

For Immediate Release

**Retail theft costs us all - and the problem is at its worst
during the holiday shopping season**

So, if you “see something”, please “say something”

Vancouver, B.C. (December 5, 2019): Theft at retail stores costs all of us money, and even with Black Friday and Cyber Monday out of the way, stores remain vigilant for shoplifting with the Christmas shopping season now at full throttle.

And it’s not just those looking for a “crime of opportunity” in the holiday crowds. Organized retail crime is an ongoing problem year-round – stealing goods through systematic shoplifting, with the goods getting sold to the public online or through flea markets. Often that money goes on to fund gangs dealing in drugs or illegal weapons.

Organized retail crime is said to cost Canadians more than \$4.6 billion a year, with about 87 per cent of independent stores becoming victims of it.

“When someone reports information about these crimes to Crime Stoppers, we pass it to the relevant authorities who can investigate.” says Linda Annis, Executive Director, Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers. “If you have information that can lead police to these thieves, tell the store owner, tell police or pass on your information anonymously to Crime Stoppers. We will never identify you and you may be eligible for a reward.”

Meanwhile, we can all help reduce retail crime by:

- Buying goods from proper, established businesses instead of some relatively unknown source.
- Thinking twice if a deal seems too good to be true. Ask sellers why they’re offering it so cheap.
- Be suspicious when someone trying to sell you something online also happens to be selling a lot of “other” brand new items too. Where did they come from?
- Also watching for counterfeit items. A lot of goods enter Canada through our ports of entry from Pacific Rim and other countries, so it’s relatively easy to smuggle in fake goods that are poor quality, or even unsafe to use.

(more)

- Being wary of anything that seems “too cheap” that can be bought from market stalls or a “pop-up” retailer which can disappear quickly. It may be embarrassing to admit you’ve been duped into buying fake goods and maybe you don’t want to call the police - but Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers provides a safe and anonymous way to report people selling counterfeit goods – so we can pass your tip to police or other authorities who can investigate.

About Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers

Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers is a non-profit society and registered charity that offers rewards for anonymous tip information about criminal activity and provides it to investigators in the communities of Metro Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

People can leave anonymous tips in a variety of ways including Crime Stoppers’ smartphone app, calling Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477, online at solvecrime.ca, by following the link on the Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers [Facebook page](#) or using the new Crime Stoppers tip reporting app. Crime Stoppers accepts tips in 115 different languages. If the information provided results in a charge or an arrest, a cash reward may be offered. Tipsters stay anonymous by using code numbers to collect their rewards.

Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers is not the police and operates solely on funds donated or generated through fundraising events. Tax-deductible donations are gratefully received anytime by accessing the “donate” link at solvecrime.ca. Follow us on Twitter: [@solvecrime](https://twitter.com/solvecrime).

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