



Practical tips for commercial real estate property security | March 2023

The security of Class A commercial real estate is a major concern for property owners and managers in British Columbia. Office towers are a constant target for loitering and criminal acts such as theft and vandalism. To ensure the security of employees, visitors, and assets, it's crucial that commercial properties owners and managers stay ahead of any security risk to protect their property members and assets.

What components are essential to an office tower security program?

The first step in creating a robust security program begins with a risk assessment to evaluate threat levels, access points and possible types of attack.

Several factors will influence threat level, such as property location. Buildings located in high-risk neighborhoods or densely populated urban areas generally require a higher level of security than those located in quieter areas.

The type of businesses operated by the office tower's tenants will also have an impact on what type of security is needed. Companies that store high-value products or handle sensitive information will often need to employ additional safety measures beyond the basic protection elements.

Finally, the physical characteristics of the property itself must also be considered. Properties with multiple access points such as entrances and exits, elevators, stairwells, and so on will require higher security measures to prevent unauthorized intrusions.

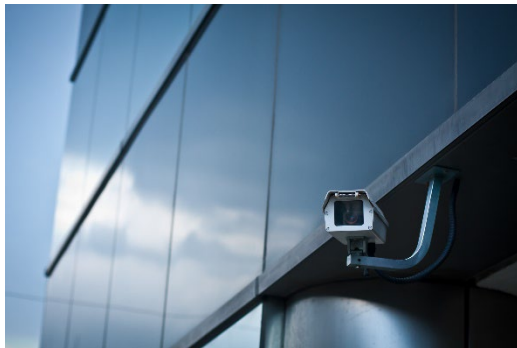
What security measures should be implemented in office towers? (cont. on next page)

A combination of on-site security guards, concierge services, as well as leading-edge surveillance and access technology are key to an effective security program. Jared Diamond, Director of Business Development in the Pacific and Northern Regions for GardaWorld, says “Guards not only act to patrol the property and respond in emergencies, but also to provide a visible presence that deters wrongdoers and criminal acts from occurring in the first place.”

For Class A properties that require an additional level of customer service, Jared explains, “There are also concierge security guards who will be uniformed in a suit jacket for a high-end look. In addition to providing core security services such as controlling entrances and exits, these guards provide additional customer services such as greeting visitors, accepting parcel deliveries, and directing visitors within the property”.

No building is complete without an intrusion and fire alarm system in place. Doug Sales, Senior Director, Commercial Systems Sales Ontario, and West for GardaWorld Security Systems, emphasizes the importance of fire alarm monitoring. “The primary concern for commercial real estate owners and managers, and a key requirement for them in attracting tenants to their property, is a fire alarm system. Not only should the fire alarm system be monitored by a monitoring centre with 24/7 live agents who can send emergency services when needed, but the fire equipment on site should be inspected regularly to ensure it complies with local regulations.”

Access control technology remains one of the most important aspects to manage the flow of traffic. Doug continues, “In commercial real estate such as a large office tower, several businesses may be located inside the building. Magnetic access cards, proximity cards and biometric readers will usually be used at main entrance for each individual tenant, as well as for protected areas such as data rooms.”



“Security cameras and remote monitoring are a key component of a commercial property’s security system,” adds Doug. “Cameras should be strategically placed in the property, covering entrances and exits, parking areas, entrance halls, stairwells, elevators, etc. Not only do cameras lend a deterrence presence, but they can be useful during off-peak hours when guards are not on-site. For example, a visitor can be guided remotely through parts of the building through remote video monitoring and access control.”

In conclusion, when these measures are combined, they effectively increase the level of security of the Class A property. Commercial property owners and managers must protect their commercial properties from the threats they may face.

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