Security Action Plan for Restaurants

Because of ongoing threats (e.g., terrorism), both large and small businesses need to review their security programs. Restaurants, for example, face security risks regarding food safety and air contamination. This handout provides an overview of general strategies to be addressed in a security risk control program for restaurants.

General Considerations

- Develop written security policies and emergency management procedures to respond to situations, such as food contamination, bomb threats, and air contamination, and distribute to all employees.
- Conduct periodic emergency evacuation drills.
- Establish a preemployment screening program, especially for employees with financial responsibility or access to high-value goods, such as meats and liquor, with in-depth checking of an applicant's job history and references.
- Establish and maintain liaison with local law enforcement and emergency response agencies.
- Perform regular audits of all security procedures to ensure that, among other things, maintenance programs are up to date and security procedures are being followed.

Access Control

- Control access into the building by locking all exterior entrances, including those to basement and shipping/receiving areas, without conflicting with life safety and fire code requirements.
- Implement a program to control the issuance of keys, including procedures to recover keys from former employees.
- Control access to air intakes of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems to prevent attempts to introduce contaminants into the system. Check credentials of outside maintenance personnel.

Security Procedures

- If access control is a problem, or the size of the staff is large, issue photo identification cards to all employees and require the card to be displayed at all times.
- Provide adequate illumination for the building, including parking lots and garages.
- Consider installing security film on accessible windows that face public streets and parking areas.
- To deter robbery, keep cash in cash registers to the minimum amount necessary to conduct business. Keep extra cash in a cash safe or make regular bank deposits.

- Advise staff to be watchful of activities in and around buffets/salad bars, which may be targets for food contamination.
- Develop procedures for checking the safety of food deliveries.
- Develop security procedures (i.e., a bomb threat checklist) for mail and packages, if bomb threats are a concern.

