

Food Marketing Institute's

# LOSS PREVENTION LETTER

*for Supermarket Executives*

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## TAKE STEPS TO FOIL ALBANIAN SAFE BURGLARS

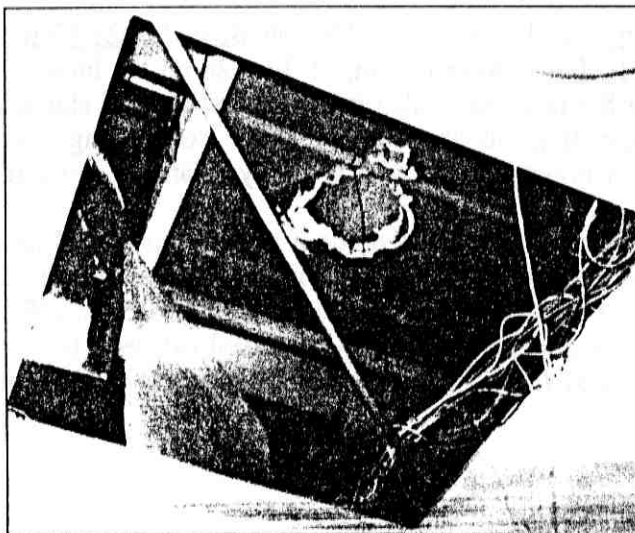
The Albanian safe burglary gangs continue to hit supermarkets, banks, home center stores, drug stores and jewelry stores. FMI's Loss Prevention Services Department has recorded 337 attacks on safes and ATM machines mostly in supermarkets over the past five years. Information about these burglaries has been disseminated to law enforcement agencies at the federal, state and local levels throughout the Middle Atlantic states and east coast. Information on the burglaries is also sent regularly to contacts in Atlanta and Southern California.

The Albanian safe burglary gangs have been particularly active on holidays and weekends. Typically, the gangs enter stores between midnight and 5:00 a.m. Entry is gained by cutting through the roof or by forcing open a fire exit door or a truck receiving door at the rear of

the store. The photographs in this article show how the Albanian gangs entered two supermarkets.

While cash loss by burglary may be covered by insurance, damage to the building and equipment caused by burglars may not be covered. Damage loss from an Albanian gang attack can reach as much as \$10,000 if the money safe is destroyed and the store roof is damaged, as shown in the photograph above at one recent supermarket burglary.

Stores located on the east coast and in the Middle Atlantic states are at risk during the upcoming holidays. Last year at least thirteen supermarkets were burglarized early Christmas day. All of the burglaries appeared to be the work of the Albanian gangs. The gangs have also targeted stores in Southern California, Tennessee and in the greater Atlanta area.



If your stores aren't equipped with a reliable alarm system, you may want to hire off-duty police officers or contract security officers to stay in the stores from midnight to 6:00 a.m. on Christmas day. The Albanian gangs will not be stopped by a standard hard-wired alarm system, however. The photograph on page 2 shows the results of a recent Albanian gang attack on telephone lines at a supermarket. A concealed cellular alarm system should

be used to back-up hard-wired alarm systems.

*(continued on page 2)*

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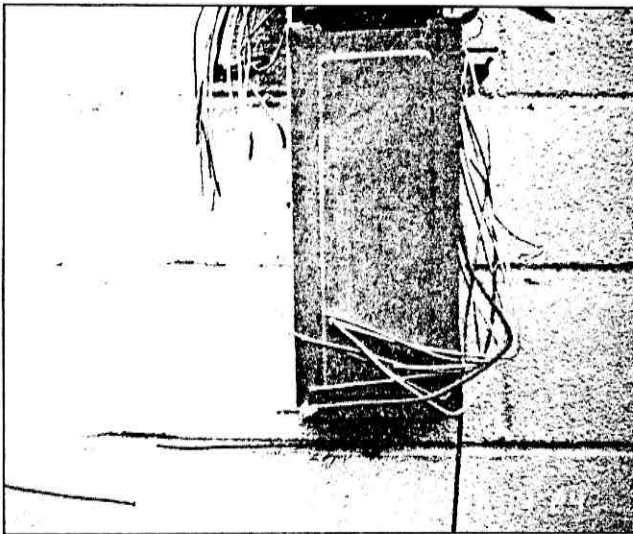
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## Take Steps to Foil Albanian Safe Burglars

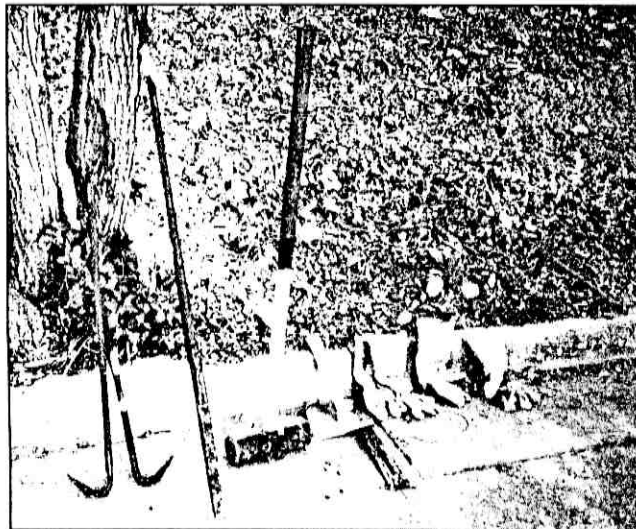
(continued from page 1)

Following is the procedure the Albanian gangs typically use to attack a supermarket.

1. Two or three members of the gang will conduct a surveillance of the store. (One gang member will usually stay in the car; check the parking lot if you suspect your store is being cased.) The gang members will locate the safe, alarm system control panel, CCTV cameras and rear doors. They often videotape, photograph and pace distances to determine where to cut through the roof.



2. Typically, the gangs will attack stores from midnight to 5:00 a.m., Saturday or Sunday. They will attack many stores over a holiday.
3. The gangs will include a driver who stays with the car and listens to a police scanner. He is equipped with a two-way radio to contact his accomplices.
4. The gangs will cut the telephone lines and then retreat to a safe distance to observe the store. If no one arrives to check the store within a reasonable time, they will begin their attack. If a security officer or police officer arrives to check the store, the gangs will watch the activity. After the security agent or police officer leaves, the gangs will approach the store.
5. Usually, the gangs scale an outside wall at the rear of the store to access the roof. One gang member has a two-way radio to communicate with the driver.
6. A small hole, about 16" square, will be cut in the roof at a point predetermined by their surveillance.



7. Usually three members of the gang will drop into the store through the hole cut in the roof. They proceed quickly with their burglary tools to the safe or ATM machine.

8. If necessary, the gangs will cover the front window with merchandise, cardboard or newspaper to shield themselves from outside view.

9. The burglars will leave their tools, usually including two sledge hammers, steel wedges and a large crow bar (see photograph below). Occasionally, a burning bar or burning torch are abandoned, as well. The gang members have been known to leave their shoes behind in the store.

10. In the past few months, the gangs have entered several stores by prying open the roll-up door at the receiving dock and then exiting through a rear personnel door.

We suggest the following steps be taken to assure that an alarm signal at your stores is handled properly.

1. Assign a responsible person(s) to report to the store to assist the police department when an alarm is reported at the store. In any such event, the store should be entered and the telephone lines should be checked. If the telephones are "dead," the store is likely a target of the Albanian gangs.

2. The police should access the roof to determine if anyone is hiding there and if there is any evidence of the roof being cut.

3. The police should check the immediate neighborhood for suspicious persons or vehicles.

Most often, the Albanian gangs drive older vehicles with New York State plates. Suspects' personal identifications are often noticeably counterfeit.

4. If any suspects are apprehended, they should be held until the police have contacted the FBI.
5. The FBI will likely suggest the action the police should take with the suspects.
6. Notify FMI's Loss Prevention Services Department of all suspected store surveillance, burglary attempts, burglaries and arrests of burglary suspects, or if you have any difficulty with local, county or state law enforcement agencies who are apparently unaware of the Albanian gangs and their threats and activities.