

INCIDENT FACTS

REPORT #:

71-233-2023

REPORT DATE:

February 13, 2023

INCIDENT DATE:

March 19, 2022

WORKER:

29 years old

INDUSTRY:

All Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers (Except Tobacco Stores)

OCCUPATION:

Sales Associate

SCENE:

Cannabis Store

EVENT TYPE:

Homicide



Arrow shows yellow sticker below cash register that reads "No More than \$100 is Kept in Tills." The employer applied the sticker after the incident to help prevent a reoccurrence.

[For a slideshow version, click here.](#)



This narrative was developed to alert employers and workers of a tragic incident and is based on preliminary data ONLY and does not represent final determinations regarding the nature of the incident or the cause of the injury. Developed by WA State Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (WA FACE) Program and the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH), WA State Dept. of Labor & Industries. WA FACE is supported in part by a grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH grant# 5U60OH008487). For more information visit www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-research/ongoing-projects/work-related-fatalities-face.

Cannabis Store Worker Shot in Armed Robbery

SUMMARY

A 29-year-old cannabis store worker was shot and killed during an armed robbery. He was employed as a sales associate, also known as a "budtender." The incident happened around 10 p.m. The store was brightly lit outside by several streetlights and spotlights. Four workers and four customers were in the store. Two unarmed guards were on duty; one was inside, and the other was outside helping a customer to their car.

A car carrying two gunmen pulled up to the store. While the car waited outside, the gunmen entered the store, drew handguns, and fired a warning shot into the ceiling. A budtender instantly pressed a panic button under a cash register. Everyone was ordered down on the floor, and workers were given plastic bags to put money in. One of the robbers aimed his gun at the worker and forced him to open one of the store's seven cash registers. A fight suddenly ensued between the worker and gunman and ended with them struggling on the floor.

The fight alerted the second gunman, who was watching the front doors. He walked to the cash register counter, leaned over it, and shot the worker in the neck. The worker was shot three more times. The gunmen stole \$250 from the opened register and fled in the getaway car. First responders arrived quickly but were unable to save the fatally injured worker.

Following the incident, investigators found:

- The employer's Accident Prevention Program (APP) had a standard operating procedure (SOP) for emergencies and robbery responses. The SOP instructed workers to comply with robber's demands and call 911 or press panic buttons. Safe drops were required every 30-45 minutes or when a cash register reached a certain dollar limit.
- Store security included two unarmed guards, surveillance cameras, and an alarm system with panic buttons under each cash register.

REQUIREMENTS

The employer met all applicable late night retail establishment crime prevention and worker safety requirements in [WAC 296-832](#) and laws in [49.22 RCW](#).

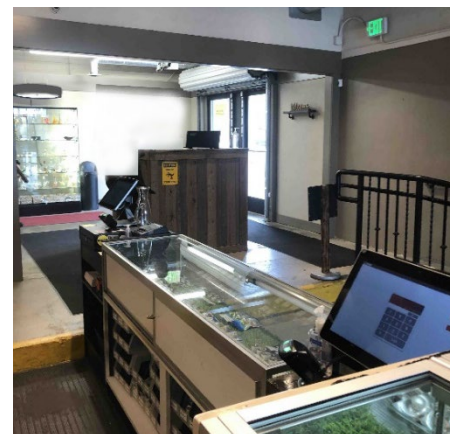
RECOMMENDATIONS

FACE investigators concluded that to help prevent similar occurrences, employers should:

- Develop, review, and enhance security plans and train all workers on the security procedures.
- Hire armed security guards and consult a security company to assess store vulnerabilities.
- Make frequent cash deposits to minimize the amount of cash in the cash register.
- Use "drop safes" and post signs in store explaining that staff cannot open the safe.
- Post signs stating that video surveillance is in use.
- Ensure adequate outdoor and indoor lighting.
- Use walk up window(s) instead of allowing people in to the store.
- Have an initial entry area separated by a security door that opens into the retail area.

RESOURCES

[Crime Prevention Opportunities for Cannabis Licensees](#). Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board



Area behind cash register counter where the worker was shot. Gunmen entered and fled through the double doors at the right rear of the store.