

## **ARMED ROBBERY**

### **Guidelines on what to do during an armed robbery**

When an armed robbery takes place at a location (store, warehouse, factory etc) the likelihood of the incident turning violent, resulting in injury or even death to personnel and customers, can be effectively reduced by the behavior of the staff and customers.

#### **Don't resist**

Do exactly as you are told. The robbers are in control of the situation because they are armed, and it serves no purpose to resist their instructions – you will only be putting your lives at risk.

#### **Stay calm**

Regulate your breathing, taking long, slow deliberate breaths. This slows your heart rate, and helps you relax.

#### **Speak slowly**

Don't shout or raise your voice to the robbers. They are probably more nervous than you, and it won't take too much for them to lose any self-control they may possess.

#### **Don't make any sudden movements**

When you want to do something – even if it is an instruction from the robber – tell him what you are doing - “I am going to take the keys to the safe out of my pocket now” - and then do it slowly.

#### **Don't set off the alarm**

Activate the alarm only if you can do it secretly. Many armed robberies have turned violent (with hostages taken) because the siren puts the robbers into a panic. Also, only set off the alarm if you can do so without the robbers seeing you. Setting an alarm can also trigger a violent response.

#### **Don't look the robbers directly in the face**

The robber may believe that you are trying to memorise his features for later identification, and could lead to him shooting you in order to prevent this.

#### **Give the robbers time to leave**

Don't shout or do anything else until the robbers have left the premises. Don't try to be a hero. Don't attempt to prevent the robbers "get-away". Many crime scenes have turned violent as the robbers are leaving, resulting in deaths and injuries to staff and customers.

### **Observation techniques**

Clear information on the robbers assists in the SAPS investigation. However, this should not be done at the risk of your life or that of the persons around you.

- Don't make it obvious that you are observing the robbers.
- Focus on one person at a time
- Gain an overall impression first:
  - \*Height
  - \*Build
  - \*Firearm or other weapon
  - \*Clothing
  - \*Special features – a limp, deformities, birthmarks, etc.
- Then look at details
  - \*Facial features – round/sharp, eyes close set/wide apart, etc.
- Remember any names used by the robbers when talking to each other
- Remember what they touch, where they walk, any cigarette butts discarded, body fluids deposited, etc
- Vehicles – The same rules apply, overall impression first, and then the details
  - \*First look at the make and model
  - \*Colour
  - \*Noticeable features
  - \*Registration number