

Shoplifting: How to prevent 'blind spots' in the store layout

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Though many types of theft deterrent equipment exist, one of the most effective and affordable approaches is preventing retail shoplifting is by avoiding "blind spots" in the store layout.

In this regard, one of the hardest places for supermarket or mass merchandise cashiers to control and easily view has been under the shopping basket, which is usually blocked by a basketful of other items above it. Failing to ring up items under the basket before customers leave the store can be extremely costly to retailers.

To prevent such losses, one nationally recognized mass-market retailer has already installed over 90,000 bottom-of-the basket (BOB) mirrors in an effort to limit this type of shrinkage in their business. The inventive mirrors are comprised of lightweight acrylic and the mirror mounts opposite the standing cashier to provide a clear, unobstructed view of the bottom of the cart without requiring the cashier to move or stoop, which also expedites checkout.

Endless Options

To accommodate a range of needs, many additional mirror and dome options are available as well. This range includes various mirror and dome sizes, shapes, and angles of visibility. Compared to conventional glass mirrors, shatter resistant acrylic mirrors are much more durable, lightweight, and fade-proof with top quality metalizing.

Specialized mirrors and domes can also help to eliminate the visual blind spots that occur at retail aisle corners, intersections, and other locations of big-box "warehouse style" stores where collisions between

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forklifts and employees or customers is possible.

For instance, convex detection mirrors have wide-angle visibility, while presenting a 20% brighter image than glass mirrors for greater clarity. A recently developed hybrid convex-dome mirror can even provide three times the viewing area of standard convex mirrors when a wider viewing angle is required.

Mirrored domes in a variety of configurations can provide the greatest visibility around corners and anywhere the widest unobstructed view is necessary. Quarter domes (90° provide viewing for corner intersections, 180° mirrored half domes improve viewing at T-intersections, 270° mirrored domes enable viewing in all directions (when mounted on an outside corner of a 4-way intersection), and 360° mirrored domes enhance viewing at 4-way or circular intersections.

When theft deterrence is the primary focus in retail environments with grid ceilings, specialized, darkened domes and globes can be positioned and mounted with surveillance camera inside, or left empty. Shoplifters, who will not know which domes are "live" will be discouraged from stealing regardless, and will be caught on video when cameras are used.

While retailers will continue to fight inventory loss with a variety of techniques, they do not want to miss out on innovations in mirror and dome technology that could help cost effectively curtail theft.

John Mangiameli is executive VP at Se-Kure Controls. [Se-Kure Domes & Mirrors](#) is a wholly owned subsidiary of [Se-Kure Controls](#), and is a manufacturer of domes and mirrors for retail applications including bottom-of-the-basket and convex mirrors, as well as smoky globes and domes for surveillance systems.

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