

ALL SECTIONS

LOCAL NEWS

WHAT'S ON

COMMUNITY

CRIME

EVENTS

CANADA 150

CLASSIFIEDS

OBITUARIES

SEARCH

Home / News / Business / Employee Theft In Canadian Businesses...

Employee theft in Canadian businesses 'is a pretty big deal'

Lead investigator says employees steal three things: time, money and product

NEWS

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by [Louie Rosella](#) 

Mississauga News



Thomas G. Martin, President of Martin Investigative Services. - Supplied photo

The majority of crimes against businesses are committed by their own employees, according to a lead private investigator and former federal agent in the U.S.

Thomas Martin, president of Martin Investigative Services and author of the soon-to-be-released book, *Seeing Life through Private Eyes: Secrets from America's Top Investigator to Living Safer, Smarter, and Saner*, said his company's investigations show 75 per cent of workplaces with 100 employees or more are victimized by employee theft.

"Employees steal three things: time, money and product," Martin said in an interview from his company's office in Newport Beach, California. "This is a pretty big deal."

Martin said the most common forms of employee theft include punching in a co-worker's time card even though he or she isn't at work or secretly stealing actual product from the business.

With technology and more businesses letting employees work from home, Martin said, stealing time has become more prevalent.

He added that employee theft has increased since 2006 for a number of reasons.

"The economy changed in 2006. The stock market started doing not so great and the housing market went into the toilet," he said.

On average, employees steal about \$2,500 in cash or goods from their employer before they're caught, says a report from the Retail Council of Canada.

The most recent numbers from the council suggest employee theft is on the rise. A 2012 report shows more than 33 per cent of unaccounted merchandise in the workplace is the result of employees who steal, a hefty increase from the 19 per cent in 2008.

The council estimates more than 500,000 employee thefts go undetected annually.

"Fraudulent acts against businesses in Canada can result in substantial losses to those directly affected by the crime, but these crimes can also have an impact on all Canadians who rely on the products and services the businesses provide," according to a 2014 Statistics Canada report.

Martin said companies can take a number of measures to prevent employee theft, including installing a surveillance system and fostering a positive workplace culture.

But, he said, the only way to detect how prevalent employee theft is in the workplace is through an investigation.

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