

**BLOG**

# Tackling Organized Retail Crime and Opportunistic Theft



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The distinction between organized retail crime (ORC) and opportunistic theft is not just academic; it's a crucial factor in shaping loss prevention strategies. While both forms of theft contribute to the global issue of retail shrinkage, their motivations, methodologies, and impacts vary significantly, demanding tailored responses from retailers.

### **The ORC Phenomenon**

At its core, ORC is about sophistication and scale. This form of theft involves networks of individuals collaborating to execute large-scale heists, often with the intent of reselling stolen goods. These groups target highly sought-after items—electronics, baby products, and even laundry detergent—anything that promises a quick turnover via physical and online marketplaces. Analysis of over a billion shopping experiences per year by Gatekeeper Systems reveals that ORC can be predicted when a retailer sees a pattern of carts, sometimes multiple, brimming with identical items, ready for resale.

### **The Opportunistic Thief**

In contrast, opportunistic theft is the act of an individual, driven by impulse or immediate need, without the backing of an elaborate network. These thieves might swipe anything from snacks to small electronics, items intended for personal use rather than resale. Their approach is less about the haul and more about seizing the moment, often going unnoticed and leaving a much smaller footprint than their organized counterparts.

### **The Impact on Retailers**

Regardless of their differences, the economic impact of these thefts is profound. Recent figures suggest a rise in the average shrink rate to 1.6% of total inventory, marking over \$112 billion in losses across the industry. While ORC accounts for a significant portion of this, opportunistic thefts add to the burden, highlighting the need for comprehensive loss prevention strategies.

### **Confronting the Challenges**

Addressing ORC demands a multifaceted strategy. Retailers must employ advanced surveillance, train employees to recognize signs of organized theft and collaborate with law enforcement to tackle these sophisticated criminals. Countering opportunistic theft involves enhancing store security measures and fostering an environment where bad actors think twice before acting.

Gatekeeper Systems' Purckek® technology offers a solution to both challenges. This technology is pivotal in preventing theft by detecting and immobilizing shopping carts laden with unpaid merchandise before they leave the store.

The system operates seamlessly, distinguishing between carts following the proper checkout process and those of potential thieves heading toward an exit door without having paid for their merchandise. If a cart does make it to the door, the wheels will be disabled, an alarm will sound, and video will be captured. In most cases, this is enough for the perpetrator to leave the cart behind and exit the store.

### **Staying Ahead of the Curve**

ORC groups are continuously adapting their methods, and opportunistic thieves are exploiting new vulnerabilities. Retailers must remain vigilant, adopting technologies and strategies that evolve with these threats to better protect their assets and ensure a safe, welcoming environment for their customers.

## **About Gatekeeper**

Gatekeeper Systems' expanded product suite of intelligent cart solutions offers solutions for EVERY retailer's needs to minimize merchandise loss, reduce asset and labor expenditures. Gatekeeper's loss prevention and cart containment solutions utilize patented locking technology to put an end to cart-based shoplifting, shopping cart loss, and uninformed decision-making. Cart management solutions increase safety and reduce labor costs by maximizing productivity while simultaneously resulting in a positive store image. Intelligent pushout theft prevention solutions stop thieves and their cart full of unpaid merchandise from leaving the store. Customizable technology allows retailers to defend their entire store or just a high loss department based on the store's unique layout. Business Intelligence solutions provide increased visibility for informed decision making. Increase efficiency, optimize fleet size, and perfect the entire customer shopping experience with store and enterprise-level analytics.

