

Retail & Age-Gated Products Security

How Brown Jug Nearly Eliminated Retail Theft Across Alaska with Patronscan

Industry: Liquor Stores · Retail
Client: Brown Jug, Alaska

Overview:

Brown Jug is Alaska's leading liquor retailer with 20+ locations and 200+ team members serving communities from Anchorage, Eagle River, and Wasilla up to Fairbanks, their northernmost store. For Brown Jug, security operations are led by Afognak Commercial Group.

Facing a sharp rise in brazen, sometimes violent theft, Brown Jug took a proactive approach: deploying Patronscan's Identity Verification Access Control (IVAC) system for ID scanning on controlled entrances. The result was a dramatic, lasting drop in theft and violence, restored employee morale, and a shopping experience that law-abiding customers actually preferred. This set a new precedent for responsible, technology-driven retail security.

Roy Chapel, Corporate Security Manager at Afognak Commercial Group, frames security around the people who make the business run: store employees. His philosophy is to "protect the staff first, and the benefits ripple outward to customers and the company."



The Problem:

During COVID-19, theft at Brown Jug stores escalated from covert to brazen and open. Thieves grabbed multiple bottles and walked out with no attempt to conceal and increasingly arrived armed. The core challenge: stop escalating theft and protect staff without the prohibitive cost of full-time security at every location, and without driving away genuine customers.

- **Relentless frequency:** Employees witnessed theft up to 10 times in a single 8-hour shift.
- **Rising danger:** Thieves used the pandemic as cover and grew more dangerous, bringing pepper spray, machetes, and guns to threaten workers.
- **Human cost:** Constant exposure wore down staff morale and threatened employee retention, customer experience, and store reputation.
- **Cost barrier:** Traditional fixes such as guards at every store and more cameras were too expensive to scale.

"During COVID, more people started coming into the store, fake coughing and saying, 'I've got COVID. Stay away, stay back.' They'd use this as a cover to take whatever they wanted. Now, these thieves have become more brazen, bringing pepper spray, machetes, and guns to threaten workers."

— Roy Chapel, Corporate Security Manager, Afognak Commercial Group

The Solution:

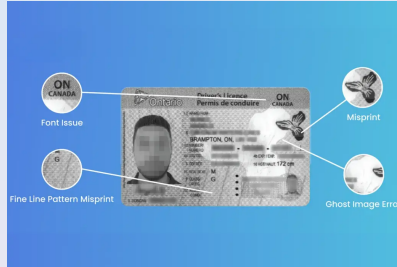
Brown Jug shifted from reactive loss prevention to proactive access control: verify identity before entry so would-be thieves can't operate anonymously. The team began with a PatronsCan IVAC pilot at the single highest-theft store, then expanded in a phased rollout as results proved itself. The PatronsCan Wall Mount technology was paired with up-front customer education to protect the shopping experience.

The PatronsCan Toolset at Brown Jug:



IVAC — Identity Verification Access Control

The core controlled-entrance ID scanning platform. Customers verify a valid ID before the sealed inner doors open, granting secure, hassle-free access while keeping unknown or flagged individuals out.



Forensic ID verification engine

A two-pronged scanning engine compares each ID against extensive libraries of real and fake templates built by PatronsCan's experts. It was fast, autonomous, and weatherproof for Alaska's extreme cold.



Strike-system integration + education

Links into door locks, turnstiles, or cooler doors for flexible deployment. Rolled out with 'bag stuffers' placed in customer bags 2-3 weeks before each install to ease the transition.

How PatronsCan Supports Daily Operations:

- **Verify before entry:** Every customer scans a government-issued ID at the controlled entrance, and only a successful forensic verification unlocks the sealed inner doors, removing the "open invitation" that made walk-in theft so easy.
- **Catch fake and altered IDs:** The two-pronged scanning engine compares each ID against extensive libraries of real and fake templates, flagging forgeries that a manual glance would miss.
- **Confirm age for age-gated products:** Age is verified automatically at the door, supporting responsible sale of alcohol without slowing down legitimate customers.
- **Keep staff out of confrontations:** Because access is controlled before anyone reaches the shelves, employees no longer have to physically intervene or chase down thieves. The most dangerous moments are designed out of the workday.
- **Reliable in Alaska conditions:** The weatherproof system runs consistently in extreme cold, so the entrance workflow holds up across every location and season.

"In the security industry, our true customers are the employees at the stores. They're the ones bringing in customers and making sales. My job is to make them feel safe, protected, and comfortable. When our employees feel confident, they can better serve our company's customers. By focusing on our employees' safety, we create a positive ripple effect that benefits everyone."

— Roy Chapel, Corporate Security Manager, Afognak Commercial Group

The Results:



Theft & dollars lost down 93–96%

The pilot store that had the chain's highest-theft location saw a 93–96% drop in shoplifting incidents and dollars lost within the first three months.



Violence & theft down 92%

As IVAC expanded to additional locations, violence and theft fell 92%, creating a safer environment for both staff and customers.



Minimal sales impact, recovered in 6 weeks

Thanks to up-front bag-stuffer education, the impact on sales was minimal and fully recovered within about six weeks, safety with the shopping experience intact.

"Patronscan actually keeps everyone safer and has almost eliminated all thefts. Nobody (employees or patrons) liked dealing with thieves who knew they could just walk in, beat us up, take whatever they wanted, and walk out. Now, they understand that this is no longer possible."

— Roy Chapel, Corporate Security Manager, Afognak Commercial Group

From challenge to strength: how it plays out day to day

- **Proactive prevention at the door:** A four-step entrance protocol with security station, ID request, swift forensic verification, sealed doors open, stops theft before it starts rather than chasing it after.
- **Safer, more confident staff:** Removing the constant threat of brazen, armed theft restored employee morale and made staff feel supported and protected at work.
- **A customer experience that wins loyalty:** Despite early concerns, law-abiding customers were minimally affected, and some now prefer to shop where Patronscan is in place because of the added security.
- **Cost-effective, scalable security:** IVAC solved 96%+ of issues for a fraction of the cost of guards, expanded camera coverage, and trespass enforcement across every store.
- **Privacy by design:** Minimal data collected, encrypted in transit and at rest, retained no longer than ~21 days (except active investigations), never sold or shared, addressing privacy concerns transparently and within the law.

What was once Brown Jug's biggest operational and safety threat became a competitive strength.

Brown Jug

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"If you want zero theft, it's going to cost a ton of money with full-time security, better ID checks, improved radius for trespassing enforcement, and cameras everywhere. But by taking the leap and bringing in PatronsCan, I solved over 96% of the issues for a fraction of the cost of all those other initiatives. It's a no-brainer."

— Roy Chapel, Corporate Security Manager, Afognak Commercial Group

Conclusion:

By replacing reactive loss prevention with proactive identity verification at the door, Brown Jug turned its most pressing safety threat into a competitive advantage. PatronsCan's Identity Verification Access Control (IVAC) solution cut shoplifting and dollars lost by 93–96% at the pilot store and reduced violence and theft by 92% across the rollout, all while sales fully recovered within six weeks and employees regained a sense of safety on the job.

What began as a single, liquor store retail security experiment has become a chain-wide standard, proving that strong security and a welcoming customer experience aren't competing goals but complementary ones.

"PatronsCan has been a blessing all around. It's been a blessing for our customers, it's been a blessing for our employees who feel like they're working – and customers are shopping – in a much safer environment."

— Ana Fisk, Vice President, Afognak Commercial Group

**Schedule a free demo with our team. Call
1-877-778-9798 or email sales@patronsCan.com.
Learn more at patronsCan.com.**