


The
**SECURITY
SURVEY:**
An
Investigative
Tool



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Investigators use many tools to do their job. Some of these specialized tools include: recorders, surveillance-capturing technologies, alarm and access control technologies, radios, computers, tracking / forensic software, log books, and cameras. The security survey is one of the many tools in the investigator's toolkit. Since most investigators lack the expertise to prepare security surveys, they usually opt to engage a professional surveyor to tackle the task. Most surveyors receive their specialized knowledge and training from academia and/or working as crime prevention specialists for major city, state, federal law enforcement agencies.

WHAT IS A SECURITY SURVEY AND HOW DOES IT FUNCTION?

The security survey is analogous to a medical CT Scan (Computed Tomography) which is an important device used by medical experts to diagnose and treat illness. Similarly, security executives use the security survey to diagnose and prescribe remedies for frail security programs. What a CT scan is to a physician, the security survey is to a security diagnostician. In professional hands, the survey profiles deficiencies, risks, and hazardous conditions, and offers creative /corrective approaches to correct these shortcomings

TYPES OF SECURITY SURVEYS:

- **The single client security survey** is a facility-wide assessment of a residence or business. These assessments are often extremely lengthy reports and touch on all aspects of facility security. The philosophy behind this form of survey is that the entire focus of the assessment is to identify crime exposures that affect the individual client only.
- **The after-incident security survey** is prepared as follow-up to an incident (burglary, robbery, assault). These assessments are usually extremely brief reports and strictly focus like a laser on the incident under scrutiny. The philosophy behind this form of survey is that the entire focus of the assessment is to identify incident-specific crime exposures only.
- **The access control security survey** is prepared as follow-up to incidents affecting ingress and egress points. This assessment is only intended to shore-up security at critical high trafficked points without restricting access into and out of the access portal
- **The multi-client / community-wide security surveys** – the philosophy behind this form of survey is that the focus of the assessment is to identify crime exposures that affect both the individual client and the overall community. These surveys are usually prepared at the request of organizations such as residential groups, gated communities, industrial parks, business improvement districts, etc. It's important to note that in these

broader assessments the surveyor's mindset requires that they understand that the individual entity and the community are one interrelated unit.

THE ABCS OF ORGANIZING THE SECURITY SURVEY:

A great way to understand how a security survey is structured is to frame the discussion using medical terminology:

1. Physicians examine patients
2. Physicians diagnose ailments
3. Physicians write prescriptions

THE EXAMINATION:

- First and foremost, the investigator must know whether the survey is a standard *overt* security survey assessment or a *surreptitious endeavor*.
- In some instances, surreptitious surveys are performed to capture internal thievery and on-site visitation by a surveyor is inadvisable. All work on this form of assessment is done during non-work periods.
- In standard overt type surveys, the surveyor meets with top management (CEO, VP, security director, facilities management director), to discuss project parameters, time-frame constraints, sub-contractor issues, budgetary issues, etc.
- The surveyor then examines company construction related documents (blueprints, floor plans, architectural drawings, electrical schematics, site maps, etc.)
- The surveyor obtains authorization letters to gain access to the survey site and its environs
- The surveyor visits the survey site on all work shifts so that each facet of the operation is examined.
- The surveyor obtains written authorization to interview department heads, managers, and employees.
- The surveyor examines company related crime incident data.
- The surveyor examines and reviews crime incident data from local law enforcement agencies (municipal and federal).
- The surveyor examines neighborhood crime incident data. An acceptable rule of thumb is to check crime incident rates occurring within a one-mile radius of the facility. Oftentimes, this info can be obtained by visiting local development corporations/industrial parks/business improvement district facilities, and/or local political offices of elected officials.
- The surveyor examines the facility's security staffing grid and security technology grid - where alarms, cameras, etc. are located.
- The surveyor examines the facility's asset protection and inventory control programs.
- The surveyor examines the company's security awareness program.

THE DIAGNOSIS:

Once the examination is concluded, it's time for rigorous analysis. This process begins by logging each risk exposure and sub-dividing them into "low" "medium" and "high" risk categories, forming a risk grid. It is through this analytic process that the amplitude of various risk exposures is valued. A good rule of thumb is to fashion judgements on sustentative data extrapolated from the risk grid, coupled with the diagnostician's intuitive abilities.

WRITING THE PRESCRIPTION:

Regardless of the form or style of the survey, it's really the content that counts. A well-structured security survey should include:

- Introduction
- Core (body of the report)
- Summary of findings /enhancements
- Implementation timetable
- Closing statement
- Appendices

Introduction:

This section of the survey stipulates who and why the survey is being prepared, the overall parameters of the study, who will be interviewed, and the start date and end date of the undertaking.

Core:

This section of the assessment includes a list of departments visited, individuals interviewed, and security deficiencies noted.

Summary of Findings/Enhancements:

The summary statement presents a menu of deficiencies coupled to an enhancement strategy listing. It is always a good idea to prioritize this listing so that percentage comparisons can be put forward.

Implementation Schedule:

This section of the report includes a timetable for executing the recommended solutions, and a schedule for revising the site to review progress and non-progress.

Closing Statement:

The closing statement should rivet attention to those individuals (department heads, employees, etc.) who assisted during the survey by acknowledging their contribution. Moreover, the surveyor should also champion the importance of implementing all recommendations.

Appendices:

This section of the report includes all support documentation including, but not limited to:

- Memoranda
- Relevant studies
- Minutes of meetings
- Crime statistics
- Community profile data (maps, charts, diagrams, photographs)

THE ABCS OF PREPARING COMMUNITY WIDE ASSESSMENTS:

Often, investigative firms are asked to evaluate security and safety issues for an entire community and/or a residential complex. It's important that investigators have some knowledge of how these broader studies are prepared. The specific form of crime risk management counseling offered clients in conventional crime control differs significantly from the philosophy applied in preparing community wide studies. Quite a different mindset is required when preparing a community wide survey. In these broader assessments, the surveyor needs to examine community data sources and conduct area-wide interviews with residents and retailers. Some of the tasks involved in drafting these wider studies include:

- A thorough review of community wide profile data (population, ethnic, income, age, housing and employment breakdowns).
- A thorough review of land use, traffic flow, and building construction data.
- A thorough review of community-wide crime analysis data from police, community groups, elected officials, chambers of commerce, etc.
- Interviews with residents, retailers and legitimate users of the strip.
- Interviews with delivery personnel, mail carriers, delivery truckers, utility company personnel who regularly service the area.

THE ABCS OF PREPARING A COMMUNITY WIDE SECURITY SURVEY:

Essentially, these wider studies follow the same structural format as standard surveys. There is a big difference in the assortment of security measures put forward to help mitigate identified risk exposures. Protection measures used in these wider assessments include:

- **Problem:** Street crime control (muggings, robberies, etc.)
- **Solution:** The formulation of strategically designed lighted corridors (pedestrian routes) linking business centers to mass transit hubs.

- **Problem:** Crime incidents at bus stops and high crime intersections.
- **Solution:** Synchronizing signal lights at high crime intersections to encourage vehicular concentration; relocating bus stops from undesirable high crime intersections to more appropriate lower crime areas.
- **Problem:** Work-related muggings at quitting time.
- **Solution:** Encourage businesses to better coordinate work release schedules with local bus and train schedules. Coordinate police coverage to correspond with work release schedules.
- **Problem:** Poor coordination between the local police and residents.
- **Solution:** Establishment of mobile crime prevention services. Creating satellite police facilities, using mounted police for special events, creating senior citizen escort programs.

- **Problem:** Crime incidents at municipally operated subway and rail stations.
- **Solution:** Installation of state of the art lighting, installing prominent signage, installing conductor boards to tell passengers where the subway car will stop on the platform, installing subway entrance lighted globes to alert passengers of entrance closures. Oftentimes, globes are either Red or Green. Red means the subway entrance is closed and green means it's open for use.

CONCLUSION:

In the court of protection wisdom, the Security Survey is the right tool to use when measuring crime risk exposure. Surveyors spend countless hours probing, examining, researching, and pondering before they tear a page from their "Rx" pad. Many larger police agencies offer *free* security surveys and private firms specializing in this area can be found by searching the world wide web. It makes good sense for investigators to add this unique service to their company's roster of services. **PI**

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