

Delaware State Police Offer Awareness and Prevention Tips Regarding Flash Mob Crime Sprees

Dover – The Delaware State Police are offering the following awareness and prevention tips in regards to a recent national and regional crime trend involving “Flash Mobs”. While there have been no reported incidents in Delaware this advisory serves as a pro-active measure to inform and educate both the employees of retail establishments as well as their customers.

In their inception “flash mobs” involved groups of people, organized via social media, who would gather in a public place to perform a dance or other innocent form of entertainment. Recently though, they have evolved into large groups who’s intent is to commit criminal acts, specifically large scale thefts, similar to “looters” in a civil unrest situation.

These mobs enter a business en-masse, gather as much merchandise as possible and flee prior to law enforcement arrival. Due to the size of these groups store employees are overwhelmed and are unable to offer any type of resistance. Nationwide there have been reported incidents involving groups ranging in size from as little as 10 to over 100 subjects, who entered businesses and fled with large quantities of merchandise.

While these tips are primarily directed towards business owners and employees, it is also useful information for consumers who might encounter one of these incidents. As with crime prevention and personal safety in general the most important factor in not being victimized is situational awareness, and if you “See Something-Say Something”.

If encountering one of these flash mob situations, personal safety is the primary objective, therefore it is not recommended that you attempt to intervene in order to recover property or to physically detain any of the subjects. It is recommended however, that you pass on any intelligence information that would be beneficial to the investigation, to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Any descriptions of involved subjects or associated vehicles is invaluable information. Don't be a victim, but do be a good witness.

The following is a basic list of tips in response to a flash mob incident:

- * Call 911 as soon as you recognize a possible criminally related flash mob event.
- * If appropriate notify mall or store security.
- * Notify adjacent businesses.
- * Obtain descriptions of those involved.
- * Attempt to identify leaders of the group. Anyone who might be giving orders or directing others on what to take or where to go.
- * Obtain descriptions of any associated vehicles.
- * Protect any physical evidence left behind.
- * Secure any video of the incident.

The following preventative measures are suggestions for retailers in order to avoid being victimized or to lessen the financial impact if an incident does occur at their business.

- * Ensure associates are aware of what is occurring not only on the interior of the business but have good sight lines of the exterior as well.
- * Be aware of large groups that are out of the norm for your

location.

- * Have an "Early Warning Communication System" in place among adjacent retailers.

- * Ensure an associate or manager is available to immediately secure the business if necessary.

- * Identify an associate who is responsible for immediately calling 911.

- * Ensure video surveillance is working properly and that someone is readily available to access footage for investigatory purposes.

- * Secure valuable or desirable items or make them less accessible.

- * Ensure good inventories to include quantities and serial numbers.

You can follow the Delaware State Police by clicking on:

[Delaware State Police Official Web Site](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Nextdoor](#)

Please tell us how we're doing via our [Citizen Satisfaction Survey](#).

Presented by Public Information Officer, Master Corporal Michael Austin

Released:071219 1500

-End-