INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT:

WE NEED TO BE READY FOR ALL TYPES OF THREATS

- Crime, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, fires, workplace violence—not exactly what comes to most people’s minds when they think of the Hospitality Industry, but these events are a stark reality and you must be prepared for all of them.
- Different properties face varying degrees and different types of threats. The size and location of property may play a major role in determining your individual risk.
- Some properties may have a higher risk for urban crimes such as robbery or terrorist attack, while others may have more of a risk for hurricane or other extreme weather conditions. In today’s environment, we need to understand that we all need to be ready all of the time.
- Regardless of the threat, you need to respond effectively and appropriately with as little disruption to guests as possible. It’s not always easy, but it’s a job that must be done and it must be done right.
- In today’s political climate, there’s a need for a new sense of security awareness.

LOW RISK DOESN’T LESSEN THE NEED TO BE PREPARED

- The United States Department of Homeland Security has included hotels in their list of potential “soft” targets.
- When a terrorist organization cannot attack hard targets, such as military or government installations because of heightened security in those locations, then they turn to other soft targets they feel are easier targets to strike. Hotels fit this soft target description.
- The risk of your hotel being attacked is extremely low; in fact the chance of anyone in the US being killed by a terrorist attack in any given year is approximately 1 in 9,300,000. The chance of being struck by lightning is 1 in 615,000, but just because the odds say that you or your property won’t be attacked doesn’t lessen the need for effective preparedness techniques.

STAFF INVOLVEMENT IN EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS

- Each property must have a detailed written plan that outlines exactly what actions must be taken in the event of an emergency. All types of potential threats in an emergency situation needs to be included. This plan should be periodically reviewed for accuracy.
- All staff and personnel need to be trained in these emergency action plans. They are your first line of defense.
- Your plan is only effective if everyone on staff is properly trained and demonstrates a commitment to the procedures in the plan and the cooperation needed to carry them out. Always encourage employees to be vigilant in regards to security concerns.
- If everyone on staff works as team and shares information and ideas, many potential threats can be resolved before they present a problem. Prevention is crucial to good security.
- Responding to an emergency is something no one wants to have to do; however, it’s easier to handle if everyone affected knows what their duties are and knows how to perform them. If everyone knows their roles to play in an emergency situation, they must be able to carry out their tasks.
- If their role is to evacuate the building they must have clear access to the outside to do so and effective means of egress needs to be maintained to accommodate all employees. If there are employees who require special attention, those needs also have to be addressed.

MAKING GUESTS FEEL AT EASE

- Achieving acceptable balance between tighter security measures when they arise and maintaining guest satisfaction can be a challenge. There’s a fine line between reassuring people about additional security measures and scaring them.
- Remember, travelers have already been exposed in most cases to higher levels of security and inspections at the airport when traveling and they’re usually accepting of added security measures if they feel they’re warranted and it will make them and others feel safer and more secure.
- Your attitude and a friendly smile can go a long way in helping make guests feel at ease, even in the face of increased security.

INVESTIGATING A SECURITY THREAT

- If an associate reports a suspicious set of circumstances or activity assume the threat is credible until proven otherwise. Investigate the matter and take appropriate action.
Anytime an incident occurs it needs to be documented. Information about the incident needs to be gathered and organized.

Remember, this report is a permanent record, so it needs to be accurate and complete. Interview everyone involved with or who witnessed the incident.

Refrain from placing blame or fault with the incident. You are to be concerned only with the facts; these facts and information gathered during the investigation will help determine the cause or causes of the incident and will aid in developing a plan to prevent future similar occurrences.

Associates should be trained to focus on behavior, not looks or appearances. They should also be trained to remember as much information as they can about the person acting suspiciously— their physical description, location and specific actions.

It’s your job as management to ascertain the credibility of the threat and decide on what action or actions are appropriate and are necessary. Treat each report as a credible threat until proven otherwise.

**DRUGS, GUNS & SUSPICITIOUS ITEMS**

- If drugs, drug paraphernalia or other illegal items are found in a guests’ room, call the police. They may or may not come to the hotel to investigate but it’s our responsibility to report any crime on our property to the police.
- There are also specific procedures to follow if a gun is found on the property. If the room is a stay-over, the manager on duty should re-key the room so the guest could no longer be able to open the door with their key.
- This forces the guest to contact hotel management when they return. The guest should be told that the hotel will not service the room as long as there is an unattended weapon present.
- If a gun is found in a check-out room, a member of management should call the police. If an explosive device is found in a room the police must be called immediately and the area must be evacuated.
- If a suspicious item such as an unattended bag is found, make a quick attempt to find the owner of the bag; do not handle the bag for any reason. If the owner cannot be found, call the police and move away from the area until the proper authorities have determined the area to be safe.

**KEEPING AREAS & EQUIPMENT SECURE**

- Keep non-guest areas secured at all times; office areas, storage rooms, conference facilities, laundry, electrical panels. Outside gates and fences should remain locked or secure at all times as well.
- If any exit doors, fire alarms, fire extinguishers or any other safety equipment is found to be defective, replace it as soon as reasonable.
- Equipment should be inspected frequently. Broken windows, burned out lights, broken locks can also be security hazards.
- Recent events are changing the way the hotel industry thinks about security. It may now be appropriate to have clearly defined levels of security which vary with the level of threat.

**POSSIBLE SECURITY MEASURES**

- The hotel management team will review the appropriate sections of the hotels’ emergency management plan, development guide and mail screening procedures. These sections should include but are not limited to Fire Emergency, Evacuation Procedures, Bomb Threats, Medical Emergencies and Mail Screening procedures.
- Every employee should be familiar with their specific duties and responsibilities in response to all of the above listed emergency situations.
- Increase security patrols and detours around the property.
- Watch for suspicious acts or packages. Check guest rooms, public areas, trash receptacles, shrubbery, planters and any other location where explosive or dangerous devices could be concealed.
- Elevator access to guest room floors is to be continuously controlled by posting a security officer or hotel staff member in such a manner that he or she will be able to limit access to the elevators to only those persons displaying a room key.
- Establish a reliable point of contact within law enforcement emergency services communities. Obtain a 24-hour point of contact and telephone numbers.
- Inspect all vacant rooms, meeting or guest rooms and make sure that they are secured when not occupied or in use. Increase security of the back dock and associate entrance. Lock the area if possible.
- Make every effort to identify all unattended packages and luggage. In event of suspicious package or item of luggage is detected, refer to mail screening procedures and emergency management plans for bomb threat information.
- The property should make sure that vehicles are not left unattended in front of the hotel. Underground parking will be restricted to registered guest only. All vehicles using underground parking beneath the hotel will be inspected for large vehicular bomb devices.
- All entrances and corridors will be continuously monitored during any high-profile controversial meeting or event.
- Fire pumps and generators should be tested to ensure they are operational. Fuel tanks should be filled.
- Fire sprinkler systems must be inspected to verify they are functional and that the control valves are locked in the open position or are electronically monitored; fire extinguishers should be inspected to verify they are functional.
- Mechanical, electrical, telephone and computer areas are to be secured. Access to central HVAC equipment must be secured and controlled.
- Hazardous chemicals should be placed in a secured area.
- Ensure a copy of the most current hotel occupancy report by name and room number is readily available.
• All registering guests will be required to provide some form of photo bearing identification at check in. For example; a driver’s license, passport, military ID or other state government issued ID card. If possible provide all registered guest with a color coded wristband that will function to identify them to hotel staff as guests.
• Any luggage or packages accepted for storage must be inspected in the presence of guest, owner or person having actual or constructive possession of the item. If possible, consider eliminating the check-in and storage of luggage.
• Hotel personnel should inspect all vendor and mail deliveries.

REGULATING ACCESS TO THE BUILDING & PROPERTY
• Entrances to the hotel will be restricted. If possible, maintain only one entrance for guests and one for staff deliveries. Consult with your loss prevention department to determine the options on how to accomplish this at specific locations.
• Associate entrances and exits will be access-controlled by technology or personnel. If an exterior entrance cannot be electronically monitored, a security guard is to be continuously on duty at the entrance.
• Key control should be evaluated to determine if all master keys, electronic and hard core are accounted for. If key control has been compromised in any way, the entire properly must be re-keyed.
• All associates will be provided with some form of controlled associate identification badge that is to be conspicuously displayed at all times.
• All staff should be alert to any person found on the property not wearing a hotel issued guest wristband or employee identification card. Staff members are to immediately report to management any unidentified person found on the property.
• All unidentified persons are to be questioned for their reason for being on the property and asked to produce some form of photo bearing identification.
• Use of contractors should be restricted. If the need for contractors is critical, hotel issued identification card that is to be conspicuously displayed at all times should identify them.
• Roof access should be secured if fire code allows or monitored in such a fashion that response time is kept to a minimum in the event of a security breach.
• Hotel air in-take systems should be secured or monitored. An emergency action plan should be developed for quickly shutting down the HVAC system.
• In today’s environment we must ensure that we’re providing reasonable care for the safety of our guests and our employees. Your emergency plan should have the procedures that correspond directly with the level of threat.
• Always be cooperative with law enforcement personnel. They can often offer valuable assistance.

HANDLING MEDIA COVERAGE OF AN INCIDENT
• If media becomes involved with coverage of an incident, refer them to your property’s public relations department, if you have one, for assistance. PR personnel and management are the only staff authorized to talk to the media regarding the incident.
• Only provide the basic facts, what exactly occurred and when and where it happened. Never answer questions about who was involved or why and how the incident occurred.
• Your actions or failure to act can become evidence should a guest be harmed or takes legal action against your property. The court will consider whether or not you took reasonable care for the safety of the guest.
• Failure to call 911 in an emergency may constitute negligence on the part of the property and staff involved. So, when in doubt, call 911.