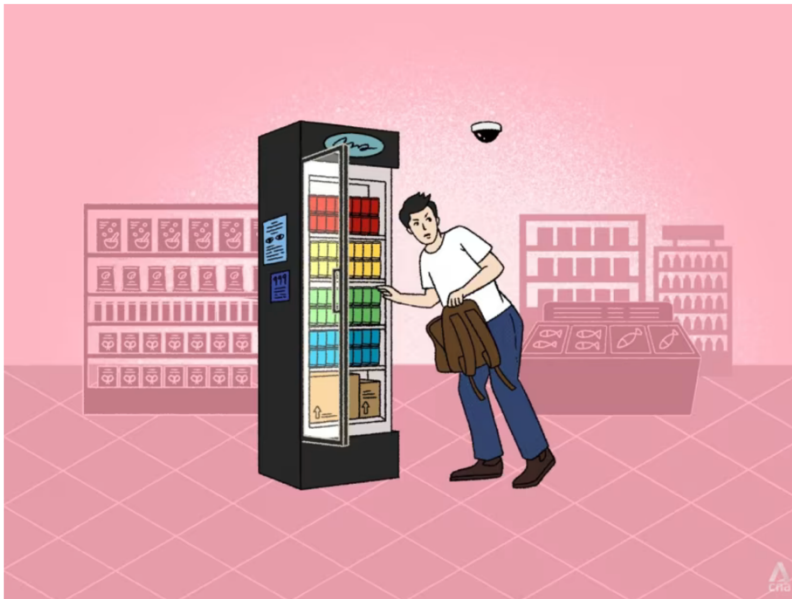


BIG READ

Stolen goods and hidden costs: Why shoplifting is on the rise in Singapore

Shopkeepers interviewed said that although they have hired more workers and installed surveillance cameras to combat shoplifting, challenges such as manpower constraints and high footfall make it difficult to fully address the problem.



Amanda Yeap

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Nearly 4,000 shop thefts were reported in 2023 in Singapore. (Illustration: CNA/Nurjannah Suhaimi)

Summary of news coverage

Stolen goods and hidden costs: Why shoplifting is on the rise in Singapore

Business owners and shopkeepers have implemented measures like installing more CCTV cameras and hiring additional staff to combat shoplifting, but these efforts have limitations, especially during busy periods. Outdoor displays add to the challenge of monitoring. Despite visible cameras and warning signs, shoplifting remains frequent. The police's 2023 crime brief noted a rise in shop thefts for the third consecutive year. Experts attribute some thefts to kleptomania, while others are driven by peer pressure and financial hardships among young people.

Given the complexities behind shoplifting behaviour, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. However, security and retail experts told CNA TODAY that taking proactive steps and focusing on key areas can help reduce incidents of theft.

Mr Benjamin Ho, a senior social worker at Thye Hua Kwan Family Service Centre's Tanjong Pagar branch, explained that when a child or teenager repeatedly steals, it often signals that previous interventions had been ineffective. "In such cases, it is

essential to reassess what is not working for both the child and their caregivers, while gaining a deeper understanding of the family's beliefs about right and wrong. Structured guidance from social workers can be instrumental in helping the child or teen develop a clearer understanding of accountability and consequences,” Mr Ho said.