# Masked gang targets Co-op in Christchurch with high-speed ram-raid on ATM



A gang of masked robbers executed a brazen ram-raid at a Co-op store in Christchurch, Dorset, early on Saturday morning, stealing a cash machine with alarming efficiency. The incident occurred around 2:30 am when the assailants drove a dark Volkswagen Touareg directly into the front of the convenience store. Witnesses reported a chaotic scene as the group used various tools to forcibly detach the ATM from the wall and load it into the vehicle’s boot.

After the heist, a second car, believed to be a blue Audi RS3, was seen speeding away, adding to the urgency of the police response. Authorities were notified shortly after the incident, arriving on the scene at 2:43 am to cordon off the area and begin a full investigation. A spokesperson for Dorset Police confirmed that the investigation aims to ascertain the circumstances surrounding this audacious crime.

The Co-op store has since reopened, but the traumatic event has left staff and local residents unsettled. A spokesperson for the store stated, “We appeal for anyone who may have seen or heard anything to come forward to Police, who are investigating. We would like to thank the Police for the speed of their response.” Despite these efforts, no arrests have been made so far, and police are actively seeking any information, particularly dashcam footage from the area.

This incident is not isolated; reports indicate a troubling trend of similar crimes across the UK, particularly targeting Co-op stores. Just last month, in a similar operation, a Range Rover was used in a ram-raid against a Midcounties Co-op in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, in which the perpetrators also escaped with an ATM. Historical cases dating back to 2016 show a pattern of such attacks on Co-op locations across Dorset, including incidents in Wareham and Upton, where criminals successfully made off with cash machines without being apprehended.

These alarming trends have sparked not only heightened police vigilance but also concerns among community members about safety. The incidents have created an atmosphere of fear, especially in smaller towns where convenience stores serve as vital local resources. In December, CCTV footage captured a separate robbery in Newport, South Wales, showing masked assailants violently assaulting a shopkeeper as they stole from the till, indicating an increasing boldness among criminals.

Moreover, there are growing concerns about how modern techniques of theft are evolving, with criminals utilising advanced methods for breaking into cash machines, including previous instances where devices were fitted to ATM machines to siphon funds or capture card information. Last year, two men were charged after being found guilty of such schemes across several sites in East Dorset, illustrating that while physical ram-raids dominate the headlines, more insidious forms of theft persist.

The community's outcry following such incidents highlights the need for increased safety measures and preventive strategies, as well as a collaborative effort between law enforcement and local businesses to mitigate the risks of future crimes. With the recent spike in ATM robberies, residents and local authorities alike hope for a swift resolution to ongoing investigations and an end to this unsettling pattern.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14747809/masked-gang-drive-Volkswagen-op-driving-cash-machine.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-dorset-37213363> - In August 2016, a vehicle was driven through the front of the Co-op store in North Street, Wareham, Dorset, at 03:58 BST. The cash machine inside was stolen, but no arrests were made despite a police search. Authorities sought information from anyone who saw a khaki coloured Land Rover with a tyre on the bonnet in the area. The BBC is not responsible for the content of external sites.
3. <https://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/20197356.co-op-store-upton-ram-raided-cash-machine-stolen/> - In the early hours of an unspecified date, the Co-op store in Poole Road, Upton, Dorset, was ram-raided by three masked men who reportedly stole a cash machine. Dorset Police were contacted for details. The Bournemouth Echo is not responsible for the content of external sites.
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-dorset-12518842> - In 2011, police in Dorset investigated incidents where criminals fitted hidden cameras and devices to Co-op cash machines in Corfe Mullen, Bournemouth, Poole, and East Dorset, leading to card retention and fraudulent bank account access. Two men were charged in connection with the investigation. The BBC is not responsible for the content of external sites.
5. <https://www.advertiserandtimes.co.uk/news/ram-raiders-use-land-rover-in-bid-to-steal-from-cash-machine-9152445/> - In October 2019, ram-raiders used a Land Rover Discovery to smash through the back doors of the Co-op in Highcliffe, Dorset, in an attempt to steal from the in-store cash machine. The offenders fled the scene on foot, apparently empty-handed. The Advertiser & Times is not responsible for the content of external sites.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-gloucestershire-68215067> - In October 2023, a Range Rover was used in an overnight ram raid at the Midcounties Co-op on Bath Road in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. The group of men stole a cash machine and fled in a second vehicle, possibly an Audi or BMW. The BBC is not responsible for the content of external sites.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-bristol-33702988> - In July 2015, masked men blew up a cash machine at the Co-op supermarket on Bishopsworth Road in Bristol, stealing money in the early hours. A resident described the 'shocking' moment he was woken by an explosion. The BBC is not responsible for the content of external sites.