



Commercial Real Estate Council March 2008

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Chairman's Corner – by Mark Wright

One important goal of the Commercial Real Estate Council is to provide credible resources to fellow members of ASIS International who are seeking help in the area of security planning and operations in and around commercial properties.

The Commercial Real Estate Council is comprised of industry experts who deal with the planning and design of sophisticated security systems, the on-going management of uniformed security personnel, and the delivery of emergency response plans for commercial properties.

While some of our council members are responsible for these functions within high rise office buildings, others oversee security and safety at shopping malls, retail stores, residential communities and other types of commercial properties. The council also benefits from active members who are recognized industry leaders in their roles as consultants specializing in commercial real estate security.

We hope you will find the articles in this newsletter of interest and that the information helps further our profession. If you need additional information on a related topic or want to have one of our council members make a presentation to your organization, please contact us.

If you are a member of ASIS International and you are directly involved in the security management for a commercial real estate portfolio, please consider joining us on the Commercial Real Estate Council.

March is Red Cross Month – by Marianna Perry, CPP

Statistics show that more than 200,000 Americans die of sudden cardiac arrest each year. Sudden cardiac arrest is the leading cause of death in the United States. Up to 50,000 of these deaths could have been prevented if someone had initiated the **Cardiac Chain of Survival** which includes having an automated external defibrillator (AED) available for immediate use. Sudden cardiac arrest is usually due to abnormal heart rhythms called arrhythmias, the vast majority of which are ventricular fibrillation. Ventricular fibrillation is a condition in which the heart's electrical impulses suddenly become chaotic, causing the heart to cease pumping blood effectively. Victims of sudden cardiac arrest collapse and quickly lose consciousness, often without warning. Unless a normal heart rhythm is restored, death will follow within a matter of minutes. Many victims of sudden cardiac arrest have no history of heart disease or if heart disease is present, they are not aware of it. Unlike a heart attack, which is the death of muscle tissue from loss of blood supply, many victims of sudden cardiac arrest have no prior symptoms.

The **Cardiac Chain of Survival** is a series of 4 critical steps and if all four steps are followed, it will help ensure survival of sudden cardiac arrest victim. The steps are:

1. **Early access to care by calling 911 or another emergency number.**
2. **Early cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).**
3. **Early defibrillation with an automated external defibrillator (AED).**
4. **Early advanced cardiac life support.**

An AED is a device about the size of a laptop computer and it analyzes the heart's rhythm for any abnormalities and, if necessary directs the rescuer to deliver an electrical shock to the victim. This shock, called defibrillation, may help the heart to reestablish an effective rhythm of its own. Training is necessary in order to understand the role of defibrillation in the **Cardiac Chain of Survival**. Training in CPR and AED and the use of these four steps increase the victim's chance of survival. Training is the key to saving more lives!

Nuisance Alarms in the Commercial High-Rise – by Glen Kitteringham, M.Sc., CPP

Have you ever considered what leads to a fire alarm activation at your property? Long recognized as a disruptive force that tenants, property managers and visitors must deal with, a study conducted in Calgary, Alberta over the past five years has identified a number of factors contributing to unnecessary fire alarms across several commercial properties. It was partially motivated by a new bylaw introduced in 2004 by the Calgary Fire Department fining property owners, \$250.00 for the 3rd and 4th nuisance alarms and \$500.00 for all subsequent alarms. Also a growing realization that there were too many alarms occurring having a negative impact on tenants and their business activities, the author undertook a detailed assessment of all alarms occurring at the properties with data collected from January 1, 2003. Now completing its fifth year, data collection and analysis has led to a 62% reduction in alarms occurring from 2003 to 2007.

As part of our initiative to reduce alarms we first had to measure them. Security personnel collected data starting January 1, 2003. After a careful plotting of all alarms, a number of patterns surfaced. First, it was obvious alarms were activating for different reasons. Therefore, the initiative to reduce the overall number of alarms would need to incorporate multiple strategies. Second, there were commonalities in some of the alarms in all three high-rise office towers indicating a standard approach would work in some cases. Third, there were some alarm causes specific to particular buildings, indicating building specific actions would be required. First, alarms were divided into 'Legitimate alarms', 'Illegitimate alarms' and 'Unknown caused alarms'. Obviously legitimate alarms were caused by fire, smoke or heat. Illegitimate alarms were caused by four reasons, 'lack of communication between parties', 'lack of training', 'work completed without authorization' and 'damage to the system'. Lack of communication refers to the various parties be they Operations, Security, Construction, and/or Contractors not communicating with each other about building activities likely to cause alarms. Lack of training refers to building staff not being familiar with the fire alarm system, hence they did not understand some or all of the system and when called upon to take various points off line failed to do thereby causing an alarm when work was carried out. Work completed without authorization refers to contractors working in the building without informing building management as to their presence or what they were there to work on. Damage to the system refers to staff, contractors or tenants damaging the system through their activities or negligence. What was interesting in the 'unknown caused alarms' the overall numbers dropped by 10% as an in-depth assessment all alarms is now conducted. Previously, if it was not readily apparent what caused an alarm, it was written off as 'cause unknown'.

As a result of the findings, several strategies were developed. First, Building Management wrote letters to over 500 tenants and contractors, informing them of an initiative to reduce the number of alarms. An explanation of the causes of alarms was provided along with the referencing of the fines that the Fire Department was now imposing on 'nuisance alarms'. If it was determined that either a tenant or contractor had created the alarm they would be responsible for paying the fine. Everyone was strongly encouraged to pay attention to any and all activities that could cause an alarm and act accordingly. Next, we developed a pamphlet for contractors working in the buildings. A list of all activities that would potentially activate the building fire alarm system was provided including cutting, grinding, dusting, vacuuming, painting, and underground parking lot sweeping. Along with this, Security and Operations staff were given far more discretionary power to determine the work contractors were completing. They were encouraged to ask far more questions that previously the emphasis was on signing contractors staff as quickly as possible. Another tactic was to increase the level of communication between various departments, contractors, and tenants to ensure everyone knew what was going on as it impacted building operations and the fire alarm system. In addition, fire system training increased for Security and Operations to ensure everyone was thoroughly familiar with the fire alarm system. People were also encouraged to pay far more attention during demolition work to ensure no more sprinkler heads were knocked off.

Finally, it was recognized that a more formal approach to managing the fire alarm system in its entirety would be required. Therefore managers from Construction, Operations and Security came together to create a Standard of Operations Manual. This group has met starting in 2004 to develop this manual and will continue to do so until it is complete. Approximately 18 procedures for building staff, contractors, and tenants to follow whenever there are potential operational impacts upon the fire alarm system were developed. Detailed standards and codes, protocols, communication expectations, potential impact upon the fire alarm system as well as many other relevant documentation were created.

As a result, the three buildings in question went from 60 alarms in 2003 to just 23 in 2007, a 61.7% reduction.

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total # of Fire Alarms	60	54	49	30	23
Percentage decrease over 2003	100%	10%	18.4%	50%	61.7%

When the Earth Shakes; Another Day in Paradise – by Dennis G. Byerly, CPP, CSEM

It's another warm and sunny day in Palm Desert, California. The palm trees are swaying in a light breeze and the residents are just going out for a round of golf.

A growing loud rumble is heard in the distance that sounds somewhat like the trains that pass by the city every day. Seconds later, the birds move from their resting places and then the ground shakes. Just a few seconds, this is the estimated time people will have to react to an earthquake.

Palm Desert is within a stones throw of the San Andreas Fault line and would likely be the epicenter of the greater than 7.9 shaker predicted for this area. Unlike Hurricanes, Storms and Tornadoes which give us some warning, Earthquakes could happen today, tomorrow, or any day in the future.

As a result, Home Owners Associations (HOA), Property Managers and their committees are working on emergency preparedness plans and actions to support this and other types of disaster.

Recently "The Springs HOA" in Rancho Mirage, CA, sponsored an afternoon Emergency Preparedness Fair at their location. The chairman of the Emergency Preparedness Committee presented the recently completed "Guide Book to Emergency Preparedness", which was hand delivered to each residence. Committee members used this personal contact as a means to obtain updated contact information on all its residents. Checklists, guidelines and prior planning actions were included in each guide book. Their next step is to appoint block captains and provide additional training to them.

Representative guest speakers provided additional information and motivation to participate in the community program. The Public Emergency Services Agencies attended and answered specific questions on support. Emergency supply vendors were also in attendance to sell their products to those that might have interest.

Most importantly, over 120 residents attended this fair and their enthusiasm for "doing something today" was outstanding. To take one step each week to prepare yourself for an emergency means that a year from now, you will be that much closer to preparedness. An extra bottle of water; an extra can good; an extra flashlight with batteries; some extra pet food; extra required medical supplies; these steps and others, will make the difference when the need arises. You will not be able to drive to the store or pharmacy to get what you need and in some cases; it could be several days before limited services are able to support the needs of the community.

See your local emergency planners for additional information on how you can prepare yourself and to help out your community.

Make today the day you take the first action to prepare yourself for tomorrow's disaster.