are recorded theft events where the retailer has actual information that an individual attempted to steal or successfully stole merchandise without paying.

Merchandise theft events can include any recorded event of merchandise loss where an organization indicates the loss was due to theft (e.g., known loss report, post-incident CCTV review).

Between 2023 and 2024, retailers that tracked these issues specifically saw additional increases in both shoplifting and merchandise thefts. On average, respondents experienced an 18% increase in shoplifting incidents and a 12% increase in merchandise theft incidents during this time period.

There is no single type of shoplifter or universal method of shoplifting. Methods range from individuals concealing product to destructive burglaries or multiple-person events. Compared with last year, retailers are now most likely to be more concerned about multiple individuals shoplifting together to steal multiple items; individuals shoplifting several items at once; and individuals coming in to shoplift a few items. "Smash-and-grab" events are the only area respondents consider less of a concern than last year.

Compared with a year ago, are the following types of merchandise theft more or less of a concern?



¹ In this year's report, shoplifting and merchandise theft were separated to better capture the full extent of external theft occurring within stores. This year's survey showed an 18% increase in external shoplifting and a 12% increase in merchandise theft incidents from 2023 to 2024. The overall increase in incidents was calculated by taking the average increase in both shoplifting and merchandise theft among retailers that track such data.

Retail theft and fraud appear to be trending higher

Based on current recorded events from January to June 2025, many respondents expect to see a further uptick in incidents relating to phone scams (65%), ecommerce or digital theft and frauds (63%), and shoplifting and merchandise theft (53%).

Based on your current recorded events for the year 2025, do you see the following thefts and frauds trending higher, lower or remaining the same?			
	Trending lower	Remaining the same	Trending higher
Phone scams	14%	21%	65%
Ecommerce or digital theft and frauds	2%	35%	63%
Shoplifting and merchandise theft	19%	28%	53%
Gift card theft or frauds	14%	37%	49%
Cargo or supply chain theft	3%	50%	47%
Quick change schemes	23%	41%	36%
External return or refund fraud	21%	53%	26%
High-profile external theft incidents (<i>smash-and-grab, mob</i>)	39%	36%	25%
Burglaries or break-ins	47%	35%	19%

Shoplifting apprehensions and arrests increased, although retailers continue to limit who can apprehend a shoplifter

Based on respondents that tracked these events, shoplifting apprehensions increased 28% between 2023 and 2024 while shoplifting arrests grew 15% during the same time period.

Retailers are limiting who can approach and/or stop an individual suspected of shoplifting amid increasing concerns for the safety and security of employees.



Violence Grows and Retailers Respond

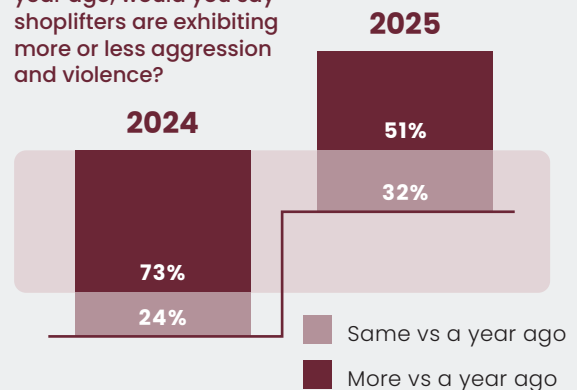
Retailers continue to report high instances of violence involving crime but also report an increase in various events involving other forms of violence or potential for violence.

In 2024, retailers continued to see the same or higher instances across most types of violence-related events in their organizations. Looking toward the next 12 months, retailers identified violence during a crime (17%), mass violence (11%) and guest violence (10%) as their top three concerns.

Please indicate whether the following violence-related events have occurred more or less frequently within your organization over the past calendar year (2024)	Less Frequent	About the same	More frequent
Homelessness – theft and violence	12%	49%	39%
Homelessness-involved business disruptions	13%	43%	43%
Employee travel safety concerns	16%	64%	20%
Guest-related violence	19%	35%	46%
Violence during a crime (including shoplifting)	21%	32%	46%
Employee-related violence	23%	47%	30%
Executive- or leadership-level threats	25%	45%	30%
Corporate, HQ, distribution or regional office threats or violence	28%	55%	17%
Brand-related threats	28%	60%	13%
Mass violence/active assailant	29%	46%	24%
Robbery	42%	48%	10%

In 2024, nearly three-quarters (73%) reported shoplifters were exhibiting heightened levels of aggression and violence. **There has not been significant improvement since.** While 17% report shoplifters are exhibiting somewhat less aggression and violence compared with a year ago, the vast majority (83%) of respondents say that levels of aggression and violence are the same or higher compared with last year.

Compared with one year ago, would you say shoplifters are exhibiting more or less aggression and violence?



Between 2023 and 2024, retailers that tracked these issues specifically saw a 17% increase in the total number of threats or acts of violence against employees involving shoplifting or theft events, and a 16% increase in incidents involving the threat, display or use of a weapon during a shoplifting or threat event.

Nearly all (91%) respondents say that violence-related theft has required them to increase employee training on workplace violence. Another 48% say that it has required them to implement measures that negatively impact the customer experience. And 35% say that they've experienced labor challenges due to the violence-related theft in their stores.

Retailers have increased safety measures involving various aspects of workplace violence, from threat identification to training. Management training (63%) and non-management employee training (60%) lead the list of increased measures to prevent and respond to retail violence. No retailers reported a decrease in safety measures to prevent workplace violence.

NRF and the NRF Foundation support retail loss prevention efforts in a variety of ways. In addition to the annual NRF PROTECT conference, there are ongoing advocacy efforts for a safe and secure retail environment, resources for implementing effective workplace violence prevention programs, and tools to help members with preparedness.

LPRC supports partnership engagement to prevent and respond to workplace violence. Through interactive and educational programs that include Integrate, the Voice of the Victim Initiative, and the Violent Crime and Organized Retail Crime summit, retailers, law enforcement and industry partners collaborate and share innovative solutions and approaches to mitigate the risks of retail violence.

Outside of any state-mandated requirements, has your organization increased or decreased any of the following safety measures to prevent various acts of workplace violence?	Same	More
Threat identification processes, structure or procedures	12%	39%
Threat reporting processes, structure or procedures	13%	43%
Threat assessment processes, structure or procedures	16%	20%
Management training on how to manage threats or violence	19%	46%
Employee training (non-management) on workplace violence prevention	21%	46%
Corporate or non-retail store threat prevention and training initiatives	23%	30%
Leadership- or executive-level threat or violence prevention	25%	30%
Global threat or travel-related threat or violence processes, structure or training	28%	17%

Retail Response to Product Protection

Retailers continue to explore measures to protect products from theft. Security requires a layered approach, based on analysis of loss by category, merchandise type and recorded incidents. Some security measures may be more prevalent in a particular retail segment, or in a retail format that sells specific categories of merchandise. Through all this, retailers also take into account the impact such measures can have on customer experience, keeping the customer's needs a priority.

Forty-two percent of those surveyed report that security measures and technology are the most effective tools for reducing losses related to external theft. It's no surprise, then, that interior and exterior security measures are the top LP-specific actions retailers have taken or are planning to take in the next 18 months in response to theft, violence and other crime in the areas around their stores.

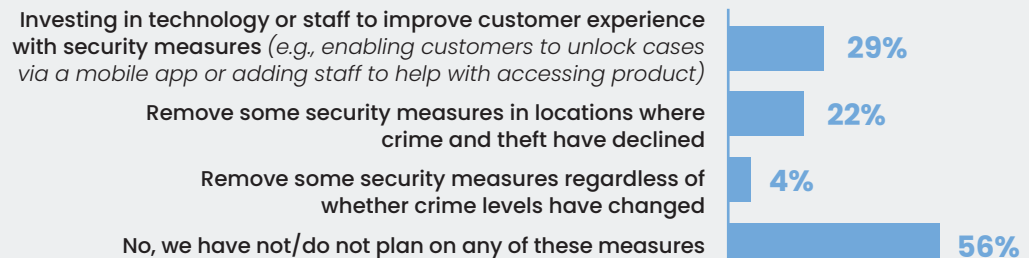
Based on current trends of theft, violence and other crime, did your organization/does your organization plan to increase or decrease any of the following LP- or security-related measures?	Increased last year	Planning to increase in next 18 months
Perimeter or exterior security measures (e.g., lighting, cameras, license plate readers)	61%	57%
Interior security measures (e.g., cameras, store layout)	53%	50%
Store- or employee-specific safety measures (e.g., panic buttons or emergency communications, body-worn cameras, remote CCTV view)	43%	46%
Employee training – theft deterrence	39%	45%
Merchandise protection measures (e.g., locks, cases, anti-sweep devices)	45%	41%
Item-level security measures (e.g., EAS or anti-theft tags, cables)	43%	38%
Employee training – theft apprehension or recovery	28%	37%
In-store LP personnel (e.g., detectives, agents, greeters)	34%	30%
Regional-based LP/AP personnel	24%	21%
Uniformed security officers or law enforcement presence in-store	29%	21%

Retailers are also taking or planning to take other actions in response; the most popular choices are alterations to the store design or layout, and removal of certain products. Nearly two-thirds (65%) made adjustments to their stores last year, and most (54%) plan to continue making adjustments this year.

Have you taken or do you anticipate taking any of the following actions because of theft, violence and other crimes in the areas around any of your store locations?	Action taken during calendar year 2024	Planning to for the current calendar year
Alter store design or layout to deter theft	39%	39%
Remove in-store product selection <i>(remove product from salesfloor or store entirely)</i>	37%	26%
Alter or remove customer purchase or payment options to reduce theft and loss <i>(e.g., self-checkout, BOPIS, mobile payment)</i>	17%	20%
Reduce store hours	24%	15%
Close store locations	20%	11%
No, we did/will not do any of these	35%	46%
Took action or planning to take action	65%	54%

Retailers are aware that these actions can impact the customer experience and keep this top of mind as they mitigate and monitor theft and violence.

Have you or do you plan on taking any of the following actions to improve the customer experience with regard to security deterrence measures in stores (e.g., locked product or anti-theft tags)?



Other findings pertaining to widespread use of security measures, results and budget allocation are as follows.

Retailers continue to implement their most widespread in-store security measures. (See appendix for full list)

- 64% of respondents report EAS, ink, spider wraps or other item theft deterrence tags appear in at least half of their stores, up from 57% in 2023
- 47% of respondents report merchandise-locking cages, cases or hooks appear in at least half of their stores, up from 41% in 2023
- 24% of respondents report item-level inventory identification appear in at least half of their stores, up from 16% in 2023

According to respondents, the most effective measures for reducing theft are security measures (e.g., locking fixtures or anti-theft devices) and technology (e.g., cameras), followed by training or changes in store procedures. Other strategies such as increased security or LP personnel were also identified by respondents as effective in reducing external theft.

From a resource perspective, budgets remained the same or increased in the past year for both internal and third-party asset protection resources. For 93% of respondents, budget allocation for internal payroll for regional or corporate personnel stayed the same or increased, followed by internal payroll for in-store asset protection personnel (89%). Third-party security officer budgets decreased for 25% of respondents; 44% report keeping security officer budgets the same, and 31% are increasing the budget.

Budget allocations for security hardware equipment (100%), software technology (100%) and physical assets (98%) to secure product remained the same or increased in the past year. More than half (56%) of respondents report an increase in budget for software technology to reduce theft, violence or fraud, with 49% increasing hardware technology.

Retailers are maintaining or increasing employee training against theft. Thirty-six percent of respondents increased their training related to loss prevention. No retailers reported decreasing their employee training efforts against theft, loss, violence or fraud.



Emerging Technologies

Technologies like artificial intelligence, body-worn cameras and facial recognition are part of regular discussions across the retail asset protection community. The retail industry is a technology leader, and that remains true when it comes to keeping people safe and product secure.

We asked respondents where they are in various stages of reviewing or implementing specific emerging technologies; many of these technologies remain in early stages of private-sector use, while others are more familiar to retailers.

	Never considered	Researching	Researched, chose not to implement	Piloting or testing	In progress	Fully operational
Advanced weapon detection software (<i>AI, thermal</i>)	41%	28%	13%	11%	2%	4%
AI-capable POS/data analytics software	11%	43%	7%	9%	11%	20%
AI-based suspicious behavior detection CCTV software (<i>e.g., violence or theft</i>)	25%	45%	11%	11%	5%	2%
AI-based ecommerce fraud detection analytics	27%	39%	2%	2%	9%	20%
Autonomous security robots	75%	16%	5%	5%	-	-
Body-worn cameras	35%	30%	19%	7%	7%	2%
Customer-accessible merchandise locks or cases	53%	23%	7%	2%	5%	9%
Facial recognition	28%	26%	28%	9%	2%	7%
Gunshot detection	40%	26%	19%	9%	-	7%
License plate recognition software	26%	36%	12%	12%	2%	12%
Multi-sensor parking lot or curbside surveillance towers/mobile units	52%	12%	5%	10%	2%	19%
RFID systems – inventory control	21%	31%	10%	7%	14%	17%
RFID systems – benefit denial (<i>loss prevention</i>)	31%	29%	7%	17%	10%	7%
RFID smart exit technology	33%	38%	10%	7%	5%	7%
RFID/EAS integration	38%	36%	10%	2%	7%	7%
RFID/POS integration	29%	40%	10%	5%	5%	12%
RFID or digital item identification tagging	33%	26%	12%	7%	7%	14%
Pushout/cart or walkout prevention technologies	63%	5%	7%	5%	5%	15%

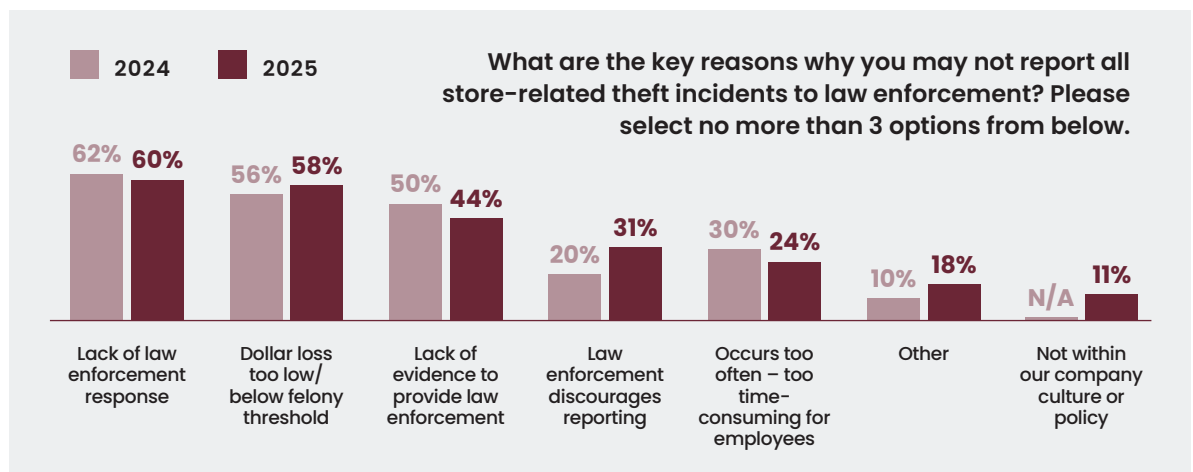
Implementing newer or emerging technologies often takes time and can come with challenges. The top three concerns identified were:

- Budget, internal resources or return on investment (50% of responses)
- Concerns with the impact on the customer (8%)
- Technology does not integrate with existing technologies (6%)

Reporting and Prosecuting Retail Theft

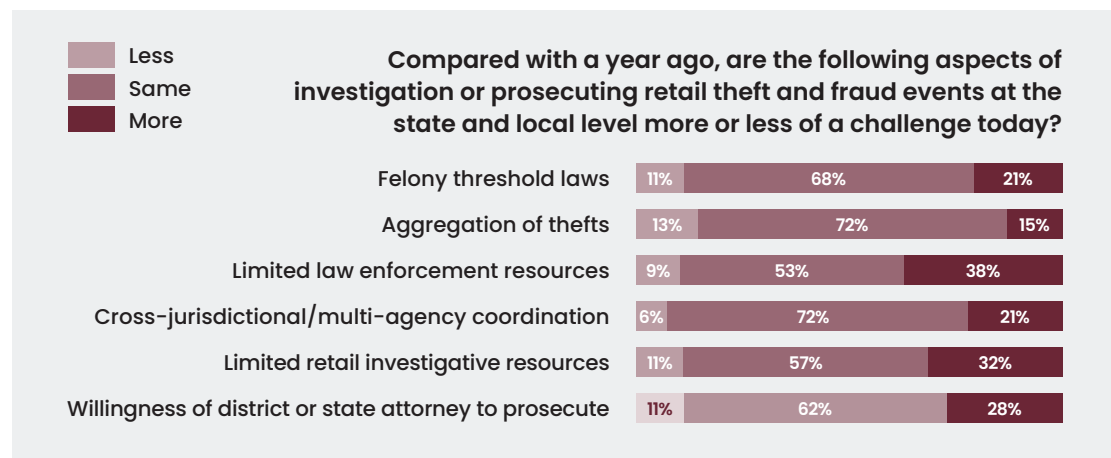
Retailers and law enforcement alike experience challenges in reporting, investigating and prosecuting retail crimes. No retailer, law enforcement agency or prosecutorial jurisdiction reports or manages theft incidents the same. Today there is also no singular, structured means of recording all incidents or loss.

The majority (64%) of retailers say that they reported less than half of their store-related theft incidents to law enforcement. Retailers state a variety of reasons for not reporting store-related theft. Lack of law enforcement response and dollar loss that's either too low or below felony thresholds top the list.



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Retailers state a variety of reasons for not reporting store-related theft. Lack of law enforcement response and dollar loss that's either too low or below felony thresholds top the list.



Organized Retail Crime

Retailers continue to show great concern over organized retail crime. They report that ORC groups have expanded their theft and fraud methods across the entire physical and digital environment.

ORC is not a singular event. ORC is a structured and organized effort of individuals, operating in concert to conduct various theft and fraud activities. These events can range from shoplifting to more sophisticated methods of online and digital frauds and scams.

Retailers report that various ORC-related theft and frauds have stayed the same or increased over the past 12 months. Phone scams and frauds (70%), digital and ecommerce frauds (55%), and shoplifting/merchandise theft (52%) lead the list of methods that have increased in the past year.

Over the past 12 months, have you seen an increase or decrease in the following methods of theft being conducted by organized retail theft groups?	Decrease	Stayed the same	Increase
Phone scams/frauds	13%	18%	70%
Digital/ecommerce fraud	5%	39%	55%
Shoplifting/retail merchandise theft	14%	34%	52%
Cargo/supply chain theft	3%	47%	50%
Delivery theft	3%	48%	48%
Gift card fraud and theft	15%	44%	41%
Quick-change schemes	10%	56%	33%
Merchandise burglaries	27%	43%	30%
Return/refund fraud	23%	54%	23%
Internal/employee collusion with ORC groups	14%	64%	21%

Retail asset protection teams regularly review incident data and video footage and share investigative information with law enforcement and peers. Factors often include:

- Scale of the theft: The type and quantity of items stolen per incident.
- Number of perpetrators and frequency: The number of people involved and how often they steal.
- Number of stores targeted: How many different store locations have been hit by the same individuals.
- Tools and methods of theft: The use of booster bags, distraction tactics or security tag removal devices.
- Coordination of thefts: Shoplifting with other known criminals or using similar vehicles.
- Evidence of reselling: Items being taken to a “fencing” location, storage facility or other coordinated drop-off point.

Retailers employ sophisticated strategies to distinguish ORC from individual acts of shoplifting, particularly theft committed out of personal need. The key difference lies not in the act of theft itself, but in the scale, methods and intent of the criminals.

ORC is rarely a one-person or one-time theft. Retailers go through time-consuming and detailed analysis to identify those involved in ORC. They collaborate with law enforcement, conducting lengthy and complex investigations, to disrupt and dismantle the larger criminal enterprises that orchestrate these thefts across their organizations.

Transnational nexus highlights a global issue. ORC groups are not entirely localized gangs or criminals stealing to sell at a local store or bodega, or online. Recent law enforcement investigations have helped illustrate the impact of transnational organized crime groups engaging in various organized retail theft and fraud schemes. Two-thirds (67%) of retail respondents recorded the involvement of a transnational organized theft group in thefts against their organization.

The investigation of ORC is a challenge for both retailers and law enforcement. It requires resources and considerable time for identifying suspects, conducting surveillance and gathering evidence. Many cases also demand coordination across multiple retailers, law enforcement agencies and jurisdictions.

Retailers were asked to select any and all of the following negatively impacting their ability to investigate or prosecute ORC activities:

- Limited law enforcement resources (selected by 57%)
- Limited asset protection resources – your organization (43%)
- Lack of prosecutors' willingness to prosecute higher level of crimes (43%)
- Felony threshold laws (36%)
- Lack of aggregating theft incidents to prosecute (32%)
- Lack of multi-agency intelligence and coordination (32%)
- Cross-jurisdictional thefts (30%)
- Inability to gain federal law enforcement support (23%)
- Transnational components of theft groups (25%)
- None of these apply to me (7%)
- Other (2%)

Progress has been made in the efforts to combat ORC. Many states have amended or created new laws. In addition, ORC taskforces and partnerships have been created with a focus on identifying and dismantling ORC groups, and some jurisdictions have altered prosecutorial changes with those involved in ORC.



Retailers were asked to select any and all of the following that have positively impacted their ability to investigate or prosecute individuals involved in ORC activities:

- New or amended state laws allowing for aggregation of retail thefts and/or prior offenses (selected by 44%)
- Increased law enforcement awareness to the issue and interest in ORC cases (42%)
- New or amended state laws providing penalty enhancements for retail theft (40%)
- Increased engagement with ORCAs, NRF ORC Network, CLEAR or other collaboration efforts (40%)
- Establishment of law enforcement taskforces (state, county or local) (37%)
- New or amended state laws establishing crime of “organized retail theft” (30%)
- Prosecutorial changes in ORC cases (e.g., interest, up-charging) (30%)
- Data-sharing platforms that share information between law enforcement and retailers (30%)
- New or amended state laws focusing on theft and resale of stolen goods (26%)
- Bail reform laws changes (e.g., reinstating cash bail, bail factors) (14%)
- Sentencing (7%)
- None of these apply to me (23%)

As ORC evolves, so do the cities, regions and states where ORC activity impacts retailers and communities. Respondents were asked to name their top 10 cities affected by ORC.

2025 Rank	City/Area	2024 Rank
1	Houston, TX	4
1	New York, NY	2
3	Los Angeles, CA	1
4	San Francisco, CA	3
5	Chicago, IL	5
6	Philadelphia, PA	9
6	Arlington/Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX	-
6	Las Vegas, NV	8
9	Baltimore, MD	-
9	Seattle, WA	-



Respondents also provided a list of those cities that may not be in their top 10 but are still areas of concern to their organizations for ORC activity. The list can be found in the appendix.

As for the products most often targeted by ORC offenders, the list may vary depending on the type of retailers responding to the survey. This year, the top categories according to dollar value lost (in alphabetical order) are:

- Apparel (*including denim and T-shirts*)
- Appliances
- Beverage products (*especially alcohol*)
- Electronics and their accessories
- Food products (*meat, seafood*)
- Fragrances
- Handbags and accessories
- Hardware and materials (*including flooring*)
- Health and beauty products
- Jewelry (*including gold and watches*)
- Laundry products
- Power tools and hardware
- Toys, games and collectibles

The retail industry continues to advocate for federal legislation and support in response to organized retail crime. Law enforcement investigations and prosecutions have shown that ORC groups often cross jurisdictions and state lines. Further, some groups engage in transnational and polycriminal activities.

The majority (80%) did indicate federal ORC legislation is needed to effectively combat organized retail crime. The most common themes for the need for federal ORC legislation include increasing cross-jurisdictional collaboration and consistency across data-sharing, investigations and prosecution. Those uncertain about federal legislation cite concerns about enforcement of any law and certainty that prosecutors will prosecute the law.



Next Steps in the Fight Against Retail Crime

This report provides insight into what retailers are doing to maintain a safe and secure shopping environment. Curtailing current levels and trends requires coordination and support from stakeholders across the nation as well as continued investment from the retail industry. Specifically:

Retailers need to continue to prioritize employee and customer safety, which includes protecting and securing merchandise for consumer availability. Invest in technologies that can improve overall inventory and theft management, help identify repeat offenders and measures that can deter theft and loss without greatly impacting the customer experience. Retailers should also continue to enhance training for employees, focusing on the various aspects of violence. Partnerships with law enforcement, other businesses and stakeholders are vital, as is the reporting of theft events and sharing intelligence to support investigations.

Law enforcement agencies need greater support and resources to effectively address retail crime, especially ORC. Continue to educate officers on the different indicators of ORC and various retail frauds. Dedicate resources to these types of crime, as they often involve complex, multi-jurisdictional networks. Build strong relationships with retailers and engage in area ORC associations and other jurisdictions for better information sharing. Communicate response capabilities and requirements with retailers in your community and educate retailers on how to escalate issues of violence for faster response.

Prosecutors, community leaders and legislators at all levels must stand behind and support retailers and law enforcement in their efforts. Continue to review, enact and enforce laws that:

- Elevate penalties for repeat offenders. Look at aggregation of stolen goods from multiple incidents or multiple victims to meet felony thresholds.
- Establish a clear definition for organized retail crime with state laws. Remember that ORC is not solely shoplifting – it can include various frauds (gift cards), cargo theft and other crimes.

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At the federal level, we urge Congress to pass national legislation like the Combating Organized Retail Crime Act (S. 1404 and H.R. 2853). This would establish a federal coordination center to streamline efforts among various agencies and the private sector, recognizing that ORC is a national and often international issue. By creating these frameworks, they can send a clear message that these crimes will not be tolerated.

To be successful, all stakeholders must present the right narrative to the public. First, educate the public on the realities of ORC, not just the sensationalized stories of smash-and-grab incidents. Highlight how ORC groups operate, their connection to serious crimes and the resulting impact on local communities. As consumers, we all play a critical part as well.

Educate consumers on avoiding the purchase of illicit goods from illicit marketplaces, non-branded retailers and online platforms. Recognize that branded goods available in high quantities or prices much lower than traditional retailers (online or retail location) is not commonplace and could be an indicator of reselling stolen goods. By creating demand for these stolen goods, consumers unknowingly fuel organized retail crime.

Only together, in a whole community effort, can our nation continue to provide a safe and secure retail economy.



About

About the National Retail Federation

The National Retail Federation passionately advocates for the people, brands, policies and ideas that help retail thrive. From its headquarters in Washington, D.C., NRF empowers the industry that powers the economy. Retail is the nation's largest private-sector employer, contributing \$5.3 trillion to annual GDP and supporting more than one in four U.S. jobs — 55 million working Americans. For over a century, NRF has been a voice for every retailer and every retail job, educating, inspiring and communicating the powerful impact retail has on local communities and global economies. [NRF.com](https://www.nrf.com)

About the Loss Prevention Research Council

The Loss Prevention Research Council was founded in 2000 by leading retailers and Dr. Read Hayes in an effort to support the evidence-based needs of loss prevention decision-makers. To date the LPRC has conducted over 400 real-world loss prevention research projects for retailers and partners.

The LPRC strives to provide comprehensive research, development opportunities, and collaborative spaces for our members that will enable the innovation of loss and crime control solutions.

The LPRC would also like to acknowledge the time and effort provided by Amelia Wiercioch, MA, and Sara Lucak, MS, from the University of Central Florida in the compilation of the annotated summary used in the creation of this report.

About Sensormatic Solutions

Sensormatic Solutions, the leading global retail solutions portfolio of Johnson Controls, powers safe, secure and seamless retail experiences. For more than 50 years, the brand has been at the forefront of the industry's fast-moving technology adoption, redefining retail operations on a global scale and turning insights into actions. Sensormatic Solutions delivers an interconnected ecosystem of loss prevention, inventory intelligence and traffic insight solutions, along with our services and partners to enable retailers worldwide to innovate and elevate with precision, connecting data-driven outcomes that shape retail's future.

Glossary of Terms

Apprehension Any incident where a retailer stops an individual suspect for a crime (theft of goods, violence against an individual, etc.) at the retail location.

Arrest Any incident where law enforcement makes an arrest or citation against the suspect for a crime (theft of goods, violence against an individual, etc.).

BOPIS / BORIS fraud BOPIS (buy online, pick up in store) and BORIS (buy online, return in store) fraud pertains to any type of fraudulent activity associated with those two purchase and delivery channels.

Burglary or break-ins An event where individual(s) enter a store during non-operating hours for the purpose of stealing goods or cash. See “ORC burglaries or break-ins” for a similar event supporting organized retail crime activities.

Cargo theft Reported and recorded incidents where merchandise is stolen prior to its arrival and inventory into a retail location somewhere along the supply chain.

Delivery fraud An event where an individual who is not the intended recipient of goods or packages acquires such goods or packages through a method of fraud.

Ecommerce theft and fraud Any type of fraud/theft that occurs through an online shopping environment or platform.

Employee-related violence Any kind of violent event in a retail environment that involves an employee.

Guest-related violence Any kind of violent event in a retail environment that involves a guest.

Homelessness-involved business disruptions When normal business activities are impacted due to an individual who, through knowledge or information by the retailer, is known to be unhoused.

Homelessness theft and violence An act of theft or violence committed by an individual who, through knowledge or information by the retailer, is known to be unhoused.

Internal theft An act of theft or fraud committed by a retail employee against their company or colluding with others to commit an act of theft or fraud.

Juvenile offender events All shoplifting and larceny events by an individual who, through knowledge or information by the retailer, is known to be under the age of 18 or appropriate legal state age of an adult.

Loyalty fraud Fraudulent acts where an individual, through cybercriminal activities like account takeover or false accounts, gains access to loyalty points or funds with the purpose of either using, selling or transferring those funds for the purpose of profit.

Mass violence/active assailant These events focus on violence (generally deadly force) directed toward multiple people.

Mob theft or multiple person grab-and-run thefts Larceny events where multiple people enter a retail location during operating hours and openly remove large amounts of merchandise in a mob-like fashion.

ORC burglaries or break-ins (merchandise-related) A burglary or break-in event, occurring during non-operating hours, which through investigation classified that the perpetrators may have been part of an organized retail group.

ORC shoplifting events Larceny or theft events at a retail location that, by the learnings, knowledge and information of the retailer, are viewed as an act involving an organized retail crime group.

Phone scams Criminal events where an individual calls a retail location or corporate entity, falsely identifying themselves as a person of power and authority to defraud the retail store or corporate entity of funds. Scams most often call for employees to take money and purchase gift cards to them provide to the bad actor.

Quick-change schemes A fraudulent activity where an individual, upon purchasing goods with cash, seeks to confuse the cashier during the process of providing change to obtain a higher value of change in return.

Repeat offender events Criminal events that take place against a single retail brand where it is determined that the same individual frequently is committing these crimes.

Return fraud This type of fraud occurs when an individual misuses the refund and/or return process associated with a purchase, often associated with the illegitimate acquisition of products or goods during a retail crime. This can include, but is not limited to, claiming a refund without returning the product and using fake receipts as part of a return.

Robbery An event where an individual uses fear, a threat or an actual act of violence (with or without a weapon) for the purpose of stealing money or goods from a retail store.

Smash-and-grab theft events These are larceny events that take place during operating hours where perpetrators vandalize, destroy or break displays or measures to secure the merchandise.

Shoplifting (excluding ORC events) The removal of a product and/or goods from a retail location without paying for them.

Violence during a crime The threat or actual act of violence by an individual against another person that occurs during the commission of a crime (e.g., shoplifting).

Additional Charts and Graphs

Figure A.1: Please indicate whether the following fraud-related theft and crime events have occurred more or less frequently within your organization over the past calendar year (2024).

Fraud-related theft events	Less frequent	About the same	More frequent
Phone scams	15%	23%	62%
Loyalty fraud	17%	37%	46%
Quick-change schemes	26%	33%	42%
Gift card-related thefts and frauds	25%	35%	41%
BOPIS / BORIS fraud	24%	36%	40%
Credit card-related thefts and frauds (<i>non-employee</i>)	15%	46%	39%
Ecommerce or delivery thefts and fraud	23%	43%	34%
Refund / return fraud	21%	48%	30%
Counterfeit currency	36%	51%	13%

Figure A.2: During calendar year 2024, did your organization increase or decrease any of the following LP or security-related measures because of theft, violence and other crime in the areas around any of your store locations?

	Decreased	Stayed the same	Increased
Perimeter or exterior security measures (<i>e.g., lighting, cameras, license plate readers</i>)	0%	39%	61%
Interior security measures (<i>e.g., cameras, store layout</i>)	0%	47%	53%
Merchandise protection measures (<i>e.g., locks, cases, anti-sweep devices</i>)	3%	53%	45%
Store- or employee- specific safety measures (<i>e.g., panic buttons or emergency communications, body-worn cameras, remote CCTV view</i>)	0%	57%	43%
Item-level security measures (<i>e.g., EAS or anti-theft tags, cables</i>)	5%	51%	43%
Employee training – theft deterrence	0%	61%	39%
In-store LP personnel (<i>e.g., detectives, agents, greeters</i>)	20%	46%	34%
Uniformed security officers or law enforcement presence in-store	23%	49%	29%
Employee training – theft apprehension or recovery	0%	72%	28%
Regional-based LP/AP personnel	12%	64%	24%

Figure A.3: Based on current trends of theft, violence and other crime, does your organization plan to increase or decrease any of the following LP or security-related measures over the next 18 months?

	Decreased	Stayed the same	Increased
Perimeter or exterior security measures (e.g., lighting, cameras, license plate readers)	0%	43%	57%
Interior security measures (e.g., cameras, store layout)	0%	50%	50%
Store- or employee-specific safety measures (e.g., panic buttons or emergency communications, body-worn cameras, remote CCTV view)	0%	54%	46%
Employee training – theft deterrence	0%	55%	46%
Merchandise protection measures (e.g., locks, cases, anti-sweep devices)	3%	56%	41%
Item level security measures (e.g., EAS or anti-theft tags, cables)	3%	60%	38%
Employee training – theft apprehension or recovery	0%	63%	37%
In-store LP personnel (e.g., detectives, agents, greeters)	3%	68%	30%
Regional-based LP/AP personnel	0%	79%	21%
Uniformed security officers or law enforcement presence in-store	18%	62%	21%

Figure A.4: Compared to last fiscal year, is your company increasing, decreasing or allocating the same amount of budget to support the current year?

	Decreasing	Staying the same	Increasing
Software technology solutions to reduce theft, loss, violence or fraud	0%	44%	56%
Hardware, equipment or technology to reduce theft, loss, violence or fraud	0%	51%	49%
Employee training related to workplace violence	0%	60%	41%
Employee training related to loss prevention	0%	64%	36%
Third-party security personnel (guards, off-duty, law enforcement)	25%	44%	31%
Physical assets or hardware to lock up or secure product	3%	70%	28%
Internal payroll for regional or corporate asset protection personnel	8%	73%	20%
Internal payroll for in-store asset protection personnel	11%	69%	19%

Figure A.5: Over the past two years, what are the top three security measures or initiatives you have implemented that have resulted in the largest recorded reduction of external theft-related shrink or loss?

Security measures and technology (e.g. product protection, locking fixtures, anti-theft devices, cameras, CCTV)	42%
Processes – training (e.g. general training, customer service and employee training)	19%
Processes – changes in existing procedures (e.g. pulling merchandise and add investigations)	15%
Increased personnel (e.g. guards, LP, AP staffing)	11%
Partnerships (e.g. law enforcement)	4%
Nothing	6%

Figure A.6: Over the past two years, what are the top three security measures or initiatives you have implemented that have resulted in the largest recorded reduction of internal theft-related shrink or loss?

Security measures and technology (e.g. exception-based reporting, cameras, CCTV)	37%
Processes – changes in existing procedures (e.g. additional or improved reporting, point-of-sales controls and data reporting, LP site visits or assessments)	24%
Processes – training (e.g. general training, consequences of internal theft, management training)	17%
Increased personnel (e.g. internal investigations or field AP)	5%
Partnerships (e.g. cross-departmental)	4%
Nothing	11%

Figure A.7: To the best of your knowledge, in calendar year 2024 what percentage of total store locations used the following security measures to protect employees, customers or products?

	0%	1% – 24%	25% – 49%	50% – 74%	75% – 99%	100%
EAS, ink, spider wraps or other item theft deterrence tags or measures	24%	7%	5%	0%	12%	52%
Merchandise locking cages, cases or hooks	30%	14%	9%	5%	9%	33%
Item-level inventory identification (RFID, digital ID)	67%	10%	0%	5%	0%	19%
Scan avoidance, item swapping or item accuracy technology (checkout)	84%	0%	5%	3%	8%	0%
Customer-activated case, shelving or product access	80%	8%	3%	3%	3%	5%
Pushout / walkout measures (e.g., shopping cart locks, receipt checking, exit gates)	71%	15%	5%	5%	5%	0%
License plate readers	78%	17%	0%	2%	0%	2%
Uniformed security or law enforcement presence	18%	68%	9%	0%	2%	2%
Body-worn cameras on store-based personnel	88%	10%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Mobile surveillance unit	74%	19%	5%	0%	0%	0%

Figure A.8: Are there any cities or areas within a state not listed above that you did not consider a concern for high theft and ORC prior to 2022? (Write up to 3 additional cities or areas.)

This list is broken down by concerning states, regions and cities. It should be noted that some of these were options provided in the previous question, but they are listed here for transparency.

States

- California
- Louisiana

Region

- Northern Virginia
- Washington, D.C. suburbs

Cities

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| • Albany, NY | • Flint, MI | • Norfolk, VA |
| • Allentown, PA | • Hartford, CT | • Philadelphia, PA |
| • Binghampton, NY | • Hobbs, NM | • Phoenix, AZ |
| • Buffalo, NY | • Honolulu, HI | • Portland, OR |
| • Burnaby, British Columbia | • Inglewood, CA | • Raleigh-Durham, NC |
| • Chicago, IL | • Lodi, CA | • Springfield, MO |
| • Dallas, TX | • Long Island, NY | • Stroudsburg, PA |
| • Denver, CO | • Minneapolis, MN | • Toronto, Ontario |
| | • Montreal, Quebec | • Worcester, MA |

