SEATTLE THEFT CRIME LAWYER FOR SHOPLIFTING

ABOUT SHOPLIFTING CHARGES IN SEATTLE, WA

Shoplifting is a form of theft involving stealing goods or products from a store such as a drug store, department store, specialty shop, supermarket, convenience store, or thrift shop. Shoplifting often seems like the easiest type of theft to commit, and statistics show that more than $13 billion worth of goods are stolen from retailers on a yearly basis. According to the National Learning & Research Center, more than 10 million people have been caught shoplifting in the last five years. When it comes to shoplifting charges, many individuals fail to realize the severity of the situation they are in. Shoplifting affects more than just the offender, it also overloads the police and the court system, and creates higher costs for consumers and communities. Men and women of all ages have been known to shoplift, and only an estimated 3% of shoplifters are "professionals" who steal solely for resale or profit. The majority of those who are caught shoplifting do so not out of criminal intent or financial need, but as a response to either personal or social pressures in their life.

Our Seattle criminal defense attorneys are here to tell you that even a misdemeanor charge of shoplifting can affect your life and should not be taken lightly. If you have been charged with shoplifting in Seattle, you can greatly benefit from having an experienced defense lawyer who will represent your rights and protect your future. Here at Lewis & Laws, our Seattle theft crime lawyer will address your charges in an effective way with the ultimate purpose of getting your charges reduced of dismissed.

PENALTIES FOR SHOPLIFTING IN SEATTLE

According to Washington state law RCW 4.24.230, anyone convicted of stealing goods from a retailer is liable for the value of the goods that were stolen (not exceeding an amount of $2,850). This means that you will be responsible for paying back the retailer for the value of the stolen merchandise. There will also be a $100 fine and payment for all legal services that the retailer incurred during the proceedings.

Shoplifting can be charged as a simple misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor, or felony crime, but is typically charged as a gross misdemeanor unless the value of goods stolen exceeds $750. Depending on the circumstances and the amount that was stolen, a conviction for shoplifting could result in jail time or costly fines. For example, you may face a maximum jail sentence of 365 days and a maximum fine of $5,000, or both, if you are convicted of third-degree theft for stealing goods that do not exceed $750.

Second-degree theft involves stealing items that are valued at more than $750 but less than $5,000, and this is considered a Class C felony in the state of Washington. These crimes can result in a maximum 5 year jail sentence and/or $10,000 in fines. The most serious theft offense is first-degree theft, which is a Class B felony that can bring about a maximum jail sentence of 10 years and/or a $20,000 fine.

SHOPLIFTING DEFENSE IN SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Regardless of what your charges may entail, one thing is for certain. You need a qualified and experienced criminal defense attorney on your side during this important time in your life. When it comes to shoplifting cases, the intent of the defendant is not necessarily as important as it is in other types of theft cases. Physical evidence is what really matters. If you were found to be possessing stolen goods, even if there were no witnesses to the crime, you risk being convicted for shoplifting because of the physical evidence that was found. Our skilled attorneys will work with you to research the circumstances surrounding your case in order to come up with a defense strategy that will be effective at court.

Charged with shoplifting? Contact a Seattle theft crime attorney **today for help!**