

Who Becomes Liable for Violent Crime in the Wake of Negligent Security?

Who becomes liable if you become the victim of a violent crime? Everywhere we go while out in public, we're at-risk for crime. No matter how well we protect ourselves, no one is one-hundred-percent safe from becoming the victim of violent crime. There are ways, however, to protect ourselves and our loved ones and reduce that risk. Most notably, when we enter a business to shop or work, we often notice security cameras and posted signage stating that the property is under 24-hour surveillance. The average person won't have a problem with this and will continue to do their job or run their errand unbothered.

However, something as simple as a conspicuously installed security camera on the premises can deter potential criminals from committing an act of violence such as a shooting or a robbery. Most of the time, the threat of being caught red-handed upon committing a crime is enough to send the criminal on their way. Criminals don't want to get caught and sent to prison. What happens, however, if there are no security cameras on the premises? The most likely outcome is that this would be the prime property chosen by criminals to go ahead and commit their crime. Business owners know this, and under normal circumstances act swiftly to outfit their business and property with appropriate security measures to prevent its occurrence.

Specifically, in neighborhoods or areas of a city with high crime rates, those who are intent on committing a crime will cause trouble in places known for their lax security. Business owners in areas of high crime must be even more diligent in their security measures than their peers who own businesses in more affluent areas. Nonetheless, security measures affect every proprietor of a business, no matter what the crime rate in the area they set up shop. It's every business owner's responsibility to protect the public from suffering the consequences of violent crime. Should they neglect this responsibility, they can be held liable for their carelessness in a court of law. The public should never have to suffer the consequences of a negligent or careless business owner! And those consequences? They range from accidental shootings, stabbings, and assaults, to homicides.

So, who is liable when a visitor to a property or business becomes the victim of a violent crime? How can proprietors of a business make every effort to deter these events from occurring? The Shaked Law Blog has those answers.

Crime in recent memory

South Florida has seen a wave of violent crime in recent months. Shooting after shooting in business after business, it doesn't seem to have an end in sight. Why is that? What can be done to prevent these violent acts from occurring over and over? The most recent crime on record comes just mere days ago, when a shooting took place at a Northwest Miami-Dade *Taco Bell* restaurant. Two lives were claimed in the wake of the shooting, and two

families are now dealing with the tragic loss of their loved ones. This didn't have to happen and could've been prevented. This fast-food chain among others has seen a dangerous rise in violent crime lately, and that can be almost entirely attributed to negligent security on the part of the franchise owner.

While Taco Bell has a responsibility to ensure their franchisees are aware of how to properly protect their business from violent crime, ultimately it comes down to the business owner to follow through. Installing security cameras and employing on-site security guards through a security company is not where the responsibility ends. It's up to the business owner to maintain the security system and ensure the on-duty guards are properly licensed, trained, and can respond quickly in the event of violence on the property.

Lights, camera, (very little) action! Tips for lowering the probability of crime: business owners take note!

Shaked Law Firm has tried and won countless cases of negligent security on behalf of our injured clients. We've seen victims of accidental shootings, stabbings, and assaults that could've been prevented, had the business owner taken the time to secure their property. When a business owner neglects to put the safety of the public first, they put themselves at-risk for a lawsuit. So, business owners, take note, and follow these tips for keeping your patrons as safe as possible when they frequent your establishment:

- **Security cameras:** this bears repeating, no matter how many times its been discussed. Security cameras can mean the difference between a violent crime and a peaceful property. In the event a crime does occur, you have a better chance of catching the perp and sending them to jail where they belong if security cameras are installed on your property.
- **Armed security guards:** this is one that a lot of business owners don't want to think about because of the financial burden it may put upon them. Armed guards on a property in an area known for high crime is essential. Employing licensed and well-trained guards to man the establishment can deter criminals from stepping foot near your establishment. And, in the event of a crime, a well-trained guard may be able to stop the criminal in his tracks, so the police can be called. An armed security guard can save lives!
- **Lights:** a well-lit property is a safer property. Keeping your property well-lit during nighttime hours can deter even the most experienced criminals. No one wants to be caught, and most people hoping to commit violent crimes use the cover of darkness to strike innocent victims. Keeping your property well-lit and maintaining the lighting regularly is another must for business owners.
- **Gates or fencing:** depending on the size of your business and the area in which you reside, properly gating your premises can help protect visitors to your property from becoming a casualty of someone else's violent act. In areas known for higher crime,

it's imperative to properly fence or gate your business or property to make it as difficult as possible for criminals to break in. For residential property owners such as landlords, installing a guard gate at the front of the property and maintaining a policy of checking the ID of every person who enters is a must.

Contact us to schedule a complimentary consultation. There's no obligation. Take the first step and call today: (877). 529-0080

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