

TECHNOLOGY SECURITY

Preparation, training critical to assisting tech

NATIONAL REPORT—Every June, the National Safety Council (NSC) promotes the observation of National Safety Month in order to focus on reducing injury in all aspects of life. For the lodging industry, and many other sectors, security and safety complement one another. That being said, properties may want to take some time out of the month to review safety and security programs, and security protocol with employees.

“While hotels should focus on safety throughout the year, this is a special time to really make safety a priority,” said Bryan Smith, Koorsen Fire and Security’s director of security business. “This is a time to review your safety program, look at what’s working and what needs improvement. It’s also a good time to go over all of your safety precautions, possible scenarios, act out drills, etc., with your employees. This will help keep safety top of mind for all employees.”

What are some key mistakes hotel owners are making when it comes to safety? Neglecting security protocols and programs. “An effective hotel security program requires a comprehensive approach that entails a continuous reevaluation of current policies, training and security systems,” he said. “What may be effective today will inevitably lead to vulnerabilities a year from now. It’s essential to constantly

update security measures and make sure that all staff members are trained accordingly.”

Proper training on security threats needs to be mandatory for all employees carrying out security policies. These classes should ideally cover a couple of essential topic areas: assessing guest behavior and identifying authentic security threats. “Attentiveness naturally plays a big role in guest service, but it’s also a contributing factor when it comes to security policies,” Smith explained. “Someone with criminal intentions may consider abandoning his plans when he witnesses how well monitored guest activity is, sending the message that any attempt to compromise security will be reacted to quickly.” Preparation is key.

For instance, properties should always include emergency procedures on how to handle intruders and when to contact authorities. “Practice sessions can be done much like fire drills to ensure all staff members are prepared for any security breaches and can react appropriately,” Smith noted. “Emergency training should also include instructing staff on how to operate fire and safety equipment—such as fire extinguishers. Whether training on general security tasks or emergency procedures, the underlying goal should be striking a successful balance of

security demands and a welcoming atmosphere.”

National Safety Month is also the perfect time to ensure everything is working properly: card access systems, fire alarm panels and surveillance cameras. “Contact your local commercial security provider for a professional inspection of these vital systems,” he said.

Implementing new security initiatives can be challenging for many properties; however, communicating clearly with employees can help hotels overcome many obstacles. “While there aren’t any codes or regulations that speak directly to the frequency with which training should be provided, doing so on a regular basis will greatly impact the businesses’ ability to protect themselves from security risks in the future,” Smith said.

Oftentimes, the greatest threat to security at a property is a lack of training and knowledge on the part of its employees. “While a door may have a card access system installed, leaving that door propped open for any length of time provides the opportunity for an intrusion to occur,” Smith noted. For him, having security equipment isn’t enough; at the end of the day, it must also be properly installed and implemented.

“In addition to being installed properly, professional monitoring is imperative to keeping a hotel safe 24/7/365,” he explained. “Work with a trusted commercial security partner to ensure that equipment is properly installed and monitored.”

—CJ Arlotta