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Despite COVID shutdowns, violent fatalities in retail reached an all-time high in 2020. Based on publicly reported data, the new report shows fatalities and violent incidents in retail were up roughly 40% since 2016.

256 customers, 123 employees, 16 security officers and 128 suspects died in stores or parking lots nationwide

The Retail Violent Fatalities Report outlines a five-year trend of violence in the retail industry and reveals the stunning reality that COVID-19 shutdowns have had virtually no impact on bringing down violence. In fact, violent trends have continued unabated since 2016.

With the customary retail sectors that typically experience violent criminal acts for the most part unaffected by the shutdowns, there was no break in violent activity for retail. In 2020, a record 70% of violent retail fatalities occurred during the commission of a crime (robberies, burglaries, thefts).

“One alarming trend was the gradual movement of fatalities occurring in the parking lots and off-premises to occurring more now in-store, virtually even with parking lots,” said Downing, a 40+ year veteran of the retail loss prevention industry. “This has resulted in more aggressive consumers, which has been increasingly reported over the last two years.”