

# Crime Prevention through Environmental Design: *Convenience Stores*

Updated April 2021

**NACS**



1. C-store Industry/Background
2. Validated Security Practices
3. If a Robbery Occurs
4. After the Crime
5. Other Crime Concerns
6. Your Robbery Deterrence Plan

# Half of America Shops at C-stores Every Day

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## Customer counts:

- One store per every 2,100 people
- 1,100 customers per store/day
- 165 million customers per day



## Segments:

- Approx. 1 in 7 in SNAP (46.5 million)
- 14.8% of workers are “shift” (Dept. of Labor)

# Why Late-Night Hours?

- Access to ATMs (35% of the ATM market)
- Fueling (80% of the fuels market)
- 24-hour kitchens (especially for shift workers)

## Reasons for Convenience Stores Being Open Late Hours *(multiple selections permitted)*

Sales justify it	68%
We feel it is what the community wants	64%
Allows us to best prepare for morning rush	48%
Enables us to accept deliveries at a less busy time	24%

*(Source: NACS 2014 retail member survey)*

# Who Are Late-Night Customers?

## 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Shift:

- 51% of protective service workers (police, fire, EMT, etc.)
- 28% of healthcare support workers (hospital, home care, etc.)
- 29% of transportation workers (truckers, delivery, etc.)
- 40% of those involved with food preparation/related occupations.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Customers Likely to be Served During Overnight Hours *(multiple selections permitted)*

Shift workers	95%
Police/other protective services	89%
Travelers driving long distance	63%
Hospital workers/visitors	57%
EMT personnel	50%
Taxi drivers	48%

*(Source: NACS 2014 retail member survey)*

# Robbery in Convenience Stores



- Convenience stores were the site of 14,426 robberies, or 6.6% of all robberies in the country.
- Another 3.2% of robberies were classified as “gas stations,” which are non-convenience store locations including gas stations only, truck stops or marine fueling locations.

# Murder in the United States



There were 13,874 murders in the United States in 2019

Of that total, 509 were associated with a robbery

# What Adult & Teens Robbers Assess

Factors	Adult Robbers Rank Order*	Juvenile Robbers Rank Order*
<b>What would be important to you if you were to rob a convenience store?</b>		
1. Escape Route	1	1
2. Amount of Money	2	2
3. Active Police Patrols	5	3
4. Anonymity	3	4
5. Armed Guards	4	5
6. Armed Clerks	6	6
7. Number of Clerks	9	7
8. Interference	7	8
9. Bullet Resistant Barriers	8	9
10. Alarm System	10	10
11. Number of Customers	11	11
12. Camera System	12	12
13. Video Recording	13	13
14. Unarmed Guards	14	14

\*Scale: 1=most important; 14=least important.

Source: *Teenage Robbers: How and Why They Rob*



# Adults Target Banks, Teens Target C-Stores

## Questions:

- Which locations you would consider robbing?
- How much do you think you would get?

Location	Adult Robbers		Juvenile Robbers	
	Rank Order	Median Dollars	Rank Order	Median Dollars
Armored Car	2	\$ 20,000	7	\$ 10,000
Bank Teller	1	\$ 5,000	4	\$ 5,000
ATM	8	\$ 500	5	\$ 3,000
Supermarket	4	\$ 3,000	12	\$ 1,000
Bar	7	\$ 550	9	\$ 600
Convenience Store	3	\$ 200	1	\$ 500
Liquor Store	5	\$ 500	2	\$ 500
Drug Store	10	\$ 400	6	\$ 500
Fast Food	9	\$ 300	11	\$ 500
Gas Station	6	\$ 250	3	\$ 475
Delivery Driver	12	\$ 100	8	\$ 300

Source: *Teenage Robbers: How and Why They Rob*

# Advice from Teen Robbers

<b>DO:</b>	<b>DON'T:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cooperate</li><li>• Give up the money</li><li>• Obey the robber's commands</li><li>• Keep your hands in sight</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Resist</li><li>• Talk</li><li>• Plead</li><li>• Stare</li><li>• Make any sudden movements</li><li>• Be a hero</li><li>• Chase or follow</li></ul>

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# Validated Security Practices

## 1. Minimize the reward

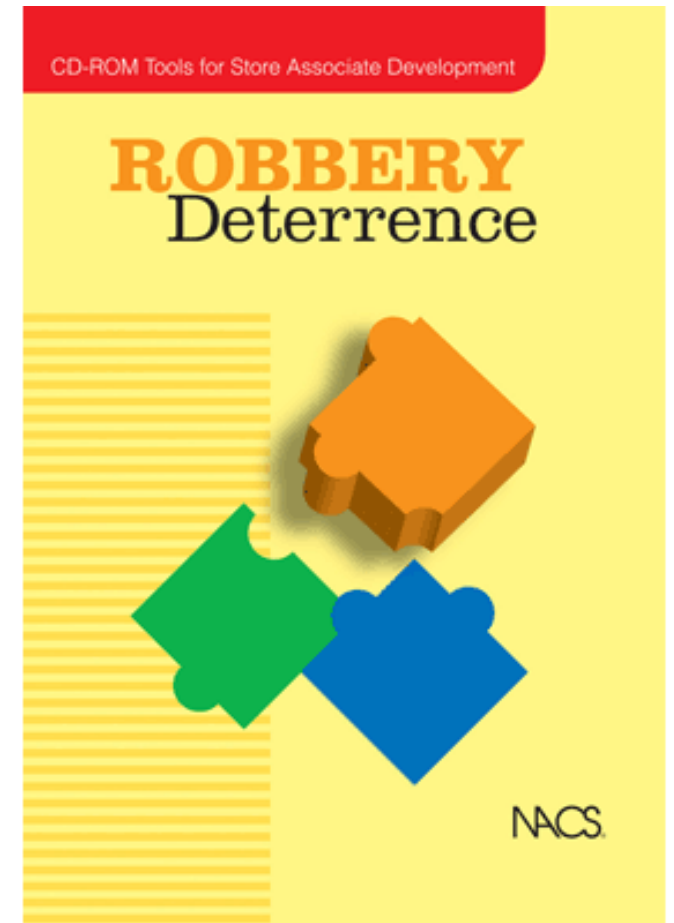
- Good cash control

## 2. Maximize the risk

- Adequate lighting inside and outside
- Maintain good visibility throughout the store
- Limit escape routes

## 3. Train employees/Involve law enforcement

- In safety and anti-violence measures
- Encourage regular visits



# Minimize the Reward: Cash Control

Cash control is how you handle money from the time it is given to you in a purchase until you deposit it in the bank

- Keep \$50 or less in the register
- Keep the register closed
- Use a time-release drop-safe
- Make the drops in plain view of customers
- Secure inventory (i.e., cigarettes)

**NO \$50'S**

**TIME LOCK SAFE—  
CLERK CANNOT OPEN**



# Minimize the Reward: Cash Control

- Drop large bills in the safe immediately. If you cannot make change, ask the customer to wait. If you do not accept large bills, explain this to customers and make sure signs are posted that communicate this message.
- Never hide change under the register, under the tray, or anywhere else.
- Never leave the cash drawer open longer than it takes to complete the transaction -- or turn your back on an open register. During busy transactions, such as lottery sales and money orders, it is critical to practice good cash control.
- Follow the cash control policy on how to use the safe that is in your store. When cashing out your drawer, always count the money in a private area. When making a deposit, put the money in a plain bag. Vary your routine and go to the bank at different times.

# Maximize the Risk: Lighting

- Effective lighting inside and outside
- Replace broken lights immediately



- Keep the store windows as clear as possible.
- The view from the register to the street should be open. Keep window signs to a minimum and place them below three feet and above six feet.
- Visibility inside the store should be clear as well. You should have a wide-open view from the register.



# Maximize the Risk: Visibility (do this)



# Maximize the Risk: Visibility (don't do this)

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- Greet your customers and let them know you are aware of their presence in your store.
- Stay active and alert. Even when customers are not in your store, it is important for you to get out from behind the counter and stay busy. This helps to discourage a potential robber.

# Maximize the Risk: Involve Law Enforcement

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- Encourage regular visits (free coffee, etc.)
- Avoid a routine
- Consider a substation

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Although you've done everything you can to help deter a robbery, there's always a chance that a robbery can still occur. You may be faced with the threat of violence. There are ways to avoid violence during a robbery.

1. Stay Calm
2. No Surprises
3. Cooperate
4. Be Aware

The first thing you should do in the event of a robbery is to stay calm. A robber is usually very nervous.

If you act nervous, it could make the situation worse and agitate the robber.

# If a Robbery Occurs: No Surprises

- Let the robber know if a co-worker is in the store or if a customer is coming into the store or entering the parking lot. Take the surprise away and you help avoid the potential for violence.
- If you are the “other” employee in the store, don’t intervene or try to play hero. Stay where you are, stay quiet and wait until the robbery is over. Do not activate any silent alarms or panic buttons unless you are being physically attacked.
- Never use a weapon. Police records show that convenience store employees have been injured during a robbery after they pulled out a weapon.



# If a Robbery Occurs: Cooperate

- Even if there is no weapon, give the robber what he wants. Do what you're told. Do not argue, stall or resist. A crime study found violence is 49 times more likely when resisting

*[Victim Injury and Death in Urban Robbery: A Chicago Study (Zimring & Zuehl)]*

- If the robber asks for the security video tape and you have access to it, give it to him. If you don't have access, make sure your store has signs posted making it clear to the robber that the video recorder is secure from everyone.
- Tell the truth if you are asked a question. If you are caught telling a lie, a robber might become angry or violent.

Nothing is more important than the safety of people

Money can be replaced

Goods can be replaced

- Be aware of what the robber looks like but do it safely.
- Do not stare, but try to remember a few characteristics of the robber so you can give the police a good physical description. For example, is he heavy, light, short, tall?
- Try to estimate his approximate height on the height markers as he leaves the store.

To minimize the likelihood of potential violence, cooperate with the robber and not resist in any way.

***There are two exceptions to this rule:***

1. Do not allow a robber to force you to leave the store. Police advise that you should stay inside the store if you can avoid leaving.
2. If you feel physically threatened or if you feel that your life is in danger, then you must do what you think is best. This could include fighting back or using any and all security resources such as a panic button. The decision is yours.

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# After the Crime

- Preserve the crime scene
  - Lock the door, don't touch evidence
- Manage the situation
  - Communicate with customers – but don't discuss the specifics
  - Record what you know

INCIDENT REPORTING FORM		
COMPANY/INCIDENT INFORMATION		
Person Reporting:	Company:	Report Date:
Location Address	Location City/State/Zip	Location Phone Number
Time: _____ a.m. / p.m.	Date Occurred: / / Day of Week (circle one): Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat Sun	<input type="checkbox"/> Convenience Store & Gas <input type="checkbox"/> Convenience Store Only <input type="checkbox"/> Gas Only <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
INCIDENT DESCRIPTORS		
List All Crimes Committed: <input type="checkbox"/> Robbery <input type="checkbox"/> Rape <input type="checkbox"/> Homicide <input type="checkbox"/> Assault <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	If robbery, how much from each? Cash Register \$ _____ Safe \$ _____ Merchandise \$ _____ Other \$ _____	Is there a security videotape of the incident? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  Were there any injuries? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Was the media present? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, who? _____	Vehicle? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Auto <input type="checkbox"/> Truck <input type="checkbox"/> Van <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ Model _____ Color _____	Were there any hospitalizations? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  Who was injured/hospitalized? _____
VICTIM(S)		
Victim #1 <input type="checkbox"/> Clerk/Attendant <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Customer/Witness <input type="checkbox"/> Suspect <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Age: _____ Sex: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	Race: <input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> African American <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Victim #2 <input type="checkbox"/> Clerk/Attendant <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Customer/Witness <input type="checkbox"/> Suspect <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Age: _____ Sex: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	Race: <input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> African American <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
ALL PRESENT		
Employees on Duty: Number of Males _____ Number of Females _____ Names of Employees on Duty: _____ _____ _____	Customers/Witnesses Present: Number of Males _____ Number of Females _____ Names of Customers/Witnesses: _____ _____ _____	Suspects/Perpetrators Present: Number of Males _____ Number of Females _____ Names of Suspects/Perpetrators Present (if known): _____ _____ _____

- Lock the door and call the police. If there are other people in the store, tell them what you are doing. The robber may have an accomplice in the store, and this will give him a chance to leave.
- Be careful not to touch where the robber may have touched, so you can preserve fingerprints for evidence. This could include the door, the counter or even the cash register.
- Make sure you call 911 immediately. It helps to know your store's address and nearest cross street.

Take charge of what happens in the store until the police arrive.

- If there are customers who have witnessed the crime, make sure they're okay and ask them to stay.
- If a customer insists on leaving, try to get his name, address, and phone number so the police can interview him later.
- While you're waiting for the police to arrive, record everything you remember about the incident. Ask customers to do the same. Make sure everyone does it individually, not together.



Take charge of what happens in the store until the police arrive.

- The police will want any details you can remember, such as the robber's appearance, the type of car he may have had, a license plate, etc. Write everything down while the details are fresh in your mind.
- Do not discuss the robbery with anyone other than the police.
- Do not mention the amount of money that was taken. This could give incentive to other robbers. Conduct an audit and determine how much money was taken afterwards. You can decide later if and when that information will be released.

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1. Shoplifting
2. Theft
3. Customer Fights
4. Angry or intoxicated customers

# Other Crime Concerns: Shoplifting/Internal Theft **NACS**



C-store shrink was \$20,270/store in 2015

- Foodservice (\$8,759)
- Cigarettes (\$5,080)

Internal theft is a bigger problem than shoplifting

- Do not physically intervene/touch the person. Handle the situation professionally. Politely question the person. Do not accuse.
  - Sometimes customers will actually forget about an item they have picked up and placed in their pocket.
- If you are certain a person is shoplifting but the customer denies it, continue to be polite. Question him but do not physically intervene and never accuse. If he refuses to cooperate, follow your company policy to either call the police or complete a store incident report.
- If you're not sure that a customer has been shoplifting, still question him but be careful. You do not want to make false accusations. If a group tries to distract you while one person shoplifts, handle the situation in the same manner.

- **Gasoline theft** usually occurs when you're busy with other customers. If your store has an intercom, use it. Welcome each customer just as if he were entering the store. Let him know you are watching. Remember, keep the windows clear so you can have good visibility of the gas pumps.
- **Beer runs** can also occur when you're busy with customers. It is usually good to call the police in the event of a beer run because alcohol is involved. Make sure you complete a store incident report. Regardless of the type of shoplifting or theft you encounter, it is important not to be a hero. In most cases you can't stop it, and you should never take a risk.

# Other Crime Concerns: Flash Robs

Like “flash mobs,” flash robs involve a large group of people suddenly appearing – except their intent is to steal. They can be organized over the Internet, using social media like Twitter, or planned at some sort of large gathering. The National Retail Federation recommends:

- Consider re-positioning store employees near high-value items
- Instruct employees and customers to retreat into a secure area of the store
- Take mental notes of the offenders and the merchandise stolen
- Preserve areas touched by the offenders to help with collecting evidence
- Make security footage available for police



Do not physically intervene or try to stop the fight. You could get hurt in the process. Call the police and let them deal with it. Then complete a store incident report.

- In some cases, customer fights are staged to distract you while accomplices rob the cash register or shoplift large quantities of merchandise like beer or cigarettes.
- Your personal safety is more important. Play it safe and follow the rules.



# Other Crime Concerns: Angry/Intoxicated Customers **NACS**

- Angry or intoxicated customers can be dangerous. If you are a target, you must remain calm and follow the rules. In most states, it is against the law to sell alcohol to a customer who is clearly intoxicated. You may have to refuse a sale, which could make a customer extremely angry. Do not get pulled into the emotion no matter what happens.
- Do not physically intervene. When the customer leaves, try to get his license plate number. Then call the police and tell them you need to report a drunk driver on the road. If the customer won't leave and continues to threaten you, call the police immediately.
- Complete a store incident report. In cases such as these, incident reports could be important because the customer could be driving drunk. You need to keep track of the fact that you refused the sale and called the police.

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It is essential that you, your family members, and any other employees working in your store be adequately and properly trained in:

1. Robbery deterrence measures
2. How to avoid violence during a robbery
3. After the robbery
4. Other potentially dangerous situations

Treat robbers like your best customers: Give them what they want and get them out of the store quickly.

# Your Robbery Deterrence Plan: Maintain Records



Keeping track of crime and violent incidents at your store WILL PROTECT YOU.

OSHA describes the need in this way: “Good records help determine the severity of the risks, evaluate the methods of hazard control, and identify training needs.”

NACS SECURITY AUDIT / SITE SURVEY	
<b>STORE INFORMATION</b>	
Address _____	
Phone Number _____	
Manager _____	
Open 24 hours? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
How many employees on each shift? _____	
No weapons? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>CASH CONTROL</b>	
Is there a drop safe? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Other type? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are cash signs up? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are large bills being dropped? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is there less than \$50.00 in cash register? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is cash register drawer open when register not in use? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are safety measures in place for making bank deposits? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Armored car pickup? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>LIGHTING</b>	
Are indoor lights working properly? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is lighting adequate in parking and adjacent areas? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>VISIBILITY</b>	
Is cash register area visible from street? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is street and parking lot visible from cash register? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Mirrors? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Signs and merchandise not blocking window? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>Escape Routes &amp; Fencing</b>	
Is there adequate fencing? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is it in good repair? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are shrubs trimmed? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>Training</b>	
Have employees been trained? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Cameras/Videos? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are systems working? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are tapes being replaced regularly? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are signs up about not having access to video? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>EMERGENCY MEASURES</b>	
Are emergency telephone numbers posted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is there an accessible working telephone near register? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are all cash signs and decals up and readable? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>OTHER SECURITY MEASURES</b>	
Bullet-resistant barriers? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Door buzzers? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Alarms? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Personal or mounted? <input type="checkbox"/> Personal <input type="checkbox"/> Mounted <input type="checkbox"/> Both	
Working? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Police podium? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Other police relations? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Automatic door locking? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Pay Phones? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>CRIME &amp; NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS</b>	
Any violent incidents in the past 2 to 3 years at this location? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Please record) <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Level of crime activity in neighborhood — <input type="checkbox"/> high, <input type="checkbox"/> medium, or <input type="checkbox"/> low?	
Residential? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Commercial? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Graffiti? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Panhandling? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Loitering? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Prostitution? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Drug-dealing? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Litter? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Gang activity? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Location in relation to interstate or major thoroughfare? _____	

# Your Robbery Deterrence Plan: Other Suggestions **NACS**

- Integrate into daily procedures, such as checking lighting, locks and security cameras.
- Keep a minimal amount of cash in each register: less than \$50 in each register, if possible.
- Adopt proper emergency procedures for employees to use in case of a robbery.
- Establish a system of communication in the event of emergencies. You need access to working telephones and emergency telephone numbers should be posted by the phones.
- Keep doors locked before business officially opens and after closing time. In addition, the day's deposit or business receipts may be a prime robbery target at store opening or closing.
- Lock doors used for deliveries and disposal of garbage when not in use. Do not to unlock delivery doors until the delivery people identify themselves.
  - In some higher risk locations, trash removal activities should be limited to daylight hours.

- NACS Products
  - NACS e-Learning Modules (<https://www.convenience.org/Solutions/NACS-e-Learning>)
    - ***Robbery and Loss Prevention: Best Practices*** (<http://store.nacs-rto.com/robbery-and-loss-prevention-best-practices-c8.aspx>)
    - ***Safety & Security*** (<http://store.nacs-rto.com/safety--security-c14.aspx>)
- [www.convenience.org/Security-Safety](http://www.convenience.org/Security-Safety)
- FBI crime information and statistics at [www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov)
- OSHA: [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)
- Local police departments
- Insurance carrier