

## Reacting to a Pharmacy Robbery

Despite implementation of robbery prevention initiatives, pharmacies may still be the victims of robberies and break-ins. In the event that this occurs, it is imperative that all pharmacy staff are trained on what to do and how to react to such a situation. This resource is meant to provide tips on how to react to a pharmacy robbery. OPA acknowledges that many pharmacies may already have policies and procedures in place, and in the event of differences, pharmacy professionals should defer to their corporate, chain and/or store policies and procedures, and are encouraged to speak to their head offices, pharmacy managers and/or owners for further clarification as required. This resource may be used to supplement that information as applicable.

### During a Robbery

- › Remain calm
- › Do not make any sudden movements (if you need to make a movement, provide an explanation to the perpetrator)
- › Comply with the perpetrator's commands and do not provoke them
- › Only speak when spoken to and keep it short
- › Activate your alarm (e.g., a silent panic alarm) only if you can do so discreetly, otherwise it is best to wait until the perpetrator has departed
- › Assume all firearms or other weapons are real and loaded
- › Limit eye contact with the perpetrator
- › Gather and remember as much information as possible while maintaining your own safety (Figure 1):
  - Perpetrator characteristics: e.g., estimated or approximate age, weight, height, clothing, tattoos, scars, mannerisms
  - Description of weapon: e.g., revolver, knife, syringe with unknown liquid
  - Departure information: e.g., vehicle make and colour, license plate number, direction
- › Conceal your recognition of the perpetrator (in cases where you recognize them) during the robbery
- › Note if the perpetrator touches anything

## After a Robbery

- › Call the police immediately (even if an alarm has been activated): Dial 9-1-1 and provide the following:
  - Your name, telephone number and the address of the pharmacy
  - A description of the perpetrator(s), direction of travel, and vehicle information if one was used
  - Information on whether weapons were used
  - Information on whether any anti-theft devices were used (e.g., tracking technologies)
- › Secure the pharmacy
  - Close and lock all doors (place a sign on the door advising that the pharmacy is temporarily closed)
  - Ask all witnesses to wait until the police arrive
  - Block off areas where the robbery took place and do not touch or move anything
  - Save any note presented by the perpetrator (do not handle these or let others handle them)
- › Immediately write down all the details you can recall about the perpetrator/robbery (Figure 1)
  - To avoid bias, do not compare/discuss details with anyone else
- › Cooperate with the police
- › Provide staff with support and counselling as needed
- › Conduct a controlled substances inventory
  - Controlled substances losses must be reported to Health Canada within 10 days using the [Loss or Theft Form](#)

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

OPA would like to thank the Ontario College of Pharmacists for their contributions to review and inform the development of this resource.

### DISCLAIMER:

The Ontario Pharmacists Association (OPA) provides this material to pharmacy professionals for informational purposes only. It is intended to provide pharmacy professionals with general guidance on how to react to a pharmacy robbery. The information provided may not be comprehensive and does not replace professional judgement and responsibilities. It is provided without warranty of any kind by OPA and OPA assumes no responsibility for any errors, omissions or inaccuracies therein. The decision for use and application of this document is the responsibility of the user. OPA assumes no liability for such use and application or any resulting outcomes. It is the responsibility of the pharmacy professional to use professional judgment in evaluating this material in light of any relevant situational data. It is intended to supplement materials provided by regulatory authorities, and should there be any discrepancies, municipal, provincial, and federal laws, policies and guidelines shall prevail. This information is up to date as at the date of publication. Pharmacy professionals are encouraged to use other resources that are appropriate and available to them.

### REFERENCES:

- i. Toronto Police Service. (n.d). *Robbery prevention*. Accessed July 7, 2022. <https://torontopolice.on.ca/crimeprevention/robbery.php>
- ii. College of Pharmacists of Manitoba. (2014, December). *Procedures in the Event of a Robbery or Burglary*. Accessed July 7, 2022. <https://mpha.in1touch.org/uploaded/web/Guidelines/Procedures%20in%20the%20Event%20of%20a%20Robbery%20or%20Burglary%20Updated%20December2014.pdf>
- iii. Ontario College of Pharmacists. (2018, February 15). Safety and Security for Pharmacies: Preventing Robberies. *Pharmacy Connection, Winter 2018*. <https://pharmacyconnection.ca/safety-and-security-for-pharmacies-winter-2018/>
- iv. Ontario Pharmacists Association. (2019, August 13). *Guidelines for Ensuring the Safety and Security of You and Your Staff in the Pharmacy*.

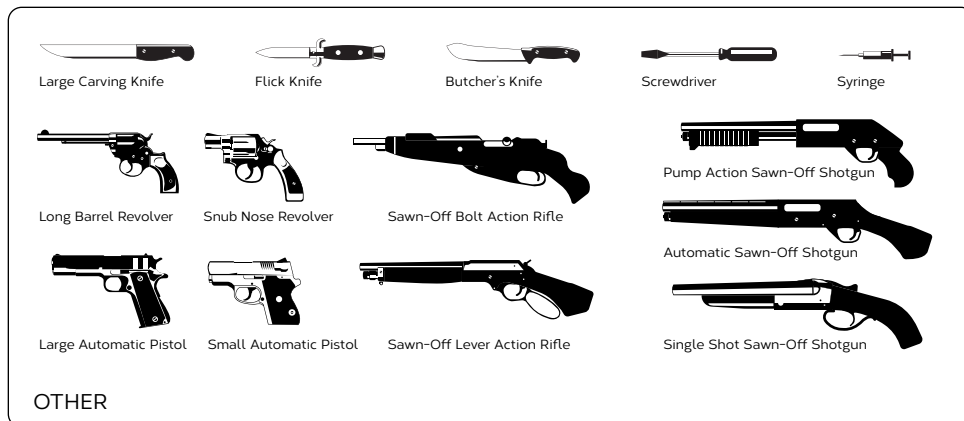
**Date Created: July 7, 2022**

**Figure 1.** After a robbery, notify police and fill in the blanks with as much information/detail as possible. (If more than one perpetrator, fill out a separate form for each.) Give one copy to the first police officer on the scene. Retain a photocopy for the pharmacy.

**TIME OF EVENT**

GENDER	RACE	AGE	DISGUISE
HAIR (COLOUR, LENGTH, STYLE)		HAT (COLOUR, TYPE)	
EYES		ACCESSORIES (NECKLACE / PIERCINGS / RINGS)	
GLASSES TYPE		COAT	
TATTOOS		SHIRT	
SCARS / MARKS		PANTS / BOTTOMS	
COMPLEXION		SHOES	
HEIGHT		WEIGHT / BUILD	VEHICLE DESCRIPTION (LICENSE NUMBER, MAKE, COLOUR, DIRECTION OF TRAVEL, NUMBER OF OCCUPANTS)
		OTHER (ANY ADDITIONAL DETAILS)	

**Common Weapon Types**



**What Perpetrator Said**