

5 Simple Steps to Improve Workplace Security

Having a robust workplace security program can seem like a daunting and expensive undertaking, reserved for only the largest companies with the most complicated issues. The reality is that every organization from the nimblest “mom and pop” to Fortune 50 companies can dramatically improve security with just some basic steps. Tragedies like we all witnessed at a high school in Parkland, Florida can make it seem overwhelming, but it doesn’t have to be that way. Spending a little bit of time and effort can pay huge dividends.

1. **Think like a criminal** - What would be attractive for a “bad guy” to take or do at your workplace? Do you deal with cash, do your employees work late at night by themselves, is it easy to get into the building? Once you identify your vulnerabilities, you can take steps to start addressing them.
2. **Pay attention to the little things** - Lights, landscaping and locks are the cornerstone of security. The lights around your building should cover the main areas where people are coming and going. Landscaping should be trimmed to help eliminate hiding spots. A recognized standard is nothing taller than 3ft or lower than 8ft. And lastly, the locks on your doors should work AND be used. Can your staff lock the main doors from the inside? Do they have a place inside the office they can retreat to if something bad happens?
3. **If you see something, do something** - People intent on doing bad things more often than not act “weird”. They act differently than regular customers or clients interacting with your business. Trust your intuition and when you get “that” feeling let somebody know right away. Never get comfortable feeling uncomfortable.
4. **Have a plan** - Spend time as a team thinking what the most likely emergencies are to occur, and then talk about what you would do if they were to happen. One of the most basic and effective plans is the Standard Response Protocol developed by www.iloveguys.com. The plan has 4 easy to understand steps and is free to download. Once you have a plan, practice, then practice again.
5. **Think of your loved ones** - As simple (or silly) a suggestion as this may seem, it’s probably the most powerful one. We all want to go home at the end of the day to the ones we love and care about. Having the resolve to follow through on security measures, to plan and prepare is much easier when you remember why you are going through these steps. Thinking of the ones you care about makes it easier to cross the street when you are nervous or step off the elevator if somebody makes you feel uncomfortable. How much do you want to come home?

In summary, keep it simple. Preventing workplace violence is a serious issue, but there are a lot of other serious workplace issues that you must deal with on a daily basis and yet you manage to provide a happy, safe and productive workplace for your employees. One major suggestion is don’t try to do this by yourself, workplace security is a team effort. There is no single person that is responsible for keeping

the workplace safe, we each have our roles to play. Many organizations find that it's easier and more effective to establish a small committee to help keep the traction going. Lastly, keep this one reality in mind. In every single workplace security incident, accident, breach or tragedy that I've been involved in, reviewed or investigated (over 2,500), it was the simple things that were overlooked or ignored that allowed it to happen. Take care of the basics first.



Mr. Hector Alvarez is a security expert who specializes in workplace violence prevention, and a Certified Threat Manager™ by the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals. He has built over 25 years of experience from serving as Security Director protecting one of our nation's most sensitive critical infrastructures, to working as a city police officer and as a professional consultant. He understands the challenges organizations face when addressing the threats of violence because he has responded to them. He has personally assessed and/or responded to thousands of potentially violent situations, developed numerous violence prevention programs and trained tens of thousands of employees and managers in the areas of crisis intervention, violence prevention, domestic terrorism and emergency management.