

Tips on workplace security for employees



It is commonly assumed that workplace security is a job for management, security personnel, the security service providers and the police.

And, to some extent, it is.

But in order to maintain a safe and secure workplace, everyone needs to become involved.

On 09 November 2021 the BusinessTech newspaper published an article “Crime wave to hit South Africa, analysts warn”.

According to the newspaper acritical, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) warned that criminal activity will increase in South-Africa due to increasing load shedding. Speaking to the SABC, the institute's Dr Johan Burger said house and business robberies were already increasing, and there were fears that the same will happen with other criminal activities.

In a second newspaper article published by the Times Live on the 11 of January 2022, a suspect was shot and wounded, and another arrested after an armed robbery at a surgery in Roosevelt Park in Johannesburg.

In a third newspaper article published by the IOL on the 14 of January 2022, cops killed three armed robbers in a shoot-out after robbery at a Mpumalanga supermarket.

Businesses are at risk of robberies, thefts, break-ins and other criminal activities. In this article we focused on a security plan (procedure) where a company puts measures in place that are designed to deny unauthorized access to facilities, equipment and resources, to protect personnel and property from damage, harm or losses.

Physical security plan (procedure) for the workplace

A physical security plan (procedure) involves the use of multiple layers of interdependent systems which include CCTV surveillance, security guards, protective barriers, locks, access control protocols, and many other measures to protect company employees, assets and information.

Safety at the workplace

With a security plan in place, the company premises will have a higher standard of security. It will also ensure that a neat and clean environment is maintained.

If the employees are and feel secured, the working environment is much healthier. Communications among employees will increase and it contributes towards a happier and more productive workplace

Workplace security tips to improve your office / building security

The follow workplace security tips will go a long way to secure your office / building from internal and external threats, and may prevent substantial losses.

- **Alarm System** - Install an Alarm System to be monitor by the security service provider 24/7, to ensure quick response from the security service providers and police for panic alarm activation during business hours or after hours.
- **Integrated Security System** - Install an Integrated Security System that is unique to your office / building needs such as, CCTV monitoring system, Access Control Management and Audio Intrusion Detection. There are many options available in the industry.
- **Employee Screening Policy** - Protect your business from employee theft by implementing a recruitment screening policy that includes criminal record checks and reference checks. Verify copies of any relevant certifications or credentials. By doing background checks, the company will minimize possible risks.
- **Employee and Visitors Access Control** - Implement a managed access control system with keyless entry to track and restrict who goes where and when. This will also allow you to easily disable access if an employee loses their card or no longer works for the company.
- **Employee Training** - Create and implement an in-depth training program on workplace safety and security, including how to properly lock up documents, and secure the building. Also include the security policy, and confidentiality agreements.
- **Lock-up Server Room** - Restrict access to the server room to those who have passed an in-depth security clearance and use an access control management. Also, ensure the server room location cannot be accessed through neighbouring business' common walls. It should ideally be located in the middle of the facility.
- **Use a fire and security rated safe** - Lock all money and financial information in a safe that meets the insurer's guidelines. Restrict access to the combination and change it often.
- **Secure Workstations** - Disconnect and remove computers that are not currently being used. Make sure all laptops and desktops are secured during business hours. Lock all paperwork in filing cabinets.
- **Be Vigilant** - Employees must be vigilant and report and suspicious activity, vehicles or packages to management or the security department at their workplace immediately.

Why does “workplace security for employees” matter?

Nationwide, crimes against businesses are increasing. Companies must be concerned about theft of equipment, inventory, trade secrets, computer information, and finances.

Employers and Employees must take steps to prevent other security risks, such as *cybersecurity*, robberies, theft, arson, vandalism, and *workplace violence*. Feeling safe at work is a priority of job satisfaction for employees.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act requires a safe workplace which is the responsibility of the employer.

Conclusion

Employees form the backbone of a company. Protecting the employees in the workplace means keeping everyone safe and secured. Workplace security is a priority for all of us.

A company should thus employ a proper security system and the employees should also co-operate to ensure their safety. Employers should ensure to understand the security policy and procedures and do their part to support it.

SERR Synergy can assist your business with regard to OHS compliance through the development of the necessary policies, documentation training and support relating to information specifically to Working from Home. Our team of OHS Professionals can relieve the stress and concerns that might affect your business' capability to stay operational.

About the Author: Leon Visser started his career in the Security and Safety Industry in 1998, where he also served in the SAPS. He currently holds a diploma in Risk Management from the University of South Africa and has completed various certificates in emergency preparedness. During 2019 he joined the OHS team at SERR Synergy for a change of pace moving from security to health and safety and is currently busy with an International Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety with NEBOSH. As a professional Health and Safety Practitioner he is registered with SAIOSH and currently holds the title of OHS Team Lead.

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