



The state of retail worker safety in Australia and New Zealand

2024 survey and report



MOTOROLA SOLUTIONS



The state of retail worker safety in Australia and New Zealand

Safety and security remain critical for the retail industry, with around one third of workers considering leaving their jobs because of safety concerns.

While the global pandemic, which contributed to a [spike in retail worker abuse](#) and workers quitting their jobs, is over, retail workers in Australia and New Zealand remain genuinely concerned about their safety and security.

In fact, **68%** of retail workers believe more could be done to keep them and their colleagues safe, according to an independent research study conducted on behalf of Motorola Solutions, a global leader in public safety and enterprise security. According to the research, around one third (**32%**) of retail workers have considered leaving their jobs because of safety concerns.

Media reports highlight police efforts to curtail retail crime. In [Western Australia](#), monthly statistics for the 2023-24 financial year put shoplifting crime significantly ahead of data from previous years. The Australian Retailers Association (ARA) applauded [Victoria Police's crack-down on retail crime](#) under Operation STAND, leading to 24 serious offenders being arrested and charged on 478 counts of retail crime.

Earlier this year, ARA and the National Retail Association (NRA) joined forces to call for stronger laws and deterrents for retail crime offenders. This included strengthening relationships between the retail sector and police, improving information sharing, increasing focus on the human impact of retail crime and increasing the adoption of technology to combat retail crime.

In its [2023 position statement on retail crime](#), Retail NZ explained how the NZ \$2.6 billion annual cost of retail crime in New Zealand was not only threatening the financial sustainability of retail business, but increasing health and safety risks for employees and customers alike. It claimed that **92%** of retailers have experienced some form of retail crime over the past 12 months, up from **81%** in the previous survey.

In both Australia and New Zealand, fears continue to grow that aggression, violence, and other forms of retail crime are getting worse, while criminals are becoming increasingly organised and brazen, putting both employees and customers at risk.

To better understand the issues surrounding retail crime and how retail workers feel about their personal safety, Motorola Solutions conducted a survey of 284 retail associates and managers in Australia and New Zealand to learn more about their feelings and the safety and the security measures that could make a difference.

The results provide valuable insights into the everyday realities of retail workers and highlight areas for evaluation and advancement within the sector.



Retail front

How crime is impacting workplace safety

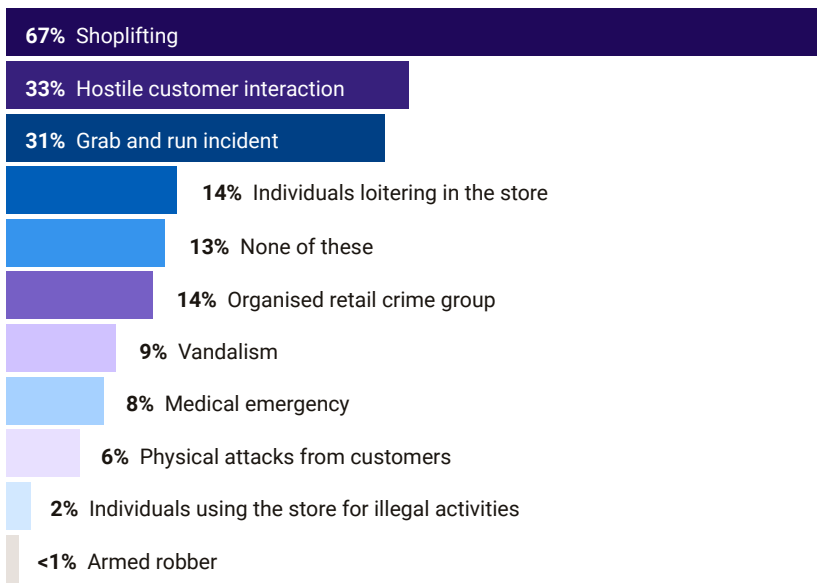
How often do retail workers say they require emergency response at their stores? More than half of respondents (**57%**) said that public safety personnel, like police, ambulance or fire officials, are called to their stores every other month (**13%**) or between 2-4 times per year (**44%**).

Fifty-nine percent of survey respondents say they are concerned about increases in shoplifting in their stores in the past 12 months, followed by hostile customer interactions (**50%**), grab and run incidents (**45%**) and organised retail crime (**39%**).

Organised retail crime is characterised by criminal rings stealing property with the intent to sell and distribute stolen merchandise, and it takes many forms – from coordinated thefts of specific goods to orchestrated, brazen attacks on retailers.

More than a third of respondents said they were concerned about attacks on retail workers (**37%**) or customers (**34%**).

Have you or your store experienced an increase in any of these situations in the past 12 months?



Note: Respondents could select multiple options.

Collectively, these results highlight why retail associations in both Australia and New Zealand continue to run public awareness campaigns highlighting the impacts of retail crime, the abuse of retail workers and safety risks in stores.

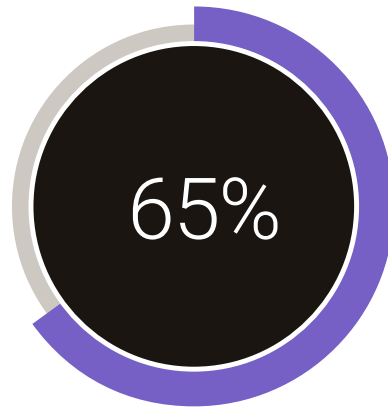




Many factors impact how safe retail workers feel at work, including having adequate physical security, staffing levels and the right technology solutions deployed at their stores.

From grocery and clothing to consumer electronics and department stores, the presence of video security cameras topped the list (**65%**) of technology solutions that increase feelings of safety.

What factors impact how safe you feel at work?

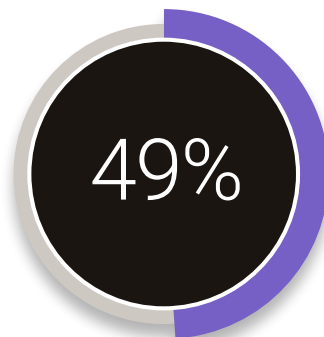


Video security cameras

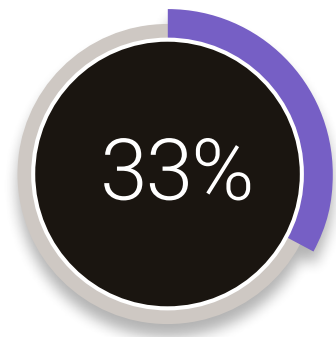
Conversely, the factors that make respondents feel less safe at work include stressful or confrontational customer interactions (**69%**), followed by inadequate staffing numbers (**57%**) and outdated alarm systems and security technologies (**42%**).

Feelings of safety and security extend beyond what's happening in the store. Respondents highlighted their concern for their safety when arriving or leaving work outside of daylight hours (**49%**) and in the car park (**33%**).

When do you feel concern for your safety at work?



arriving or leaving work outside daylight hours



in the car park





Holiday shopping

Busy season brings extra stress

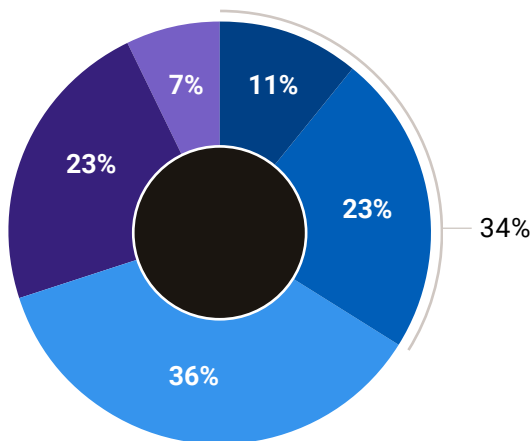
Retail workers become significantly more concerned about their personal safety at work when thinking about the holiday shopping season. While **73%** said that they ordinarily feel safe at work, more than one-third (**34%**) said that they are concerned for their personal safety heading into peak shopping season.

More than two-thirds (**70%**) of those surveyed expect their store to be short-staffed during the holiday season. Since adequate staffing levels significantly impact how safe workers feel, it's understandable that they are more worried about safety during the busy holiday season.

Those who reported going into the holidays understaffed were more likely to report feeling less safe overall.

The top three safety concerns respondents cited around holiday shopping are shoplifting (**28%**), hostile customer interactions (**23%**) and grab-and-run incidents (**7%**).

How concerned are you for your personal safety at work leading into peak shopping season?



- Extremely concerned
- Very concerned
- Somewhat concerned
- Hardly concerned
- Not concerned at all

Top ranked - what are your top 3 safety concerns going into the holiday shopping season?





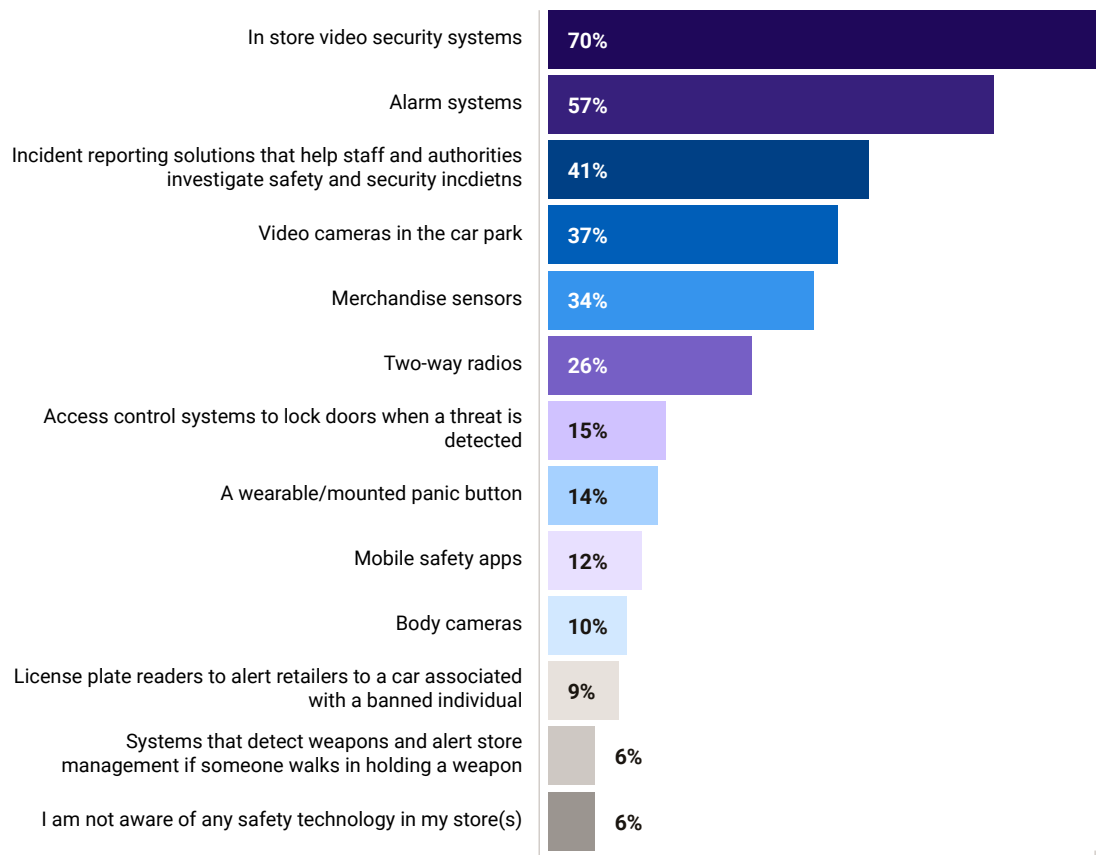
Workplace safety

How retailers can help employees feel safer

A majority of respondents said that their stores have video security systems in place (**70%**), which reflects the major factor that retail workers said makes them feel safer. Alarm systems (**57%**) and incident reporting solutions that help staff and authorities investigate safety and security incidents (**41%**) were among other technology solutions that respondents said are currently used to provide safety and security in stores.

Almost **40%** of respondents said that their employer has introduced new security measures in the last year. The changes employers have made align with some of the employees' concerns: Increased emergency preparedness and response training was the most frequently cited addition (**48%**). Other top changes include deploying new or enhanced technology (**46%**), more timely communications about in-store incidents (**42%**) and increasing staffing (**34%**). The last of which is a factor that employees cited as important to increasing their own feelings of safety.

What types of safety technology do you use in your store?



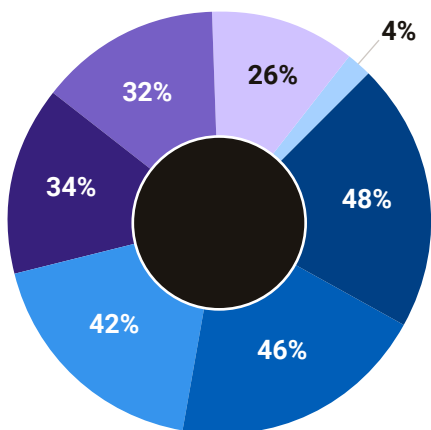
Note: Respondents could select multiple options.



With nearly one-third of employees feeling unsafe in the car park and even more feeling unsafe when getting to or leaving work outside of daylight hours, technologies can help ease safety concerns for employees entering and leaving their buildings. Workers cited video security systems (48%), alarm systems (39%), and access control

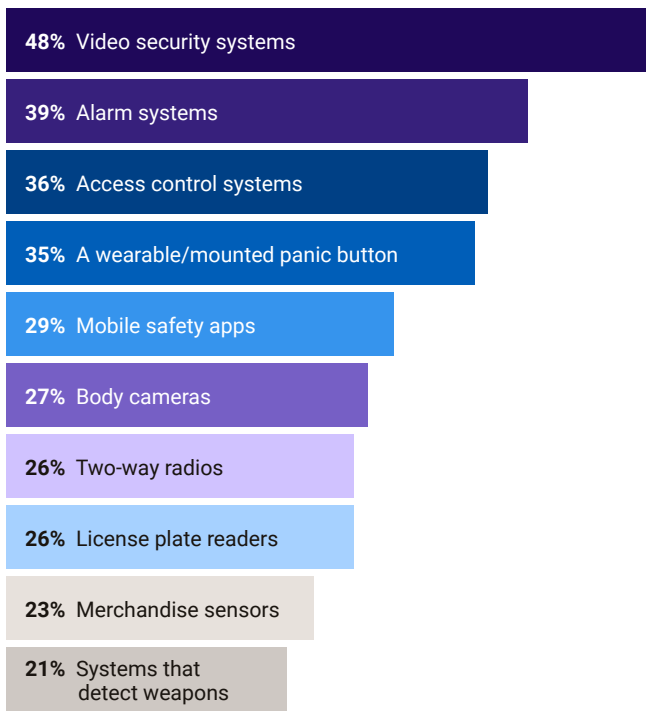
systems to lock doors when threats are detected (36%) as measures that could help. Half of those (50%) who reported feeling unsafe in those situations said their workplaces do not have video security cameras, which can be placed in and outside the building.

What types of changes have been made?



- Increased emergency preparedness and response training
- New or enhanced safety technology
- More timely communication about in-store incidents
- Increased staffing
- Increased security personnel
- Adjusted store hours
- Other

What types of safety technology would make you feel safer at work?



Note: Respondents could select multiple options.





Body cameras

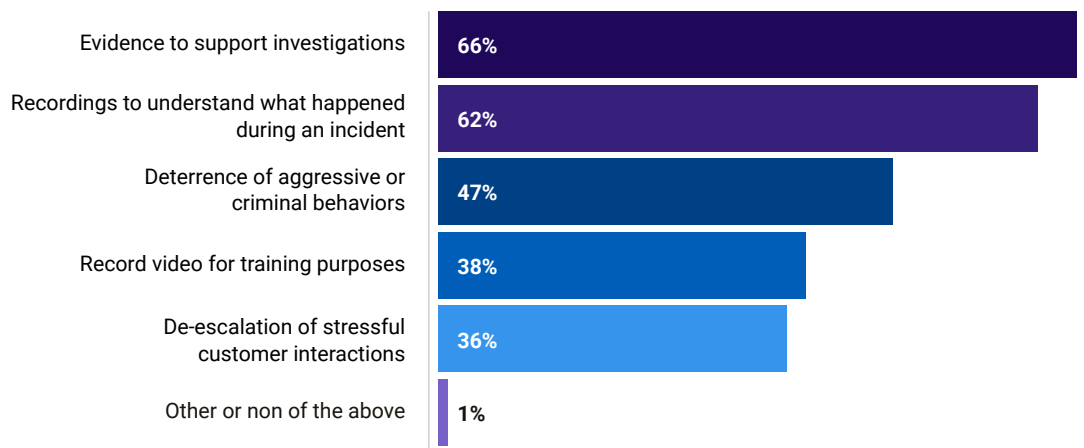
The emerging retail safety tool

Body cameras are an increasingly popular tool in retail security. Earlier this year, [Woolworths New Zealand announced](#) it is deploying team safety cameras across all **191** of its stores nationally in response to a **75%** increase in physical assaults and **148%** increase in serious reportable events in the last three years.

Fifty-four percent of employees in this survey said body cameras would make them feel safer, while **22%** said they weren't sure. However, the technology has higher adoption rates abroad, and **70%** of retail workers surveyed in a comparable study from Motorola Solutions in the U.K. said body cameras effectively prevent and de-escalate dangerous situations. This sentiment is echoed by the Central England Co-op, a U.K.-based retailer, which said the roll out of body cameras helped employees feel safer and provided another deterrent to prevent crimes.

The majority of respondents said body cameras could provide evidence to support investigations (**66%**) and that the recordings could increase understanding of what occurred during an incident (**62%**). Deterrence of aggressive or criminal behaviour was considered to be another value of body cameras by **47%**. These devices can serve as a force-multiplier for retail workers, addressing their desire for more staff and technology while potentially deterring aggressive customers and shoplifters.

What do you consider to be the value of body cameras for retail staff?



Note: Respondents could select multiple options.

"Retailers are increasingly seeking durable, high-performance solutions that not only aid in loss prevention but also provide critical protection for staff against aggressive or hostile behaviours, enhancing both security and workplace safety. The use of body-worn cameras in the retail sector is projected to experience significant growth, with the global market expected to double in size between 2022 and 2027."

– Paul Bremner, principal research analyst at Omdia.



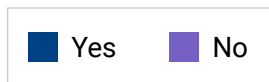
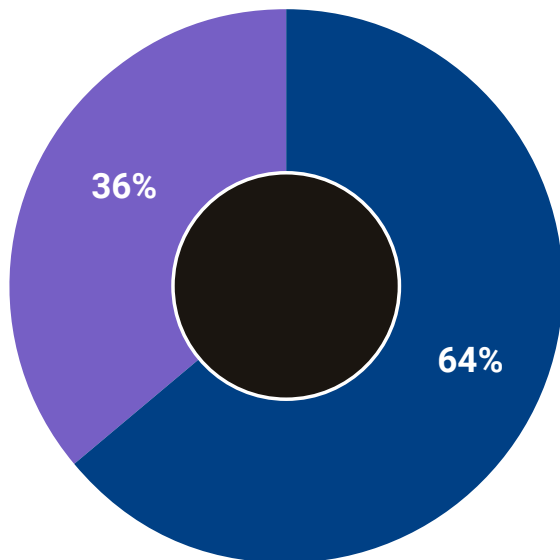
Responding to a crisis

How technology can help

Retail workers are increasingly able to leverage technology when incidents occur in stores. A majority of workers (**64%**) said that they can alert all of their coworkers instantly when the need arises. The most common way that workers notify their onsite coworkers when a safety or security situation arises is via PA systems/storewide announcements (**40%**), with alarm systems (**33%**) and two-way radio systems (**25%**).

Overall, more than two-thirds of those surveyed said that their employers can do more to keep them and their coworkers safe. Forty-eight percent said they would feel safe if their store employed video security systems, **39%** identified alarm systems and **36%** chose access control systems to automatically lock doors when faced with threats.

If an incident occurs in your store, are you able to instantly notify all your co-workers at once?





Conclusion

Retail workers in Australia and New Zealand are navigating an increasingly dangerous environment. From hostile customer interactions to organised crime, the challenges are significant, and heading into the holiday season, there’s a greater concern for safety. However, by embracing modern security technologies and taking a proactive approach to safety, retailers can help create a safer environment for workers and shoppers alike.

Methodology

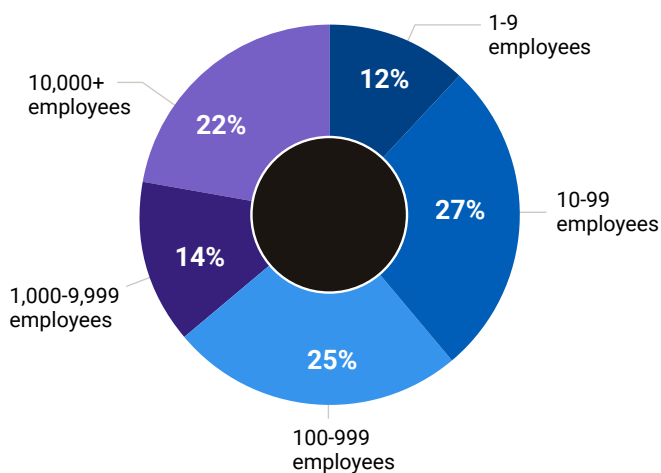
The independent market research firm Researchscape conducted this survey. Respondents were 284 full- and part- time Australia and New Zealand retail employees. The survey was conducted in TK 2024 and results were weighted to be representative of the overall populations of Australia and New Zealand.

Similar surveys from Motorola Solutions were conducted around the same timeframe in the [U.S.](#) and [U.K.](#)

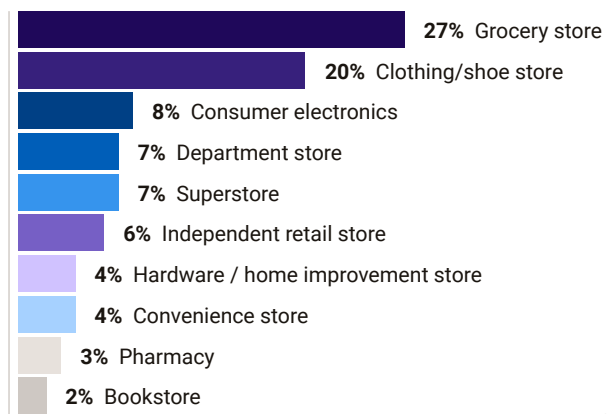
About Motorola Solutions

Motorola Solutions is solving for safer. We build and connect technologies to help protect people, property and places. Our solutions enable the collaboration between public safety agencies and enterprises that’s critical for a proactive approach to safety and security. Learn more about how we’re solving for safer communities, safer schools, safer hospitals, safer businesses – safer everywhere – at www.motorolasolutions.com.

Approximately how many employees work at your organization?



What type of store do you work at?





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Motorola Solutions Ltd., 10 Wesley Ct, Burwood East Victoria, 3151 Australia motorolasolutions.com

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