



a quarterly newsletter
on risk management

Security What does it mean and how does it affect me?

By Tim Delaney

This newsletter is intended to remind you about the importance of security – both at work and at home. While some terms may sound new, you should already be aware of the general concepts. The take home messages are: be aware of what’s going on around you and take reasonable steps to protect people and property.

Security can be defined as freedom from care, anxiety, doubt, danger or risk. In many ways it overlaps with safety, but it does differ in a couple ways. OHS tends to deal with known risk, while security takes into account some

undetermined risk. For example, a locked door keeps everyone out – good or bad guy. The other main difference is that we tend to share information around safety hazards so everyone will know what’s going on. With security, sometimes information is provided on a “need to know” basis. Like safety, it’s rare to be in an environment that’s 100% safe or secure 100% of the time.

Bob Cooper is the senior provincial security consultant with the province. When he teaches the departmental security officer course, he mentions a 30:30:40

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General Comments

ratio, where about 30% of a population will actively seek out opportunities to steal, another 30% may steal if an opportunity presents itself and 40% of people won't steal under any normal circumstances. Let's face it: everyone isn't entirely honest or trustworthy.

The two key questions in security are: "What are we trying to protect?" and "Who are we protecting it from?" Depending on whether you're thinking home or office, we may be trying to protect our real estate, our business or personal property, our corporate or personal information, or ourselves. Who are the bad guys – people who would create graffiti or commit vandalism, thieves, robbers or people who would assault us? Obviously, we'd put our greatest effort toward protecting the things we can least afford to lose.

One of the keys to personal protection is awareness and a "survival mindset". In the sidebar on the right, I've adapted the four levels of security awareness from an article by selfdefenseresource.com, which came from original work by Col. Jeff Cooper. It's an interesting concept – FYI.

In general there are three main themes we look at in terms of security: physical security; our behaviours and attitudes; and aspects of our natural environment.

Physical security includes things like locks, fences, alarms, closed circuit TV and other electronic devices. You could also include lighting in that group.

The next group include people: their behaviours and attitudes as well as administrative rules we may impose on them. Some say security is only effective when *everyone* makes sure the door is locked. How do we behave? Do we let unknown people follow us into the secure area of our workplace? If you saw someone eyeing your house, would you walk out, take a good look at them and ask what they want? How do you walk down the street: confident and alert or in your own little world?

Environmental aspects of security have branched into an area known as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, CPTED (pronounced sep-ted). There are three aspects to CPTED.

The first is "natural surveillance" or the ability of neighbours or passers-by to see the area we are trying to protect, or for us to see our surroundings. The rationale is that bad guys don't want to be identified or caught. Sight lines are improved by deliberately modifying landscaping features so there is less opportunity for someone to hide. Lighting would also enhance natural surveillance.

The second aspect is "natural access control". This may include fences and gates, but would also include hedges, pathways, hills, ponds or anything

Personal Security – 4 Levels of Awareness*

This can make up to 90% of self-defence, 10% being verbal de-escalation and physical techniques. Awareness can help you identify and avoid potentially dangerous situations.

WHITE – You're **relaxed**, like you would be in the privacy of your home. You aren't thinking about threats to your security. You're "switched off". Criminals look for people in this state (they call them victims!).

YELLOW – You're "switched on", in a state of **relaxed alertness**. You have a 360-degree awareness of potentially dangerous areas such as secluded doorways, alleys, behind large objects or dark areas and an awareness of the people around you. Unless you're in a secure environment, you should probably be in this state!

ORANGE – You are in **danger** and evaluating the threat from a **specific** source. It may be threatening or suspicious language or behaviour. Focus on the attacker, checking for escape routes, potential weapons you can use and if people around you are friend or foe. This is your decision to **take action**.

RED – You are in **conflict**, a state of threat avoidance. Be prepared for fight or flight. **Never fight if you can flee!** Carry out the decision you made in Code Orange. If you are using physical self-defence, your level of force should equal that used against you.

Practice thinking about the "what ifs" so that **awareness becomes a habit**, like you would with safety hazards. Maintain a **survival mindset** and you probably won't be a victim.

* Adapted from www.selfdefenseresource.com and Col. Jeff Cooper.

that would encourage a visitor to naturally go where we want them to go.

Finally, "territorial reinforcement" is used to define the purpose for the space and ownership of it – if a space or property looks like it has a defined purpose, it is less likely to be a target. Also, if a property is cared for, it is a less likely target than one that's been neglected.

Since we have things at work and at home that have value, someone will want to take them from us. While we can't absolutely prevent crime, we can tip the balance in our favour by being a "hard target". Criminals will naturally seek out a softer, easier target. What can you do to improve security?

Security at Work

Everyone has a part to play

By Tim Delaney

For the employees, management has done most of the background work and security reviews are ongoing. Some of these efforts would have included: threat risk assessments, locking systems, lighting, alarm systems and so on. The key is that every employee has to do their bit to make the system work.

While we can't eliminate all risk, we can deter the majority of the crooks and creeps. Also, we don't want to secure things to the point of undue inconvenience to staff. It's a balance where we hope to have acceptable risk. Here's a list of things to consider about security while you're working.

In the Office

Physical Security – make sure doors to secure areas are locked and latched, as well as windows when you leave for the day

Behaviour – greet strangers in the workplace – ask if you can help them; report suspicious behaviour; secure valuables or sensitive documents if your workspace is unattended; lock your computer (cntrl-alt-del and enter) if your computer is left unattended

Environment – can you see and be seen in the workplace – reception areas, meeting rooms, etc.; can you arrange furniture so that you can't be cornered or that there aren't "improvised" weapons within reach of others; is there adequate lighting/visibility so you won't be ambushed by someone hiding

On the Street

Physical Security – improvised weapons – a rolled up magazine (club or jab), keys, a pen or small flashlight (slash or jab), a bag, purse or backpack (to swing at assailant) – use what you've got, but flee if you can!

Behaviour – don't stop for suspicious strangers; be mindful of time of day, neighbourhood (remember the 4 levels of awareness)

Environment – be mindful of who can see you (friend or foe) and what you can see, so you're not surprised by a strangers

In the Car

Physical Security – lock your car & close your windows! consider an alarm

Behaviour – park facing out of the space, if possible; under lights, nothing identifying you or anything of value in view in car

Environment – can your vehicle be seen by passers-by or security camera; can you see your vehicle as you approach it

Visiting Other Offices, In the Field or New Locations

Physical Security – you can't control someone else's system; if there was a threat and security was not sufficient, consider re-locating the meeting to a better place or time

Behaviour – you need to do your part to make their system work; be mindful of an unfamiliar meeting location (exits, security features in place); wear your ID tag, especially if you're in an office other than your own

Environment – can you see/be seen by other office staff (in case there's a problem)

While Travelling

Physical Security – relying on hotel/airport security

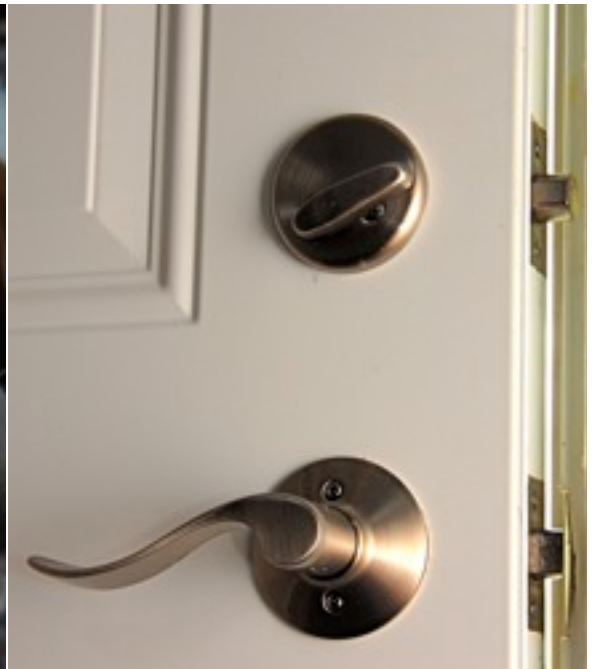
Behaviour – 4 levels of awareness! try to look like a local; don't advertise valuables (computers, cameras, etc.)

Environment – try and stay in well lit and easily observed areas

Security at home

Simple things like a dog, sensor lights, a quality dead bolt on your door and a neatly kept property contribute to the security of your home.

Crooks are lazy. If it looks as though you've made it hard for them, kept valuables out of sight and have taken some steps where they might either be caught or identified, they're likely to look for a softer target.



Security at Home

Practical things you can do

By Tim Delaney

Obviously, we can't completely guarantee security – a determined thief can foil most of our efforts. Fortunately, most crooks aren't that determined – they'll spend more time looking for an easy mark than trying to get your stuff. The following are ideas for improving your security off the job. Use what works for you. If you have any other ideas, please share!

Home & Garden

Physical Security—deadbolts on exterior doors; long screws on hinges & deadbolts, into wall stud; latches on windows (also a dowel or screws may prevent a window from being slid open); window bars on basement windows (as long as you can get out if there's a fire); security film on vulnerable windows (laminated, ~ \$11/sq. ft.); alarm or video surveillance system, if warranted

Behaviour – vary your routine a bit so a would-be thief won't predict your movements; try to disguise “expensive” garbage (break down box from new computer or stereo); observe your property to see if anyone has been snooping around (they often scope out the place before a hit); consider keeping your house locked while you're at home, if home invasion is a threat; if on vacation, consider lights and a radio on timers or have a neighbour move cars around from time to time; don't hide house key on property

Environment – show pride of ownership with a well-maintained property; trim trees and shrubs so thieves can't hide; consider thorny shrubs or a fence to protect a vulnerable area that can't be easily observed; motion-sensor lights placed so no one can approach the house, garage or shed without triggering the light; use hedges or fencing to influence direction of travel; try to keep valuables out of sight from windows or by casual visitors

Shed & Garage

Physical Security – lock doors (or make sure there's nothing of value inside); alarmed (if house is alarmed)

Behaviour – keep valuables like snowblowers & chainsaws out of sight; secure ladders or tools, so a thief can't use them to break into your home; don't leave bicycles unattended on the front lawn; lock your car, especially if it has a garage door opener in it

Environment – good sight lines to shed or garage from your house or your neighbours; keep more valuable items out of sight or attach a curtain to window

Cottage

Physical Security – locks and alarm system, if appropriate; some may prefer to leave the cottage fairly easy to get into to lessen the chance of greater property damage

Behaviour – remove any valuables at end of season, especially if physical security is low; remove wheels from ATVs, to prevent drive away theft

Environment – if practical, visibility by passers-by or neighbours; keep property neat and looking cared-for

Identity

Physical Security – put “Photo ID Required” on credit card signature strips to stop unauthorized use; password on computer

Behaviour – shred trash with account and other personal information; keep mailbox empty; beware of “phishing” email (any email supposedly from an authority, like your bank, asking for your ID and password); any telemarketer that asks for your credit card number; consider a PO box in rural areas

Environment – visibility, in the event someone is raiding your trash

General Comments

When I get a chance, I'll add more security information to our website at: www.gov.ns.ca/agri/ohs – stay tuned!

The comments in this newsletter are ideas. Some may be practical for your situation – some may not. Using any techniques may not prevent a determined thief, but at least you did something to protect your property.

If you have an accident or incident at work, you're supposed to fill out an incident report. Security issues are no different – they should be reported. The difference is in how they're dealt with.

If it's a theft or property damage, Bruce Langille, risk manager at TIR, needs to know within 24-48 hours or your loss might not be covered. If it's a security issue that's personal in nature, privacy will be maintained. In some cases, Bob Cooper, senior security consultant with TIR may need to know. Either way, we can't help you, if we don't know.

If you have any questions, I'd be happy to answer them.

If you have any comments, suggestions for future articles or would like to submit an article, please contact Tim Delaney at 424-0319 or by email at delanets@gov.ns.ca