

## Security Services

Virtually all commercial buildings of any size need some sort of security measures implemented to protect corporate assets and to reduce the liability for incidents. Routine security services touch on all areas of a mid- to large-size commercial or corporate-owned property.

Typically, the facilities management department may perform some of the functions and manage those aspects that are contracted out. The mix of in-house and outsourced services varies based on the specific needs of each company, whether union workforces are involved, and whether classified federal work is being performed. Routine tasks are often outsourced.

The following are the security services typically provided:

- Admittance Monitoring and Control
- Visitor Processing
- Alarm Response
- Monitoring Parking
- Directing Municipal Emergency Services
- Documentation of Conditions and Incidents
- Maintaining Logs
- Tracking Incidents

These services relate directly to the protection of the building during normal business hours. There are several additional services that facility management customers often require, which include:

- Security for Customer Areas
- Protection of High Value, Customer-Owned Equipment
- Exterior Patrols
- Interior Patrols
- Exterior Area Emergency Devices
- After Hours/Special Events

### Admittance Monitoring and Control

Routine admittance monitoring entails controlling admittance at the perimeter of the building through a combination of security guards, concierge services, or electronics such as the installation of electronic card access systems. The number of security guards needed depends on the design and size of the facility and the area crime rate.

### Visitor Processing

As part of the admittance control process, customers want the perimeter guard or concierge to call their offices upon the arrival of guests. In secure areas, visitors are issued badges and/or escorted to customers' offices.

### **Alarm Response**

An alarm response service is the local process for monitoring and responding to alarms in the building and taking action when the response dictates. Depending on security hardware installed at the site, it may involve monitoring closed-circuit television systems. This task may be quite specialized in some companies.

### **Monitoring Parking**

If the property has a parking lot or garage, security may involve routine periodic checks or patrols of the parking area, assisting customers with directions, and providing jump starts for their vehicles. These guards also notify the police to respond to events taking place in these parking areas.

### **Directing Municipal Emergency Services**

When an emergency takes place on the property, the security personnel are normally assigned to direct the emergency services to the emergency site. This work is likely to be outsourced if a company likewise outsources its entire security program. In other instances, depending on the nature of the emergency and local procedures, security personnel remain at the site to help with crowd control or to act at the direction of in-house emergency services personnel or the property manager.

### **Documentation of Conditions and Incidents**

The security service observes and documents site conditions. Routine documentation includes reporting the presence of hazards, making written reports of security-related incidents—such as theft or damage—and notifying facility operations personnel of the incident. The facility manager and the property manager should establish a policy to identify who will be authorized to sign a criminal complaint against persons who have committed crimes that damage the property or cause loss of assets. Consultation with the owner’s legal counsel should be made during the policy formulation process.

### **Maintaining Logs**

As part of the audit process, security personnel normally maintain log books that record entries of personnel after business hours, equipment failures or building problems such as water leaks or elevator breakdowns, and the delivery of packages and other items on behalf of facility operations personnel.

### **Tracking Incidents**

Facility operations should maintain statistics of incidents taking place on the property to identify trends and take measures to prevent additional incidents. Numerous low-cost software programs are available in the security marketplace to simplify this process. These programs allow for loading individual reports into an automated database that can sort incidents by type, date, severity, and degree of danger.

### **Security for Customer Areas**

For reasons of liability in multi-customer buildings, access to and from the customer areas should be controlled by the customers, except in instances of an emergency. If space is leased, the lease document should define standards for the types of equipment and devices that the customers may choose to install to control access. If the lease does not specify equipment, the facility manager should work with customers to set standards for the equipment. Minimum standards should be set regarding locks and security systems. Customers should meet the minimum standards when installing their own equipment. They should also be given the option to exceed the standard as long as life-safety codes are followed. In single-customer facilities, there may be a need to collaborate with the tenant in devising approaches to security. The facility manager may control some aspects of access to the customer areas through a guard service or electronic devices. However, the precise nature of the additional service must be defined in writing to limit the liability of the company and the facilities management department.

### **Protection of High Value, Customer Owned Equipment**

Customers bear the primary responsibility for protecting high-value equipment and commodities from losses because of crime or other events. Facility operations must collaborate closely with the property manager to reassure customers who have this exposure.

### **Exterior Patrols**

The use of exterior security patrols, particularly motorized ones, should be carefully evaluated. On properties located in suburban or rural areas with low crime rates, the deployment of these patrols may be hard to justify. However, these patrols are recommended in urban or suburban areas where crime is commonplace and where adjacent properties have such patrols. If there are multiple buildings and the property is large enough to require traveling from one building to another (a campus setting, for instance), motorized patrol vehicles are recommended. Strict guidelines for personnel assigned to motorized patrols should be written and incorporated into the guard-training program.

### **Interior Patrols**

Historically, guard patrols of the interior of a property were common because they were often required as a condition of fire insurance. Modern smoke detection devices and security electronics, such as access control and surveillance systems, decrease the need for interior security patrols. Furthermore, an increasing number of thefts and other breaches of security each year are caused by guards. Unless technology cannot adequately protect the property, interior patrols are not recommended.

However, some facilities that insurance carriers classify as highly protected risks require guard patrols as a condition of insurance. Typically, these facilities are special use properties, such as refineries and high-hazard manufacturing or production sites, and not typical commercial properties. Even in these occupancies, more reliable forms of surveillance are increasingly being

used, such as robotic tour devices (automated cars mounted with video cameras that transmit live images).

### **Exterior Area Emergency Devices**

A number of devices are becoming increasingly popular for protecting personnel in parking garages and parking lots. These devices, described as “assistance stations,” consist of brightly painted or marked poles containing two-way intercoms that are continuously monitored by staff. Remote controls are also available and are typically purchased by the customer. These devices contain strobe lights and CCTV devices that can be activated by a customer or passerby in the event of an emergency. Facilities in high crime areas with customer populations that work evenings should consider installing these devices.

### **After Hours/Special Events**

If customers elect to use a facility for special events, or to permit the use of their space by a third party for such special events as parties or charitable purposes by nonprofit groups, there must be a clear understanding about who bears liability for any incidents that may occur. In a commercial lease situation, the customer should be required to execute a special license agreement. Such agreements limit the liability of the building owners in case an incident occurs during the event. The agreement should define conditions for not only additional security, but also HVAC, cleanup, parking, use of alcoholic beverages, supervision and monitoring of children, and designation of evacuation wardens for the event.

### **Assessing Level of Security Service**

For corporate-owned facilities, the level of security is based directly on business requirements. In a leased facility, if the customer selects higher levels of security than those described below, they may be considered above standard services and billed accordingly.

Facility managers should follow the community crime rates, because local increases in crime may necessitate an increase in security measures at their properties. Each community maintains crime statistics and reports them to the state and federal governments. Reports of these statistics are published in a compendium commonly known in the United States as Uniform Crime Reports ([www.fbi.gov/ucr](http://www.fbi.gov/ucr)).

If the crime rate significantly escalates in the community, particularly adjacent to or on the property, appropriate precautions should be communicated to all customers along with a description of any optional security services. The amount of security provided to any facility should generally be based on these criteria:

- the crime rate in the community in which the facility is located
- the crime rate in the immediate area of the facility
- businesses or occupancies at the site that might attract persons to commit crimes
- the customer’s need for protection based on the overall corporate need to protect assets and business operations at the site

- the type and level of security provided in buildings directly adjacent to the property and in comparable buildings of similar size, use, and occupancies in the same geographical area
- the amount of internal theft within your own company and on the premises

Many customers view security as an important dimension of service because it protects their personnel and business operations. Customers must have confidence that the facilities management department is providing a safe environment.

This article is adapted from BOMI International's *Fundamentals of Facilities Management*. More information regarding this is available by calling 1-800-235-2664, or by visiting [www.bomi.org](http://www.bomi.org).

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