

THE ULTIMATE SECURITY THAT WILL STOP “SMASH AND RUN” CRIME

DURHAM REGION — Broken glass, damaged doors, stolen merchandise and vehicles being used to ram store fronts have become an expensive reality for some businesses across Durham Region.

Commercial break-and-enters have hit businesses from Ajax and Pickering to Oshawa and Clarington, and recent police investigations have demonstrated just how costly organized property crime can become.

By June 25, 2026, Durham Regional Police had received 174 commercial business break-in reports across Durham Region, according to information provided by police.

The figure represents reported commercial break-ins — not necessarily 174 different businesses — because an individual business can be targeted more than once.

The number is also broader than what is commonly described as a “smash-and-grab.”

Police generally record these incidents under commercial break-and-enter classifications rather than maintaining a separate public statistic exclusively for smash-and-grab attacks.

The potential cost became particularly clear with Durham Regional Police’s Project Magenta. Police announced in September that four suspects — two adults and two youths — were facing more than 200 charges following an investigation into organized property crime across Durham Region and Toronto.

Police say approximately \$148,000 in merchandise was stolen during those two incidents.

Investigators also linked the group to an attempted break-in at Oliver Jewellery in Pickering, where a stolen vehicle was allegedly used in an attempt to force entry into the business.

Jewellery stores, cannabis dispensaries, trading-card retailers and pawn shops were among the types of businesses targeted.

According to Durham Regional Police, stolen vehicles were frequently used to facilitate the offences, including incidents where vehicles were driven into storefronts.

The total known losses and damages attributed to the offences investigated under Project Magenta approached \$1 million.

The problem has not been confined to Ajax and Pickering. In July, Durham police reported that at least three suspects were being sought after eight businesses and restaurants were broken into in Oshawa and Clarington.

Police also investigated two separate break-and-enters at an Oshawa hobby business.

The incidents demonstrate that commercial break-ins can affect businesses of very different sizes and types.

For a small independent retailer, the cost can extend far beyond whatever merchandise is taken. There can be smashed windows, damaged doors and frames, destroyed displays, insurance

attacked more than once, and the police figure covers commercial break-and-enter reports generally.

There does not appear to be a publicly available authoritative Durham Region statistic showing how many businesses have permanently closed specifically because of smash-and-grab crime.

Therefore, The Central Newspaper cannot responsibly state that a particular number of Durham businesses have shut their doors because of these crimes without individual confirmation from the businesses involved.

But even when a victimized business remains open, the financial damage can be substantial.

The two Ajax trading-card break-ins alone involved approximately \$148,000 in stolen merchandise, while the broader Project Magenta investigation resulted in nearly \$1 million in known losses and damages, according to police.

As businesses look for ways to protect themselves, physical security manufacturers are promoting products designed to make forced entry substantially more difficult.

Metalex Security Products says its security systems are designed to protect residential and commercial properties against forced entry and high-impact attacks.

One of its products is the SAFE-T-SCREEN.

A SAFETY PRODUCT THAT CAN TAKE A HIT with a baseball bat, sledge hammers and not even bare a scratch.

Safe-T-Screen is subjected to impact testing intended to simulate attempted break-ins and other high-force events.

Metalex says the stainless-steel security screen is designed to withstand significant impact without tearing or breaking while still allowing visibility and ventilation.

Every screen is custom manufactured for the property where it will be installed.

The company highlights several features: CAREFREE VENTILATION — Windows can remain open while the security screen provides an additional physical barrier against unwanted entry.

WON’T RUST OR CORRODE — Metalex says Safe-T-Screen is manufactured from stainless steel designed to withstand exposure to the elements and Canadian winters.

UNOBSTRUCTED VIEW — The screen is designed to provide protection without substantially blocking the view through the window.

UV PROTECTION — According to Metalex, the screening blocks an average of approximately 60 per cent of harmful UV rays, which may also help reduce fading of surfaces behind the screen.

The manufacturer says the product is intended to combine physical protection with visibility and airflow rather than turning a window into a solid barrier.

COMMERCIAL STOREFRONTS ARE A DIFFERENT BATTLE - For a retailer facing the possibility of a vehicle or heavy object being driven through a storefront, security needs can go well beyond conventional locks.

Metalex offers several products aimed specifically at commercial properties.

ROCKGLASS - The company markets RockGlass as a storefront-security solution intended to resist rocks and other impacts that could otherwise penetrate conventional glazing.

Metalex also says RockGlass offers a higher R-value than standard glass, providing an energy-efficiency benefit in addition to security.

This product is great for show-cases and high visibility areas. Showcases become undamageable. In the event of crime this product could become the ultimate solution.

These security screens are promoted for homes and commercial buildings as physical barriers intended to discourage unlawful entry while also helping keep animals and pests outside.

FORTRESS BOLLARDS - One of the most aggressive forms of smash-and-grab crime involves using a vehicle as a battering ram.

Fortress Bollards are designed to create a physical

barrier between vehicles and vulnerable storefront areas.

For businesses where conventional windows and doors may not be enough to stop a vehicle-assisted attack, bollards can add another layer of protection before an offender ever reaches the glass.

BALLISTIC-RESISTANT GLASS - Metalex also offers ballistic-resistant glazing products designed for properties requiring a higher level of security.

The company promotes the system as providing protection while maintaining transparency and visibility.

WINDOW GUARDS - Physical window guards provide another option for protecting vulnerable openings while maintaining ventilation.

Metalex says its range is designed to reduce the risk of forced entry while allowing businesses and homeowners to continue using their windows.

The troubling lesson from recent Durham cases is that a lock and an alarm may no

longer represent the entire security plan.

When offenders are prepared to smash doors, break glazing or allegedly use stolen vehicles to force their way through storefronts, businesses are increasingly examining physical barriers designed to delay or prevent entry altogether.

Cameras can record an attack. An alarm can announce it. But reinforced screens, security glazing, window guards and bollards are designed to confront another question: CAN THE INTRUDER GET INSIDE IN THE FIRST PLACE?

Metalex Security Products says its approach is based on providing multiple layers of physical security for homes, retailers, commercial properties and higher-security facilities.

For Durham businesses watching the growing cost of commercial break-ins, that conversation may be becoming increasingly important.

See page 6 for more details.



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ENDOBUDDY HOSTS COMMUNITY FUNDRAISER

To Advance AI-Powered Endometriosis Care and Launch Toward a Clinical Pilot

Everyone Welcome

Whitby Legion
117 Byron St S

October 10, 2026

6 PM to 10 PM

This event is part of a multi-channel campaign to raise funds for EndoBuddy’s upcoming clinical pilot and legal compliance review, ahead of a planned public launch during Endometriosis Awareness Month in March 2027.

Endometriosis affects roughly 1 in 10 people with a uterus worldwide, and diagnosis often takes years due to inconsistent symptom tracking. EndoBuddy was created to help close that gap, giving patients a way to log symptoms continuously and bring a clearer picture to doctor appointments.

Funds will go directly toward legal review and clinical pilot costs required to bring EndoBuddy safely to patients and clinicians.

\$5,000
Fundraising Goal

One part of a broader campaign running through the end of October 2026.

Support the campaign through

GoFundMe

LiveGood

Community Event

Earlier Data. Earlier Answers. Brighter Futures.

Investigators allege the group was connected to 36 incidents between June and September 2026, including eight commercial break-and-enters and 15 vehicle-theft-related offences.

Durham Regional Police Service Project Magenta began following two smash-and-grab break-ins at Ajax trading-card retailers on June 14.

deductibles, lost operating time, security upgrades and the possibility of increased insurance costs.

The strongest publicly reported regional figure available is: 174.

That should not be interpreted as 174 individual businesses or 174 smash-and-grab incidents.

Some businesses have been

This new product could be the answer for many shop owners.

Along Oshawa downtown it has become a serious problem for business owners and landlords.

This new age product is so strong that it renders it bullet proof.

According to product information supplied by Metalex,

LET ME BE YOUR VOICE FOR

SCHESHAWNA LEMAIRE

CITY COUNCILLOR WARD 5 OSHAWA

Being a resident of Ward 5 for the past 51 years, I have seen many economic and social changes within southern Oshawa. As your City Councillor for Ward 5, I will work to strengthen community programs that support families, seniors, and youth. I respect the efforts made by those serving. **BUT IT IS TIME FOR CHANGE.**

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