

THE RISK OBSERVER

COLLEGE CAMPUS SECURITY

The protection of employees and students from physical harm, and preservation of public and personal property is critical in a campus security risk management program. A well designed campus security program should include the following elements:

- Reliable communications for on and off campus
- Campus law enforcement
- Security assessments
- Building and site access control
- Residence hall security
- Security equipment
- Record keeping

COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

Written and electronic communications should include safety tips within the student handbook. Online and written postings or handouts can provide important information on safety and crime prevention tips. It can also be used to provide information on campus security procedures and policies, and instructions on how to report suspicious or criminal activity on campus to the proper authorities. Campus publications, such as the student newspaper and newsletters, campus E-mail systems, and crime prevention bulletins, can be used to provide the information.

Communication with the local police is important. Local security personnel should be familiar with the campus setting to facilitate a timely response in the event of an emergency. Local emergency responders can also be a valuable resource in providing safety and crime prevention training programs for the student body. Students and staff should be made aware of the importance of security and be trained on how their campus security program works. The student online safety site, handbooks, student newspaper and posters can all be used to provide information about the security program. A crime prevention training program for students should promote the shared responsibility among students, staff, and campus law enforcement.

CAMPUS LAW ENFORCEMENT

A major task of campus security is patrolling the grounds. Security patrols should focus on crime prevention through the reduction of criminal opportunities. The public safety department is responsible for the campus security program on most campuses including the staffing and supervision of campus security officers. This department may also have responsibility for investigating crimes, as well as instances of employee misconduct, theft of college property, and threats against individuals. Campus security staff authority can range from contract or proprietary security officers, with basically civilian



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status, to security officers that have limited arrest powers, but less than arrest powers of the police. In some jurisdictions, campus security officers have full police authority.

Depending on their level of responsibility, all campus security officers should have minimum levels of education, work experience, and training, be subject to background investigation and criminal history checks, and be required to take psychological examinations and be tested for drug use. The training should be focused on the defined job responsibilities and should meet requirements of applicable state laws. Many states have regulations governing screening and/or training of security officers.

SECURITY ASSESSMENTS

A physical assessment of the campus should focus on the following:

- Access from other properties by physical barriers such as fencing.
- Maintenance of landscaping to eliminate hiding spaces for criminals and provide for visible surveillance of the property.
- Building design features that reduce or eliminate hiding spaces for criminals.
- Signs of vandalism, or homelessness around the property as indications of potential high risk areas.
- Lighting is a significant crime deterrent. Security lighting should adequately illuminate entrances to buildings, walkways, vehicle parking areas and other pedestrian traffic areas. The lighting system should be regularly maintained and repairs made expeditiously.

BUILDING AND SITE ACCESS CONTROL

Campuses are typically considered open environments where students, guests, and staff can move freely from place to place. A building and site access control program should be designed to allow authorized individuals easy access, while restricting access to unauthorized individuals. The degree of access control should be a function of the campus layout. The size and layout of the campus plays a significant role in determining the feasibility of controlling perimeter access. Building access control system should take into consideration life safety, ADA, and fire code regulations.

EMERGENCY CALL STATIONS

One key security issue for college campuses and some high school campuses is the use of emergency call stations scattered throughout the campus along walking areas, and in some of the remote areas such as parking lots. When the user picks up the phone they are connected to security and a blue light flashes 8 to 10 feet high to alert others in the area.



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ELECTRONIC CARD AND KEY ACCESS

Computer card access to buildings offer many advantages over key controlled buildings, and as older buildings are renovated consideration should be given to converting to electronic card access.

A key control program must include a key inventory control, and if the locking system has been in place for a long time, and all keys cannot be accounted for, consideration must be given to changing to a new locking system. When selecting a new key system the system should have restrictive key blanks that are not readily available to locksmiths, to ensure that those keys are not easily replicated. The key system also should be compatible with the existing campus locks so that new locks will not have to be purchased. Accurate and timely tracking of who has what keys is critical, and keys should only be distributed on an as needed basis. A secure key storage should be maintained for extra keys. Policies should be established regarding who has access to rooms, who has authority to grant access to a particular area, and who is responsible for issuing keys, and only designated locksmiths should be permitted to change or repair locks.

As a result of increased security awareness on campuses, there has been a move away from the traditional key and lock systems to more sophisticated card access systems.

An advantage of card access systems is the fact that codes can be changed rapidly to disable lost or stolen cards. Card access systems flexibility varies from single locks to systems that electronically control multiple locks in multiple buildings. In card access systems the same principles of key control apply to the distribution and management of access cards. Data can be retained and retrieved on building access histories to assist in investigations.

RESIDENCE HALL SECURITY

A residence hall security program should include the following elements:

- Training of residents in responsibilities and role in maintaining the integrity of the security program.
- Door controls assuring that the doors are always locked.
- Restricting night time access into residence halls to one door.
- Separate keys or cards to enter the building and to gain access into student rooms.
- Updating access codes or changing locks to student rooms whenever a key or access card is lost.
- Security patrols should verify that accessible doors and windows are locked at night.
- All door access controls should meet the most current life safety code standards.



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SECURITY EQUIPMENT

Fire alarms, sprinkler monitoring systems, video monitoring, and security alarms can be integrated to make it easier for the school to staff a centralized monitoring station, and to coordinate an emergency response. Closed circuit TV systems are oftentimes used as to enhance security. These systems are typically installed at entrances to residence halls to identify visitors requesting entry, in parking lots to monitor potential criminal activity, and on campus grounds for surveillance purposes and as deterrence to crime. The system should be tied into a video recorder to provide for a historical record that can be reviewed to evaluate access control, traffic patterns, and as evidence of a crime. Intrusion alarms should be used when a fast response is needed to breaches of security has occurred into areas where access is not permitted.

RECORDS KEEPING

Tracking of security events is helpful so that criminal and violent acts on campus can be evaluated for patterns, and for providing the information to the police for investigations. Statistics can then be consistently monitored to evaluate trends and the success of a campus security program.



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