

Building Security – Keeping People and Property Safe

According to the US Small Business Administration, locations without formal security measures are over 4 times more likely to be targeted by criminals than those with robust systems in place. Building security is the protection of property, assets, and occupants from intruders, perpetrators of violence, and unsafe or hazardous situations that can cause them harm or damage. Underestimating the importance of building security puts everything and everyone within the building at risk. Maintaining your building's security is the responsibility of all staff, and here are some effective measures to help reduce the risk to people and property.

#1 Emergency Procedures – Develop and regularly update your Emergency Action Plan for your site. Conduct drills to ensure everyone knows the procedures and protocols, be it to shelter in place or to evacuate. Maintain an updated list of emergency contacts and ensure it is easily accessible. Not having clear and practiced procedures can lead to chaos during an emergency. Consider implementing visual aids to remind staff and visitors of protocols and be sure to keep everyone informed if changes are made. As part of your routine access checks, ensure that all exit routes are not blocked. Sample Emergency Action Plans, Fire Prevention Plans & Workplace Violence Plans can be found here -

<https://www.memun.org/Risk-Management/Loss-Control/Resources>

https://www.safetyworksmaine.gov/safe_workplace/sample_programs/index.shtml

#2 Employee Engagement – Involving and engaging your employees in the development of your building security strategy is important because it ensures the security plans are practical, effective, and widely supported. Employees offer valuable insights into daily operations and potential vulnerabilities, helping to create a more comprehensive strategy. Their involvement also fosters a sense of ownership which increases the likelihood of compliance with the protocols. Involving employees early helps to identify potential challenges, improves communication, and builds a culture of security and safety.



#3 Access Control – Ensure all entry points are secured with locks and monitored by personnel or by surveillance cameras. Implement a system for verifying the identity of all visitors and staff, such as ID badges or sign-in sheets. Doors and windows that are not properly locked or monitored can allow unauthorized individuals to enter. Over 30% of burglaries occur through unsecured entry points such as unlocked doors or windows. If your property has fences, gates or barriers that are easily bypassed this too can allow unauthorized access. Work with your staff to review your site and identify weaknesses. Together, develop a plan to control those points through locks, gates, fencing, etc. Be sure to implement a monthly routine to ensure that access points and barriers, if in place, are secure and working properly. A sample building security checklist can be found here on our website in Loss Control Sample Policies. <https://www.memun.org/Risk-Management/Loss-Control/Resources>

TOOLBOX TALKS

#4 Lighting – Ensure that all exterior areas including parking lots and walkways are well lit to deter unauthorized access. Consider keeping interior lights on in key areas during off-hours to maintain visibility. Insufficient lighting both inside and outside pose security risks and creates opportunities for criminal activity, be sure to fix lights/replace bulbs/sensors on lights not working. A combination of motion-activated lights, floodlights, and well-placed dusk to dawn lights are optimal.

#5 Surveillance Systems – Install security cameras at strategic locations, including entrances, exits and high traffic areas. Camera footage should be recorded to a server (cloud based or local server based) and maintained for a minimum of 30 days. Camera systems should also be set up to alert someone in the event motion is seen during certain hours. Areas without cameras can become blind spots where suspicious activities may go unnoticed. Identify those areas and monitor.



Remember that no single strategy is foolproof, and a comprehensive approach that combines multiple tactics is often the most effective way to maintain building security. Additionally, it is important to regularly assess the effectiveness of these strategies and adjust them as needed based on the specific needs and challenges of the community and the building in question. Many of the solutions above would be eligible for funding from our Risk Reduction Grant, which can be found here:

<https://www.memun.org/Risk-Management/Grants-Scholarships/Risk-Reduction-Grant>.

If you'd like to talk more with a Loss Control Consultant about this subject, please email – rmslosscontrol@memun.org

Sources –

[Protecting the Public \(safer.me\)](https://safer.me)

<https://safetyculture.com/topics/building-security/>

FBI uniform crime reporting program

US Small Business Administration/Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Guidelines (CPTED)