



The Four Pillars of a Good Security Program

Establishing an organizations security program is much like building a house; for both, you need a solid foundation without which the entire effort will crumble. When establishing a system for good security, that foundation needs to set on four crucial risk management practices or pillars: Awareness, Target Hardening, Staff Training, and Law Enforcement Liaison.

AWARENESS

American Jewish Leaders can no longer put security on the back burner. We cannot solely rely on law enforcement to protect us. The ADL and the FBI have both reported that the threats to the American Jewish Community are increasing. The Jewish community does not exist in a vacuum and is subject to the social, political and economic forces that affect all Americans. In many cases those forces can affect the Jewish community even more intensely as we've seen with the recent increase in bomb threats called into JCC's and Jewish schools across the United States with this trend expected to continue.

We must start creating awareness within our institutions that security is everyone's responsibility. It starts with the CEO of any organization and flows down to every staff member and employee in the building. We like to call it creating a "Culture of Security" in your organization. It starts with educating your employees on what the threats are and training them on how to respond to stay safe. The "See Something, Say Something Campaign," as simple as it sounds works. Your employees are your first responders. By encouraging them to report suspicious activity and working with the police you may disrupt and deter a serious incident from happening before it impacts your organization.

TARGET HARDENING

Take a hard look at access control to your facility. Yes, we have the difficult challenge of being open and accessible to the public we serve, but you also have a responsibility to keep everyone safe. We don't need to create a fortress with armed security guards stationed at every turn. However, you should have a security professional conduct an assessment of your facility and make appropriate well thought out recommendations for protecting your building and the people within. Things like IP based video surveillance cameras with remote monitoring by the police if necessary, reinforced doors with internal locks in the event you have to initiate a lockdown, panic alarms at reception desks and throughout key areas of your building, shatter proof glass, an emergency notification system for the building and/or campus that can put out immediate situational awareness in the event there is a security concern. You can quickly become overwhelmed with trying to figure out where to prioritize. You should always start at your front door or main access

For more information on our Security Program, please contact:

Shawn Brokos, Director of Community Security • sbrokos@jfedpgh.org • 412-992-5229

Erin Fagan, Community Security Associate • efagan@jfedpgh.org • 412-992-5252

Or visit: jewishpgh.org/explore/community-security

point where the public enters your facility. That is where most of the problems begin with someone gaining access that wants to cause harm. You can then look at other areas of your facility, but you should start at your main access point. You also don't have to invest thousands of dollars. Start prioritizing based upon your immediate security needs and from there work to upgrade in stages. There is also a grant opportunity for non-profits to apply for funding for target hardening of their facilities.

TRAINING

The next pillar is probably the most important one. Conducting staff training. It is one thing to talk about your security plan and have a written document that sits on a shelf in some back office; it is another to conduct a live drill to test it. While everyone is required to conduct annual fire drills how many organizations conduct active shooter training or how to respond to a bomb threat/suspicious activity? You must dedicate time and resources to training your employees. Where to go and what to do in the event you have a hostile intruder. Your children and grandchildren are probably more educated and prepared on this through their school's emergency drills on what to do than most organizations employees. The two most important things you can do in training your staff is "How to respond if there is an active shooting situation and how to spot and report a suspicious activity." These are the key areas you need to focus on right away.

LAW ENFORCEMENT LIAISON

Our last pillar deals with community and law enforcement/first responder liaison. It is easier to work together if both Jewish leaders and police supervisors meet and get to know one another, talk openly about security concerns at their facilities and then work on solutions as to how to stay safe from those who might seek to cause harm. There is an old saying that you never want to be meeting your community's emergency responders for the first time and exchanging business cards at the scene of a critical incident impacting your agency. They need to be well versed in the layout of your building(s) and your security plan having trained with your staff. Most police and fire departments have community liaison officers that will come to your building and help you put together a training plan that works to improve the overall safety of your guests and buildings personnel. The FBI and DHS also have staff dedicated to working to help design training and exercises at no cost to help prepare your staff on response to a critical incident. The DHS has an individual in every region called a Protective Security Advisor that will come to your facility and conduct an assessment that will identify security gaps and give you recommendations for target hardening.

Putting these four pillars into place is just the first step of crafting any kind of solid security program. It may well be the most important step—as everything else you do will eventually rest on the foundation you lay down in the beginning.