

2001
NATIONAL RETAIL
SECURITY SURVEY

FINAL REPORT

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Security Research Project

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INTRODUCTION

Retail loss prevention executives engage in a constant battle to detect and prevent inventory shrinkage. Shrinkage (or shortage) are the financial losses attributable to a combination of employee theft, shoplifting, administrative error, and vendor fraud. In order to overcome the problems associated with shrinkage, loss prevention directors must possess accurate information regarding the prevalence of the problem, sources of the loss, obstacles other firms encounter, as well as a way to identify and employ "best practice" strategies. The National Retail Security Survey (NRSS) is intended to provide loss prevention executives with the most current market-specific information to assist in their continuing efforts to limit inventory shrinkage and financial losses.

The 2001 National Retail Security Survey (NRSS) is the tenth in a decade-long series of annual, industrywide empirical research studies beginning in 1991 that have focused on retail loss prevention and retail store security activities.

RESPONDING RETAILERS

During the past year we received anonymous questionnaire responses from 120 retail companies representing 20 different retail markets. The retail firms participating in the survey represent virtually the entire retailing industry with the intentional exclusion of restaurants, bars, motor vehicle dealers, auto service stations, direct catalog sale outlets, and internet "etailers." The reader should note that the total number of respondents for the 2001 survey was significantly lower than in previous years. For example, the 2000 NRSS survey included 199 different retail companies and the 1998 NRSS survey received responses from 200 companies. We speculate that the lower response rate for this year's survey may be related to the economic recession and the associated hardships experienced by the entire retail industry during the calendar year 2001. Moreover, an examination of returned questionnaires indicates that an unprecidented number of retail establishments filed for bankruptcy or went out of business in the past year. Finally, the turnover in senior loss prevention executives was also particularly high during the past year. This means that our mailing list was not always able to reach the correct person to complete the NRSS questionnaire, exacerbating an already difficult situation.

The type of retail store chains that most frequently responded to this year's survey included women's apparel, (14), department (11), home centers/hardware/garden (10), discount (9), drug (9), and sporting goods (8) stores. Other vertical markets participating at somewhat lower levels were cards/gifts/novelties (6), consumer electronics/appliances (6), jewelry (6), recorded music/videos (6), other apparel (6), shoes (5), supermarket/grocery (5), household furnishings (4), men's apparel (4), children's apparel (4), and books & magazines (3) stores. The remaining vertical market segments were represented by one firm each: cameras/photography (1), office supplies/stationery (1), and optical (1). (Due to only one respondent, summary statistics were not calculated for the above types of retailers.)

LEVELS OF INVENTORY SHRINKAGE

The principal objective of the NRSS each year is to ascertain the level of inventory shrinkage experienced by various types of firms within the retail industry. Relying on data collected from calendar year 2000, the 120 responding firms reported an average shrinkage rate equaling 1.80% of total annual sales. This figure is significantly higher than the 2000 NRSS shrinkage rate of 1.69%. In fact, the 2001 shrinkage rate marks the highest rate since 1996 when inventory shrinkage was reported at 1.87%.

The overall average (mean) shrinkage percentage has remained relatively stable over the past decade. In fact, this past year's level was almost the same rate as when we started the study in 1991 — 1.79%. Since then we reported a shrinkage rate of 1.91% during 1992, down slightly to 1.88% for 1993, increasing in 1994 to 1.95%, decreasing again in 1995 to 1.83%, rising to 1.87% in 1996, down to 1.77% in 1997, dropping further in 1998 to 1.72%, falling to its lowest rate at 1.69% for 2000, and then back up to 1.80% for 2001.

Assuming a retail base of \$1.845 trillion in annual sales for the retail sectors surveyed in this study, this translates into an approximately \$33.21 billion annual loss as a result of inventory shrinkage.

There was some significant variation observed among the various market segments included in the study. For example, above average shrinkage percentages were reported by "Other" Apparel (2.97%), Cards/Gifts/Novelties (2.66%), Shoes (2.46%), Men's

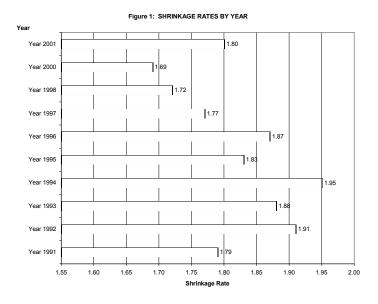
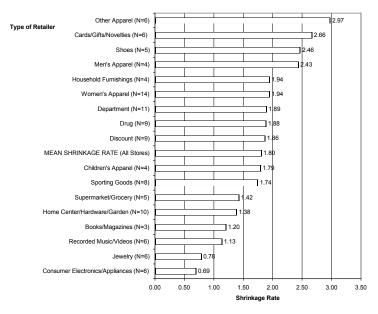


Figure 2: SHRINKAGE RATE BY RETAIL MARKET SEGMENT

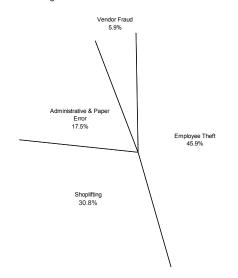


Apparel (2.43%), Household Furnishings (1.94%), Women's Apparel (1.94%), Department (1.89%), Drug (1.88%), and Discount (1.86%) stores. Below average shrinkage percentages were reported by Children's Apparel (1.79%), Sporting Goods (1.74%), Supermarket/Grocery (1.42%), Home Centers/Hardware/Garden (1.38%), Books & Magazines (1.20%), Recorded Music/Videos (1.13%), Jewelry (.78%), and last, Consumer Electronics/Appliances (0.69%) chains.

SOURCES OF INVENTORY SHRINKAGE

A second major objective of the NRSS is to measure the perceived sources of inventory shrinkage as appraised by corporate retail loss prevention managers. Inventory shrinkage refers to loss caused by a combination of different sources including employee theft, shoplifting, administrative error, and vendor fraud. In most cases of shrinkage, there is not an exact or definite audit trail, so loss prevention executives must make "after-the-fact" educated guesses to estimate how their inventory losses occurred. While such guesses are undoubtedly affected by personal biases, nevertheless, loss prevention executive opinions are very useful because of their intimate knowledge concerning problems related to shrinkage. While not nearly perfect estimates, these educated guesses are the single best source of information that one can obtain regarding where missing inventory in the retail store most likely ends up. Among the four sources of inventory shrinkage, retailers attributed 45.9% of their company's losses to employee theft, 30.8% to shoplifting, 17.5% to administrative error, and 5.9% to vendor fraud.





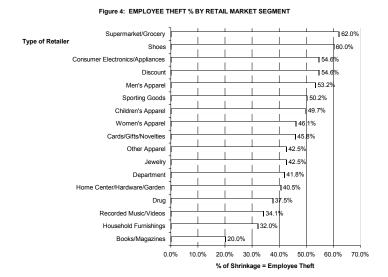
Employee Theft

Consistent with previous NRSS studies, loss prevention executives again indicated that they believed employee theft to be their most significant source of inventory shrinkage. Specifically, retailers attributed 45.9% of inventory shrinkage to employee theft, the highest figure yet observed in the ten-year history of the National Retail Security Survey. The 2001 proportion of inventory shrinkage thought to be the result of employee theft is up 1.4 percentage points from the previous record high figure of 44.5% observed in the 2000 NRSS. Assuming a total shrinkage dollar total of \$33.21 billion, this translates into an annual

employee theft cost equaling \$15.243 billion. The reader should be aware that there is no other form of larceny that annually costs the American public more money than employee theft.

The types of retailers that reported the greatest problems with employee theft included (in rank order): Supermarket/grocery (62.0%), Shoes (60.0%), Consumer electronics and appliances (54.6%), Discount (54.6%), Men's apparel (53.2%), Sporting goods (50.2%), Children's apparel (49.7%), and Women's apparel (46.1%) stores. All eight of these market segments experienced employee theft levels above the industry-wide average.

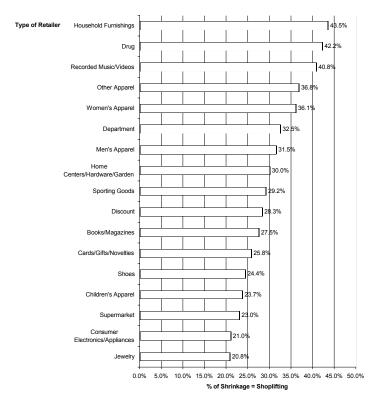
Estimates of employee theft which were below the overall average included the following market segments (also presented in rank order): Cards/gifts/novelties (45.8%), Jewelry (42.5%), Other apparel (42.5%), Department (41.8%), Home center/hardware/garden (40.5%), Drug (37.5%), Recorded music/videos (34.1%), Household furnishings (32.0%), and last Books & magazine (20.0%) retailers.



Shoplifting

The second most important source of inventory shortage was again reported to be shoplifting. In the calendar year of 2002 retailers attributed 30.8% of their company's loss to shoplifting. When this number is compared to last year's survey, losses attributable to shoplifting fell 1.9 percentage points (from 32.7% in NRSS 2000). These data indicate that while shoplifting comprised a lower inventory shrinkage total than

Figure 5: SHOPLIFTING % BY RETAIL MARKET SEGMENT



employee theft, stealing by shoppers still cost American retailers an impressive \$10.23 billion.

Retail chains that reported estimates of shoplifting above the overall average included: Household furnishings (43.5%), Drug (42.2%), Recorded music/videos (40.8%), Other apparel (36.8%), Women's apparel (36.1%), Department (32.5%), and Men's apparel (31.5%)stores.

Estimates of shoplifting which were below the average were: Home centers/hardware/garden (30.0%), Sporting goods (29.2%), Discount (28.3%), Books & magazines (27.5%), Cards/gifts/novelties (25.8%), Shoes (24.4%), Children's apparel (23.7%), Supermarket (23.0%), Consumer electronics/appliances (21.0%), and Jewelry (20.8%) chains.

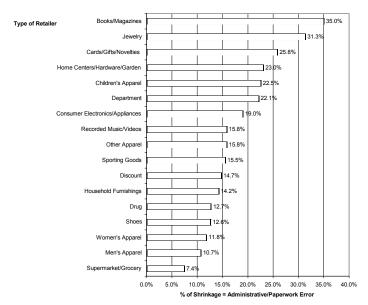
Administrative and Paperwork Error

While employee theft and shoplifting are the largest inventory shortage problems, there are other sources of loss in the retail store. For example, shrinkage related to administrative and paperwork error was virtually identical to the 2000 figure of 17.5%. These are losses are largely due to pricing errors, such as markup and markdown errors. Retail market segments that reported estimates of administrative and paperwork error above the overall average of 17.5% included: Books & magazines (35.0%), Jewelry (31.3%), Cards/gifts/novelties (25.8%), Home

centers/hardware/garden (23.0%), Children's apparel (22.5%), Department (22.1%), and Consumer electronics/appliances (19.0%) stores.

Estimates of administrative and paper error below the average were: Recorded music/videos (15.8%), Other apparel (15.8%), Sporting goods (15.5%), Discount (14.7%), Household furnishings (14.2%), Drug (12.7%), Shoes (12.6%), Women's apparel (11.8%), Men's apparel (10.7%), and Supermarket/grocery (7.4%) chains.

Figure 6: ADMINISTRATIVE ERROR % BY RETAIL MARKET SEGMENT

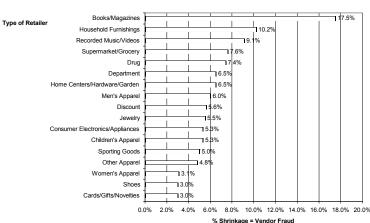


Vendor Fraud

Although important, losses due to vendors stealing merchandise while in the store stocking shelves was again the smallest form of inventory shortage. Losses due to vendor fraud increased almost a percentage point, from 5.1% in last year's study to 5.9% in the 2001 NRSS.

Companies that reported the highest estimates of vendor fraud included: Books & magazines (17.5%),

Figure 7: VENDOR FRAUD % BY RETAIL MARKET SEGMENT



Household furnishings (10.2%), Recorded music/videos (9.1%), Supermarket/grocery (7.6%), Drug (7.4%), Department (6.5%), Home centers/hardware/garden (6.5%), and Men's apparel (6.0%).

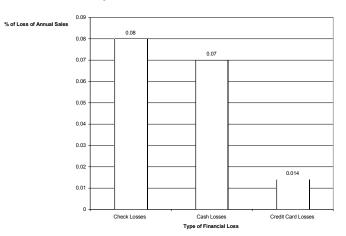
Estimates of vendor fraud reported to be below the industry average included: Discount (5.6%), Jewelry (5.5%), Consumer electronics/appliances (5.3%), Children's Apparel (5.3%), Sporting goods (5.0%), Other apparel (4.8%), Women's apparel (3.1%), Cards/gifts/novelties (3.0%), Shoes (3.0%).

CHECK, CASH, AND CREDIT CARD LOSSES

Inventory shortage is not the only way that retail stores lose valuable assets. Another focal point of the NRSS has been to document the amount of check, cash, and credit card loss that retailers experience within a given year.

For the 2000 calendar year, retailers reported that check losses totaled .08% of annual sales. This figure is significantly lower than last year's reported check loss, representing a .59 percentage point decrease compared to the 2000 NRSS total of .67% of sales.

Figure 8: CHECK, CASH, & CREDIT CARD LOSSES



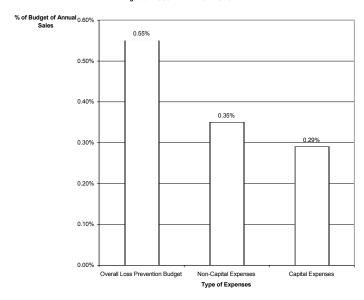
The second most important source of financial loss was cash shortage which amounted to .07% of annual sales. This is a .06 percentage point decrease from the 2000 NRSS total of .13%.

Finally, the least serious source of financial loss was credit card chargeback loss, accounting for .014% of annual sales. Compared to the 2000 NRSS total of .23%, this year's figure represents a significant decrease in credit card loss.

Loss Prevention Budget

We also measured corporate commitment to loss prevention by examining the level of financial resources committed to controlling losses in the retail store.

Figure 9: LOSS PREVENTION BUDGET



Survey respondents indicated the average budget for security and loss prevention was .55% of their 2000 annual sales. This figure is significantly lower than the .79% figure reported by retailers in last year's NRSS survey.

Approximately .35% percentage points of the security and loss prevention budget was spent on non-capital expenses (e.g. payroll), while .29% percentage points of the security and loss prevention budget was used for capital expenses (e.g. security equipment). The 2001 non-capital expenses represents a .18% percentage points decrease from the 2000 figure of .53%, while the 2001 capital expenses indicates a .08% increase from the 2000 NRSS figure of .21%.

Loss Prevention Department Personnel

Another indication of corporate commitment to preventing inventory shrinkage is the number of loss prevention employees used throughout the entire company and within a typical store. For the 2001 NRSS, responding stores indicated that an average of 97.5 loss prevention employees worked throughout the total company. There were approximately 34.9 "exempt" (e.g. managerial) loss prevention employees within the total company and 70.4 "non-exempt" (e.g. detective) loss prevention employees within the entire company.

In terms of loss prevention employees within a typical store, the 2001 NRSS indicated there were 1.8 loss prevention employees working in a typical store. There were .5 "exempt" loss prevention employees in a typical store and 1.4 "non-exempt" loss prevention employees in a typical store.

Figure 10: LOSS PREVENTION PERSONNEL - TOTAL COMPANY

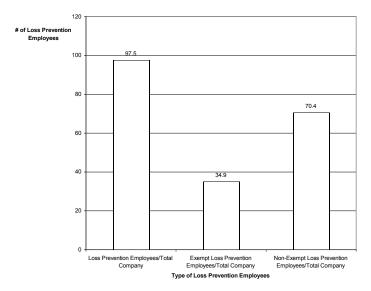
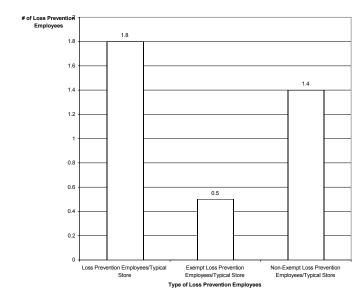


Figure 11: LOSS PREVENTION PERSONNEL - TYPICAL STORE



LOSS PREVENTION STRATEGIES

To investigate how retail firms attempted to minimize their losses, we examined a total of 69 different loss prevention strategies grouped into four major categories. The four loss prevention strategy categories include: pre-employment integrity screening measures, employee awareness programs, asset control policies, and loss prevention systems.

A. Employee Integrity Screening Measures

All 14 of the pre-employment integrity screening measures were utilized by at least one company. The most popular pre-employment screening measures included verification of past employment history (81.7%) and criminal conviction checks (80.8%), respectively.

Two of the 14 screening measures were used by approximately three-quarters of the companies including: multiple interviews (75.8%) and personal reference checks (71.7%).

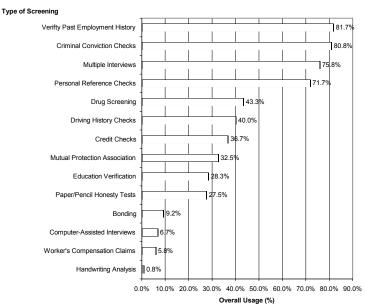
Another six (6) of the 14 pre-employee integrity screening measures were utilized by at least 25% of the companies including drug screening (43.3%), driving history checks (40.0%), credit checks (36.7%), mutual protection association (32.5%), education verification (28.3%), and paper and pencil honesty tests (27.5%).

There was considerable difference in the use of preemployee integrity screening measures depending upon whether the hire was for management, nonmanagement, or a professional-level job position. Companies used an average of 4.9 employee integrity screening measures for managers, 3.8 measures for non-managers, and 1.3 measures for professionals.

For managers, the most frequently used integrity screening measure was the verification of past employment history (80.8%), followed by the use of multiple interviews (75.0%), criminal conviction checks (73.7%), personal reference checks (66.7%), drug screening (35.8%), credit checks (35.0%), driving history checks (31.7%), mutual protection association (30.8%), education verification (24.2%), paper and pencil honesty tests (21.7%), bonding checks (9.2%), computer assisted interviews (5.8%), worker's compensation claims (5.8%), and handwriting analysis (0.8%).

The most commonly used pre-employment integrity screening measure for non-managers was also the verification of past employment (73.3%), followed by personal reference checks (62.5%), use of multiple interviews (51.7%), criminal conviction checks 43.3%),

Figure 12: PRE-EMPLOYMENT SCREENING MEASURES



drug screening (35.0%), mutual protection association (31.7%), paper and pencil honesty tests (25.0%), driving history checks (19.2%), credit checks (15.8%), education verification (8.3%), bonding checks (5.8%), worker's compensation claims (5.8%), computer assisted interviews (5.8%), and handwriting analysis (0.8%).

Finally, for professionals, the most frequently used integrity screening measure was again the verification of past employment (24.2%), followed by personal reference checks (21.7%), use of multiple interviews (20.8%), criminal conviction checks (16.7%), drug screening (13.3%), education verification (9.2%), driving history checks (7.5%), credit checks (6.7%), mutual protection association (3.3%), paper and pencil honesty

Figure 13: # OF SCREENING MEASURES USED BY POSITION

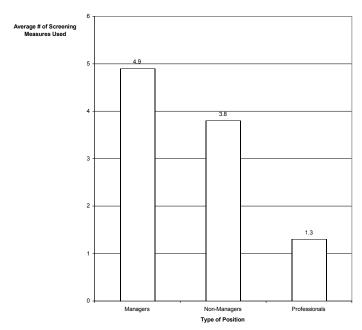


Figure 14: INTEGRITY SCREENING MEASURES USED FOR MANAGERS

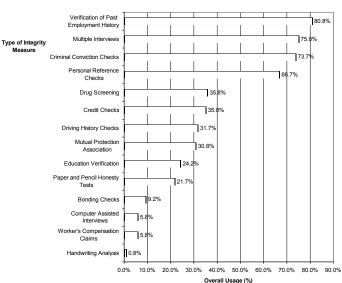
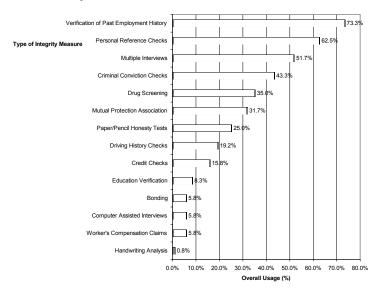
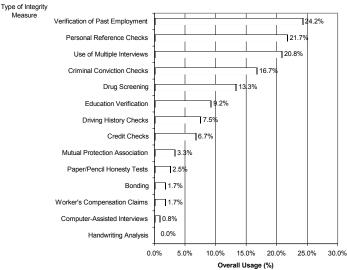


Figure 15: INTEGRITY SCREENING MEASURES USED FOR NON-MANAGERS





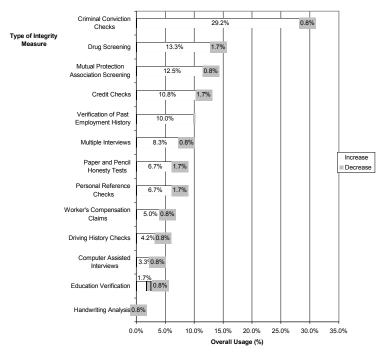


tests (2.5%), bonding checks (1.7%), worker's compensation claims (1.7%), and computer assisted interviews (.8%).

Twelve (12) of the 14 pre-employment integrity screening measures were slated for some level of increased usage for the upcoming year by at least one responding company. Five (5) of the 14 measures were slated for increased usage by at least 10% of the firms including: Criminal conviction checks (29.2%), drug screening (13.3%), mutual protection association screening (12.5%), credit checks (10.8%), and verification of past employment (10.0%).

Another four (4) of the pre-employment screening measures were slated for some level of increased usage by at least 5% of the responding firms including: multiple interviews (8.3%), paper/pencil tests (6.7%), personal reference checks (6.7%), and worker's compensation claims checks (5.0%).

Figure 17: CHANGE IN USE OF INTEGRITY SCREENING MEASURES

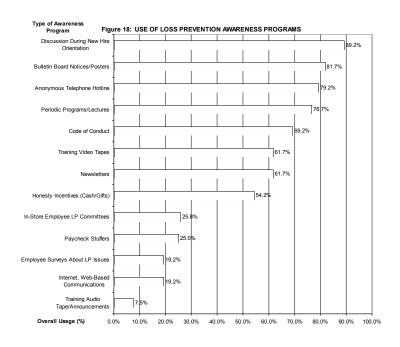


B. Loss Prevention Awareness Programs

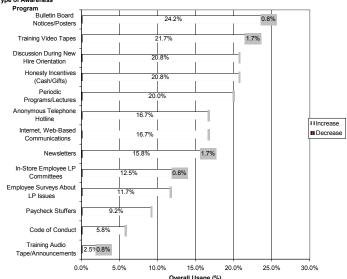
All of the 13 loss prevention awareness programs were utilized by at least one company. The most commonly used awareness programs were discussions during new hire orientation (89.2%), use bulletin boards notices/posters (81.7%), use of anonymous telephone hotlines (79.2%), and periodic programs/lectures (76.7).

Four (4) of the 13 awareness programs were used by at least half of the companies including: code of conduct (69.2%), training video tapes (61.7%), newsletters (61.7%), and honesty incentives 54.2%).

Another two (2) awareness programs were utilized by at least 25% of the companies including: in-store







employee loss prevention committees (25.8%) and paycheck stuffers (25.0%).

All of the 13 loss prevention awareness programs were slated for some level of increased usage for the upcoming year by at least one responding company. Approximately 20% of the firms indicated they planned to increase bulletin boards notices/posters (24.2%), training video tapes (21.7%), discussion during new hire orientation (20.8%), honesty incentives (20.8%), and periodic programs and lectures (20.0%).

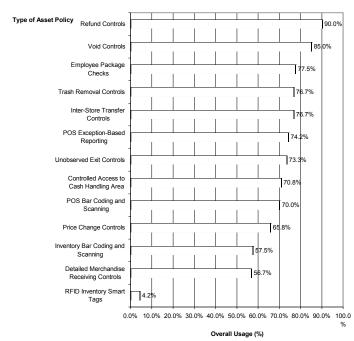
Another five (5) loss prevention awareness programs were indicated to be increased by at least 10% of the responding firms including: anonymous telephone hotline (16.7%), internet or web-based communications (16.7%), newsletters (15.8%), in-store employee loss prevention committees (12.5%), and employee surveys about loss prevention issues (11.7%).

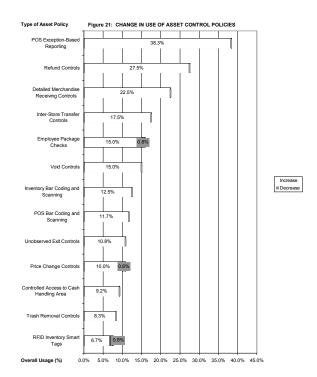
C. Asset Control Policies

Consistent with previous years, asset control policies were clearly the most widely used retail loss prevention strategies. Each of the 13 asset control policies were utilized by at least one company. The most frequently used asset control policies used included: refund controls (90.0%), void controls (85.0%), employee package checks (77.5%), trash removal controls (76.7%), inter-store transfer controls (76.7%), POS exception-based reporting (74.2%), unobserved exit door controls (73.3%), controlled access to cash handling area (70.8%), and POS bar coding/scanning (70.0%).

Three (3) of the 13 polices were utilized by two-thirds to one-half of the firms including: price change controls (65.8%), inventory bar coding/scanning (57.5%), and detailed merchandise receiving controls (56.7%).

Figure 20: USE OF ASSET CONTROL POLICIES





All 13 asset control policies were slated for some level of increased usage for the upcoming year by at least one responding company. Firms indicated they planned to increase: POS exception-based reporting (38.3%), refund controls (27.5%), detailed merchandise receiving controls (22.5%), inter-store transfer controls (17.5%), employee package checks (15.0%), and void controls (15.0%).

Another four (4) loss prevention asset control policies were indicated to be increased by at least 10% of the firms including: inventory bar coding/scanning (12.5%), POS bar coding/scanning (11.7%), unobserved exit door controls (10.8%), and price change controls (10.0%).

D. Loss Prevention Systems & Personnel

Each of the 29 loss prevention system and personnel programs were reported to be in use by at least one company. The most commonly utilized programs included: burglar alarms (90.0%), and live, visible CCTV (74.2%).

Three (3) of the system and personnel programs were utilized by at least 50% of the companies including from highest to lowest check approval database screening (67.5%), live, hidden CCTV (59.2%), and armored car deposit pickups (55.0%).

Another fourteen (14) system and personnel programs were used by at least 25% of the companies including: cable/locks/chains (45.8%), secured display fixtures (45.8%), acousto-magnetic, electronic security tags (EAS) (43.3%), shoplifting deterrence signage (42.5%), drop safes (42.5%), mystery/honesty shoppers (41.7%), silent alarms (40.8%), observation mirrors (40.8%), uniformed guards (36.7%), simulated, visible CCTV (30.8%), plain clothes detectives (29.2%), radio frequency EAS (29.2%), ink/dye denial tags (28.3%), and merchandise alarms (25.0%).

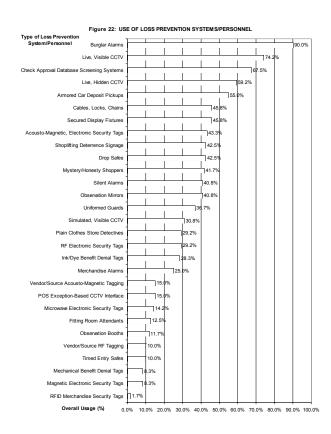
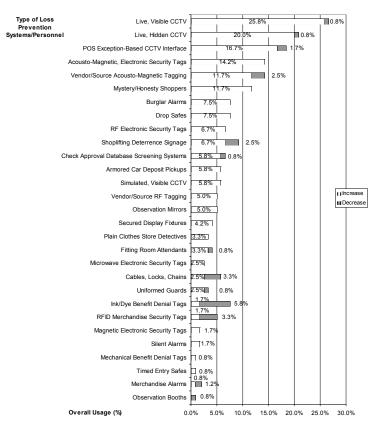


Figure 23: CHANGE IN USE OF LOSS PREVENTION SYSTEMS/PERSONNE



Twenty-eight (28) of the 29 loss prevention system and personnel programs were slated for some level of increased usage for the upcoming year by at least one responding company. Three programs were slated to increased by at least 15% of the companies including: live, visible CCTV (25.8%), live, hidden CCTV(20.0%), and POS exception-based CCTV interface (16.7%).

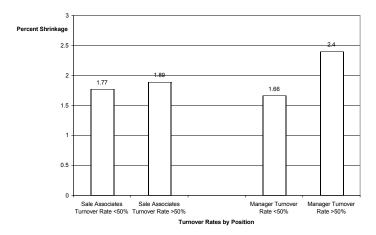
Another three (3) system and personnel programs were slated for increased usage by at least 10% of the companies including: acousto-magnetic EAS (14.2%), vendor/source acousto-magnetic tagging (11.7%), and mystery/honesty shoppers (11.7%).

HUMAN RESOURCES AND SHRINKAGE

In a continuing effort to determine the relationship between shrinkage levels and the characteristics of the workforce, a variety of human resource variables were discovered to be correlated with inventory shrinkage levels. As previous NRSS reports detected dishonest employees typically work less than one year. Similarly, this year's data revealed that the average length of employment for a dishonest worker was 9.8 months.

Consistent with previous years, there is evidence indicating shrinkage increases as turnover rates increase. In particular, shrinkage rates are 1.77% when

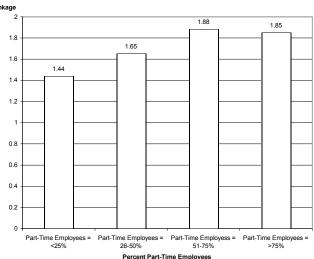
Figure 24: PERCENT SHRINKAGE BY TURNOVER RATES



sale associates turnover rates are less than 50% and 1.89% when sale associates turnover rates are greater than 50%. For managers, the shrinkage rate is 1.66% when turnover rates are less than 50% and 2.40% when managerial turnover rates are greater than 50%.

Concerning the relationship between shrinkage rates and part-time employees, this year's NRSS discovered heavy reliance on part-time employees continues to be associated with higher shrinkage rates. More specifically, shrinkage rates are 1.44% when part-time employees account for less than 25% of the workforce, 1.65% when the part-time employees account for 26-50% of the workforce, 1.88% when part-time employees account for 51-75% of the workforce, and 1.85% when part-time employees account for greater than 75% of the workforce.

Figure 25: PERCENT SHRINKAGE BY PERCENT PART-TIME EMPLOYEES



EMPLOYEE THEFT AND SHOPLIFTING

Each year the NRSS also collects information regarding the nature of employee theft and shoplifting cases. Consistent with previous years, incidents of shoplifting continue to outnumber occurrences of employee theft. However, the average cost of employee theft is generally much greater than the average cost of shoplifting.

Employee Theft

There are three common responses to employee theft including: apprehension/termination, prosecution, and civil demand or recovery.

Retailers reported an average of 30.3 employee theft apprehensions for every \$100 million in sales. This figure represents a continual decline in employee theft apprehensions. For instance, the 2000 NRSS reported an average of 33 apprehensions per \$100 million in sales.

Approximately 23% of dishonest employee cases were referred for criminal prosecution. This translates into an average of 11.5 prosecutions for every \$100 million in sales. This resembles a similar rate from the 2000 NRSS figure of 12 prosecutions per \$100 million in sales.

Approximately 29% of dishonest employee cases resulted in civil demand actions. This translates into an average of 37 employee theft civil demand cases for every \$100 million in sales. This figures marks a significant increase from the 2000 NRSS rate of 10.1 civil demands per \$100 million in sales.

Finally, the average dollar loss per employee theft incident was \$1,445.86. This figure is significantly higher than the 2000 NRSS number of \$1,022.68.

Shoplifting

Consistent with previous NRSS reports, shoplifting continues to outnumber the incidents of employee theft. Similar to responses to employee dishonesty, firms apprehend, prosecute, and seek civil demands against shoplifters.

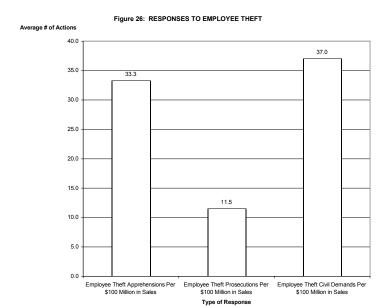
Retailers reported an average of 131.6 shoplifting apprehensions for every \$100 million in sales. This figure is significantly higher number than the 2000 NRSS average of 96.5 apprehension for every \$100 million in sales.

Approximately 24% of shoplifting cases were referred for prosecutions. This translates into an average of 92.8 shoplifting prosecutions for every \$100 million in sales. This average is drastically higher than the 2000 NRSS figure of 76.7 prosecutions.

Approximately 28% of shoplifting cases resulted in civil demand actions. This translates into an average of 133.7 shoplifting civil demand cases for every \$100

million in sales. This is significantly higher than the 2000 NRSS figure of 69.3 civil demands.

Finally, the average dollar loss per shoplifting incident was \$195.73. This marks an increase from the 2000 NRSS dollar loss figure of \$128.03 per shoplifting case.



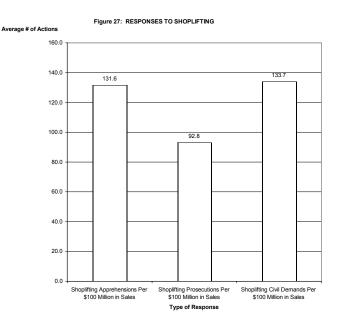


Figure 28: AVERAGE DOLLAR LOSS PER EMPLOYEE THEFT & SHOPLIFTING INCIDENT

