

How secure is your facility?

A pattern of security breaches

We spend hours every day in facilities that should be safe—but sometimes aren't. Whether the facility is a government agency, educational institution, entertainment venue, medical facility or retail store, managing access and traffic flow are vital to maintaining the safety of everyone on site. Utilizing card reader access, tailgate detection systems and door alarms are just a few of the ways to harden security on premises.

A recent independent study conducted by Readex Research for Security Management Magazine gathered results from 448 respondents to explain the risks facing today's physical premises. Some of its most important results (outlined below) offer insight into the dangers that respondents have encountered, and how they plan to tackle them.

What kind of threats do organizations face?

Any organization or enterprise with a physical presence must deal with potential safety threats, while allowing authorized users reasonable access to the building.

The most common threats may also be the most overlooked: 54% of respondents said their facilities were left vulnerable because doors were propped open or left unlocked. 48% said they had experienced a tailgating violation. (Tailgating is defined as authorized users being followed into the facility, with or without their knowledge). 20% of survey respondents said they were vulnerable because unauthorized employees had unrestricted access to restricted areas or information that they shouldn't have.



The most obvious safety threat at any facility is to personal safety. 65% of respondents to the survey said that the safety of people was their biggest concern in the event of a breach. This applies to patients, doctors or nurses in a hospital setting; employees in an office building; the members of a gym; movie-goers at a theater; clients in an eldercare facility; or students at school.

However, intentional attacks aren't the only threats to consider for businesses where intellectual property or personal information may be easily accessed within the facility. A breach that allowed access to this type of information would be a great loss if that information got into the wrong hands. In fact, information security as the second-most cited concern in the Readex survey.



Other concerns include vandalism or simple property theft, as well as the expensive issue of liability. If an unauthorized visitor is injured on the premises, the property owner may face a lawsuit or an insurance payout—the same is true if an unauthorized visitor causes harm, intentionally or not.

Greater physical security benefits nearly any kind of facility, but especially ones with vulnerable user populations, vital infrastructure, or particularly sensitive data:

- *Daycare and eldercare facilities*
 - *Hotels*
 - *Schools, from primary or secondary to higher education*
 - *Industrial plants*
 - *Fitness centers*
 - *Software and technology producers*
 - *Hospitals and other clinical providers*
 - *Banks*
 - *Energy and utilities*
 - *Entertainment venues (such as casinos, theaters, and sport complexes)*
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The survey results show that physical threats are a growing concern for nearly 1/3 of those surveyed, with 27% answering that their vulnerability to a physical security breach has increased over the last two years, while just two percent more (29%) report that they believe that their physical security has increased in that time. (An additional 43% expressed a belief that their vulnerability has not changed.)

Additionally, legal and regulatory requirements, such as 2018's Kevin and Avonte's Law and the rules issued by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) or the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), drive the need for better safety and security.

How vulnerable are today's organizations?

Why does the vulnerability of a building, a campus, or some other secured space change over time? Partly, it's because threats evolve: Intruders adopt new tactics to breach the perimeter and learn what tricks work to get inside the gate or the building.

At the same time, organizations themselves adopt new security measures, from more secure entry barriers to a greater security personnel presence. Meanwhile, employees or other users of the facility may unintentionally defeat protective measures or adopt a casual attitude toward security by overlooking or failing to follow access control protocols.



What measures are respondents looking into?

Nearly two thirds of respondents (65%) said that improved physical security would have prevented their facilities' most recent security breaches; 48% plan physical security upgrades within the next two years. Some of the respondents who are currently planning security upgrades say they are considering cameras (76%), card readers (61%), door alarms (40%), pedestrian gates or turnstiles (29%), or tailgate detection systems (26%).

Matching physical security problems to the right solutions

The insights from this study may help organizations put their own facility needs in context. Questions to ask include:

- *Am I most concerned with keeping out intruders?*
- *Am I concerned with preserving the safety of employees, visitors, patients or students by keeping them in a known, protected area?*
- *Does my facility contain vulnerable physical or intellectual property that should be given additional protection, such as storage of personnel records, data, pharmaceuticals or cash?*
- *Do I need physical security measures that can be matched with video footage?*
- *If a door is propped open or left unlocked, who needs to be alerted?*
- *Do I have needs for additional physical security measures, such as user-friendly voice features or weather resistance?*

These answers can help any organization with the selection of the right physical security solutions and creation of a comprehensive security plan.



CASE STUDY

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