

A COMMERCIAL SECURITY SURVEY

PREPARED FOR:

**The University of Houston - Victoria
3402 N. Ben Wilson
Victoria, TX 77901-5731**

CONTACT:

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PREPARED BY:

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SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

At approximately 1400hrs on Tuesday, 05/15/2007 I arrived at 3007 N. Ben Wilson, Suite 107 to begin a Commercial Security Survey the University of Houston, Victoria (Hereafter, UHV). The contact person who requested the survey, Genaro Cortez is the Safety and Risk Manager for the UHV system at this location. Mr. Cortez advised that UHV was interested in improving their security at one of their buildings located at 3402 N. Ben Wilson which houses the Victoria Chamber of Commerce (VCC), the UHV Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and storage for the UHV System. Assisting in gathering information for this survey were: UHV Director of Facilities, Michael E. Ruland; UHV Purchasing Agent, Lydia Huber; SBDC Director, Keith Mudd; and VCC President Randy Vivian. The initial on-site survey concluded at approx 1545hrs, I returned to the location at approximately 2200hrs on Friday, 05/18/2007 to inspect the exterior lighting.

SECTION TWO

IDENTIFICATION OF SITE

The building in question is a single-story office building with storage area in the rear. It is primarily used for the Chamber of Commerce and Small Business Development Center functions of encouraging the economic growth and development of businesses of various types in this community. The building is located in the 3400 block of N. Ben Wilson a five-lane (with left turn lane) street, which has a steady flow of vehicular traffic during normal business hours. Both offices are primarily open to the public and operational from 0800hrs to 1700hrs Monday through Friday with occasional night and/or weekend events.

Business History and Crime Status: Both the VCC and the SBDC relocated to this address at the end of October 2006. This survey was prompted by a burglary that occurred the previous weekend. During this burglary, the front door glass of the SBDC was shattered and entry was made in several of the offices throughout the building. Some money and candy was stolen and several electronic items were removed from offices, and then abandoned just outside the building on the North side. Other than this incident, there has been some minor criminal mischief activity to the UHV facilities in the past as well as some minor criminal activity in the surrounding residential areas.

SECTION THREE

PERIMETER BARRIERS

A. EXTERIOR LIGHTING

There are various types of lighting throughout the building perimeter and parking area. While this lighting is well placed, it is inadequate to provide safety and security. The current lighting provides only a soft light with poor color rendition to the parking areas. This could make it difficult to accurately describe a criminal seen in the area. The flood lights on the back of the building provide excellent white light, but their angle tends to blind anyone at a distance, thus concealing anyone who may be near the building.

Recommendations:

Maximum – Upgrade all exterior lighting to provide bright white lighting to the parking area and building accesses. Install additional lighting to provide good lighting to all areas around the portable building near the rear of the main building. Adjust the angle of the flood lights in the back of the building to illuminate the building itself.

Minimum – Upgrade all exterior lighting to provide bright white lighting to the parking area and building accesses. Adjust the angle of the flood lights in the back of the building to illuminate the building itself.

B. FENCES, SHRUBS, TREES AND NATURAL BARRIERS

There is a wooden privacy fence along the East side of the property with some various vegetation extending over the property from the residential yards. The remaining perimeter is sparsely populated with small vegetation that is not consequential to this study.

Recommendations: Monitor the vegetation that is encroaching on UHV property from the residential areas. Make sure this vegetation does not grow to the point of inviting criminals by keeping it neatly trimmed at least 8’ off the ground.

C. ALARMS (PERIMETER)

There is no existing perimeter alarm system.

Recommendations: No Recommendations.

SECTION FOUR

EXTERIOR BARRIERS

A. DOORS

There are seven entrances into this building. There are two on the South side, two on the West side, two on the North side and one double-door on the East side. The two single, metal doors on the location (one on the North wall, one on the South) have excellent security characteristics and require no changes.

Recommendations:

Maximum – The double-door on the East side of the building poses the largest security risk as they are secluded from visibility and provide ample opportunity for tampering. The doors and door frames should be reworked to include solid core-wood or metal doors in good condition mounted on metal frames or a solid wooden frame with hardened steel strike plates. There should be no gap between the doors and the door jamb. It would be best to change this to a single door, but if the double-door configuration is to be kept, the secondary door should be equipped with header and footer bolts flush-mounted in the door edge that engage metal strike plates in the top and bottom frames. A double-cylinder deadbolt with at least a 1-inch throw should be used on the primary door and all hinges should be peened to prevent tampering.

The glass doors on the North and South faces of the building also have limited visibility outside of the immediate area. As such, they should incorporate either safety bars or some type of solid door with door viewers to reduce criminal opportunity. These doors should also have double-cylinder dead-bolts with a 1-inch throw engaging metal strike plates.

The front doors of both the SBDC and VCC currently only have a handle-locking system. The VCC door should be equipped with a double-cylinder dead bolt with a 1-inch throw engaging a metal strike plate. The SBDC incorporates a double-door system. The secondary door should be equipped with header and footer bolts flush-mounted in the door edge that engage metal strike plates in the top and bottom frames. A double-cylinder deadbolt with at least a 1-inch throw should be used on the primary door.

A metal plate should be attached to the exterior of all doors with deadbolts. These plates should extend beyond the width of the door and extend upward and downward in such a fashion that the deadbolt is concealed when viewed from the exterior of the building. This will protect the deadbolts and strike plates from direct attack.

Minimum – Reduce or eliminate the gap under the double-doors on the East side of the building to prevent tampering. The secondary door should be equipped with header and footer bolts flush-mounted in the door edge that engage metal strike plates in the top and bottom frames. A double-cylinder deadbolt with at least a 1-inch throw should be used on the primary door and all hinges should be peened to prevent tampering.

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B. WINDOWS

The only windows that pose a significant security risk are those on the North face of the building. These are the only windows designed to be opened that are a likely target for a burglar.

Recommendations: The windows in question should be equipped with some secondary locking device. This can take the form of a window rail clamp or bar to prevent opening the window should the factory installed locking device be defeated.

C. WALLS

The exterior walls of this location pose no significant security risk.

Recommendations: No recommendations.

D. ROOF

There was no easy access to the roof and this did not appear to be a likely ingress point for potential criminals.

Recommendations: No recommendations

E. FLOOR

The foundation is concrete and therefore does not pose a security risk.

Recommendations: No Recommendations

F. OUTSIDE STORAGE AREAS

There is one 30' X 16' portable building near the Southeast corner of the building. This building has no power running to it and is used for storage of items that are not considered likely targets of theft or burglary.

Recommendations: Continue to minimize the desirability of breaking into this building by storing more valuable items in the primary building. Improving the security measures on portable buildings only tends to increase the likelihood of damage to said building. No other recommendations.

SECTION FIVE

INTERIOR CONTROLS

A. DOORS AND LOCKS

There is a wide variety of both single and double doors inside the primary building. Most are adequate for the purposes they serve. However, areas used for storage of client or member information should be secured any time they are unattended. The areas of primary concern are the SBDC's file room and electronics storage closet and the VCC's office where member information is stored.

Recommendations:

Maximum – All doors into these rooms should be solid core and incorporate deadbolt locks with a minimum 1-inch throw engaging a metal strike plate that is anchored to the wall framing, not the door frame. These locks should be engaged any time the secured areas will be unattended for any length of time.

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B. INTERIOR WALLS

There are very many interior walls. All are constructed of sheetrock over metal studs. The walls are functional and appropriate for their purposes.

Recommendations: No recommendations.

C. ALARM SYSTEMS

There is no internal alarm system.

Recommendations: No recommendations.

D. SAFES AND SECURED CABINETS

There are no safes in the location. The SBDC incorporates a series of locked cabinets containing all client information. These cabinets are currently stored in the HVAC room of the location which has adequate security measures installed at all room accesses. There is one lock box for petty cash kept in the VCC's lobby. The VCC also has a locked file cabinet with Chamber Member information stored in it including some credit card numbers.

Recommendations:

Maximum – It would be best if the SBDC's files could be transferred to digital format on a non-networked computer. The information should be stored on electronic media in an appropriate safe with a backup copy stored off-site. As this is not allowed by the SBDC's governing body, the hard copies of this information should all be stored in these cabinets which should only be unlocked when files are actively being accessed. The VCC should not store members' credit card information at all. The inconvenience of them having to supply that information annually is offset by the comfort of knowing that the information is not accessible during the rest of the year. The petty cash box situation cannot be improved in any cost-effective manner.

Minimum – The hard copies of the SBDC's client information should continue to be stored in locked file cabinets which should only be unlocked when files are actively being accessed. The VCC should not store members' credit card information at all. The inconvenience of them having to supply that information annually is offset by the comfort of knowing that the information is not accessible during the rest of the year.

E. KEY CONTROL

There are three primary keys to this building: one which opens the two front doors and an adjoining door shared by the locations, one which opens SBDC office doors and another which opens VCC office doors. Every full-time employee of either location has a front door key and a suite key appropriate to the location they work in. Maintenance and custodial staff have access to master keys for the entire building.

Recommendations:

Maximum – The ideal solution would be to switch to an electronic card-key access either with swipe-cards or proximity keys. These keys would operate either magnetic locks or electronically controlled deadbolts. Such a system would allow specific access limitations applied to keys that could not be easily duplicated and could be easily rendered useless. Such systems preclude employees leaving areas unlocked for various reasons and documents all ingresses and egresses.

Minimum – Rekey the locks every time an employee leaves the company. Switch to a key that cannot be easily copied.

SECTION SIX

CONCLUSION

OVERALL BUILDING SECURITY

Overall this site is a well controlled and safe environment. There is little cause to fear break-ins as the potential gain to the burglar is limited to the information stored in files that a criminal would need to be aware of in advance. There is even less reason to fear that employees will be confronted by a criminal. However, due to the nature of the information stored on site, should it ever be compromised, clients and members are at significant risk of identity theft. If the recommendations in this report are implemented they will help to alleviate some of the weaknesses that still exist at this site. These strategies cannot guarantee a perfectly crime-free environment. Please contact the Victoria Police Department Community Services Section for further information on crime prevention tactics.