

# CITY OF BARSTOW

CALIFORNIA

POLICIES and PROCEDURES MANUAL:

POLICE

Subject: UNSECURED BUSINESS

## INTRODUCTION

This policy is intended to be used as a basic guideline for field officers who, during the course of their duties, discover a commercial establishment unlocked or in some unsecured state (window open, door ajar, etc.).

For the purpose of this policy, an unsecured business is defined as a commercial establishment in an unsecured state during other than normal business hours.

Normally, unsecured businesses will be discovered by a patrol officer while making routine security checks, but some may be the result of a radio call.

## DEFINITION

Although what is considered "secure" largely depends on the individual officer's judgment, the following set of criteria is established:

The business establishment must be open or unlocked to the extent that it can be entered without physically altering any portion thereof. Screens on open windows should not be removed unless already unlatched, louvers should not be removed even if it is obvious that they are poorly installed or situated, and locks should not be manipulated or "slipped" even if they provide only minimum security.

If an officer finds an establishment that, in his opinion, lacks certain sound security measures, but would not meet the above established criteria for an open business, it is incumbent upon him to request that the Dispatcher notify the owner either by phone or by assigning an officer to advise him of the deficiency. Not only will this action deter a possible unlawful entry, but it will act as a valuable public relations tool.

## PROCEDURE

Officers must notify the dispatcher immediately upon discovering an unsecured business, giving the name and address of the establishment. A back-up unit will then be dispatched.

### Reference:

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If a building is found open and the officer is able to enter, he should attempt to determine if the building has been unlawfully entered prior to this arrival. If it has been unlawfully entered, he must notify the dispatcher of his findings, ask that the dispatcher determine ownership, and contact the owner. The officer must then make the necessary crime report. If no unlawful entry was made, the officer should ask that dispatch notify the owner or his representative of the unsecure premises and remain on-site until the owner or his representative appears. If the owner cannot be contacted or if the owner fails to appear within a reasonable time, the officer shall attempt to secure the premises before returning to patrol.

None of the above guidelines are meant to preclude an officer from using his initiative in apprehending a burglary suspect inside a building. Obviously when checking an open business, caution should be used until it has been definitely established that no danger exists.

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