

# MUNICIPAL SECURITY

A safe and secure public building begins at the start of design and extends far beyond security cameras and metal detectors.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### 1 in 5

In 2011, about 1 in 5 victims of workplace homicide was a government employee.\*

### 3X

From 2002 to 2011, the annual average rate of simple assault in the workplace against government employees was more than three times that of private-sector employees.\*

### 96%

From 2002 to 2011, about 96% of workplace violence against government employees was against state, county, and local employees, who made up 81% of the total government workforce.\*

\*According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics



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## INSIGHT Thought Leadership



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Safety and security are fundamental components of building design. As designers, we always factor security into design, but the higher risk which municipal facilities face, when it comes to employee and public safety, can not be ignored.

Factoring safety and security into a design creates a significant impact to discourage threats of violence and/or create life-saving delays.

Consider the following factors when renovating or designing a municipal facility. Risk assessments, security features, and safety plans must be analyzed at the start of the design process, alongside site selection and space layouts.



According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, nearly 10% of active shooter events occur at government facilities.

### **RISK & VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS**

A one-size-fits-all security solution does not exist. However, conducting a “worst-case scenario” vulnerability and risk assessment defines the facility’s needs so the necessary options and technologies are considered. A risk assessment helps measure the building’s use, services offered, site and facility layout, and public accessibility.

### **ACCESS CONTROL SYSTEMS**

Every building open to the public is exposed to risk. Municipal facilities – with departments such as probation, courts, and child support – can be particularly vulnerable to threats of violence. These threats warrant heightened levels of security.

A secure entry/front desk with a clear line of site is the first line of defense for assessing potential threats. Access control systems screen individuals entering the facility – be it a staffed security desk with a sign-in sheet or a remotely monitored advanced security authentication system. Electronic access control systems are a cost efficient and flexible option for monitoring entry points. Electric strikes with swipe cards are the easiest option for retrofitting a renovated space, but electronic locksets offer a higher level of security.

### **ADVANCED SECURITY MEASURES**

Facilities containing courtrooms or probation services are at risk for violence. Weapons screening is a tool for physical violence prevention, but its implementation demands additional waiting space and other long-term costs that must be considered. Since many active shooter incidences are employee-related, the designer and stakeholders must assess whether employees will be subject to weapons screening.

Bullet resistant wall systems are common in municipal buildings. Concrete provides thick and robust ballistics protection, but can be cumbersome and expensive to install. Fiberglass resin panels, however, can achieve similar levels of ballistic and forced entry resistance at a significantly lower weight and, often, price.

Tension escalation can occur more quickly in a loud space, particularly in a facility with human services. Considering acoustics during design can help lower risks for potentially violent or threatening situations.

### **EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANS**

Advanced preparation for potentially dangerous situations, such as natural disasters or threats of violence, can help protect everyone in the facility. Notification systems, evacuation routes with signage, lockdown procedures, and responder protocols are some of the elements essential to a strategic emergency plan.

### **OVERALL HEALTH, WELLNESS, & SAFETY**

Successful municipal design incorporates comfort and efficiency for employees, convenience and usability for the public, aesthetics that blend with the community, and safety for those in the building and on site.