

# Physical Security Guidelines for Organizations Leasing Space or Using Shared Space



Many Jewish organizations lease space in commercial buildings or share space with other Jewish organizations. Ensuring the security and safety of Jewish organizations in commercial space presents many challenges that need to be considered before signing a lease. Multiple factors are considered when organizations lease space, including budget, location, size, proximity to clients and partners, accessibility, transportation and infrastructure, room for growth, and security and safety. All these factors affect the overall safety and security of a facility.

While considering a space, the prospective tenant can work with the lessor to understand existing security measures and include upgraded improvements in a lease. The prospective tenant should fully understand the building's existing physical security measures and understand the landlord's role in building security and the obligation to tenants.

When selecting a leased space, ask the lessor if a Threat, Vulnerability, and Risk Assessment (TVRA) or physical security survey has been performed, and if so, whether they can provide a copy for a security professional to review. If no assessment has been completed or if one cannot be provided, consider having a security professional conduct one. A thorough and detailed TVRA early in the leasing process will identify vulnerabilities specific to the proposed property and provide options and mitigations that are appropriate and cost-effective rather than excessive or unnecessary. Additional factors, such as location, neighboring businesses, the threat landscape, and historical crime information, will aid in developing the building security strategy.

The ideal time to request physical security improvements or a specific risk reduction process is before the signing of the lease. This is especially true for any unique or unusually expensive improvements and any architectural requirements affecting the entire building. The flexibility before signing an agreement may include the space's location, layout offered, and other variables typically outlined in a lease, all of which may be identified in the TVRA.

## Common Vulnerabilities in a Commercial Building



Inadequate perimeter security, such as a lack of fences, security cameras, or adequate lighting.



Insufficient vehicular control, including traffic and parking patterns that allow vehicles to get close to the building.



Weak building structures, such as a lack of blast-resistant or anti-entry glass or weak doors and windows.



Lack of sufficient building access control and visitor management measures. In most cases, buildings have unrestricted public access along with a variety of tenants that affect access control measures.



Lack of security personnel and limited physical security measures for HVAC systems and mechanical areas, mail rooms, loading docks, shipping and receiving areas, and communications and network areas, as well as food supply and delivery areas.



Insufficient or delayed response times from emergency personnel, such as police and fire departments.

# Key Physical Security Considerations



## Location and Surrounding Environment

The location of the building and what surrounds it can affect security. Important factors to consider are area crime statistics and nearby criminal activity generators such as shopping, retail establishments, and entertainment areas. Response times for emergency services to a leased space are also important.



## Perimeter Security

The first line of defense against physical threats is a well-secured perimeter. Look for fencing, gates, and barriers to control access to the parking area and building frontage.



## Parking Lot and Building Exterior Lighting

A well-lit property is a deterrent to potential threats and assists surveillance efforts. Properly lit entrances, parking lots, and other vulnerable areas enhance visibility and minimize areas of concealment for would-be intruders. The lighting should be well-maintained, cover all areas with no gaps in coverage, and preferably be LED fixtures.



## Access Control to the Building

Limited access to the building and/or specific areas is paramount for security. Existing access control systems may include key cards, biometric scanners, or keypad entry, which manage and monitor who enters and exits the building. In addition, the building should have an alarm to detect unauthorized access.



## Access Control within the Building

Unrestricted access within the building is a security concern. Access to elevators, floors, and restrooms needs to be controlled. Visitor management systems are commonly used to control access within buildings. Communications, network, and mechanical areas should be secured at all times with limited access.



## Building Security Personnel

Visible security personnel act as a deterrent, signaling to potential threats that the property is actively protected. Security personnel are a crucial component of physical security, with duties that often include patrols of the building and property, access control, monitoring of surveillance systems, and responding to incidents. Security personnel should be licensed, bonded, and insured, in addition to having defined roles and responsibilities. If armed security is present, ensure proper state training and certification requirements have been met.



## Video Surveillance Systems

The presence of high-quality Video Surveillance Systems (VSS) throughout the building covering vulnerable areas such as entrances, exits, and parking lots bolsters physical security.



## Hardened Windows and Entry Points

Windows and doors are commonly used as entry points by criminals. These areas should be reinforced with impact-resistant glass, security film, or window bars. Additionally, ensure that all entry points are equipped with reliable locks, preferably electronic door access control systems.

# Important Questions to Ask

- ? What is the role of the security personnel?** Is their role limited to loitering, solicitation, and panhandling prevention in the building common areas and reporting observed security problems to the police or other authorities? Or do they take a more active role in access control and conduct identification and screening duties?
- ? Who handles access control measures?** Who is responsible for dispensing access and card keys to tenant employees? What are the procedures for reporting the loss of such cards and for periodically reviewing the access codes to the premises? Is there a visitor management system? Elevator access control? How are mail and deliveries handled?
- ? What emergency procedures are in place?** Does the building have a public address system? Mass alert system? Are there emergency response plans? How often are emergency drills conducted? Have local first responders toured the building?
- ? What are the capabilities of the Video Surveillance System?** Are there gaps in coverage? If so, are there plans to address them? Is access to the systems available for tenants?
- ? What other tenants are on the premises?** Do any of the building's tenants attract unwanted attention by publicly supporting controversial groups or movements? Will the building owner provide additional information over time as new organizations look to lease space in the building?
- ? Is there a 24/7 contact?** Who can be contacted on a continuous, 24-hour emergency basis for security concerns or other building-related matters?
- ? What improvements can be made to the potential leased space?** To what extent will the proposed tenant be entitled to implement additional security measures on its premises? Will they need to be compatible with existing systems? Can the proposed tenant employ security personnel, and can they be armed if deemed necessary?

Lessors should provide tenants with basic security features to protect tenants and their property. Typically, lessors have no obligation to provide any advanced security features, such as an alarm system or private entryways, beyond the basic features required by state tenancy laws. However, when a lessor does provide additional features, they must ensure that those features are in good, working order at all times. For example, if the lessor promises that active security personnel will be on duty during certain hours, they should be obligated to provide a qualified security guard.

Common areas such as walkways, entryways, sidewalks, parking lots, and similar vicinities are the lessor's responsibility. Lessors should ensure that these areas are well-lit at all times and that unauthorized persons cannot gain access outside of normal business hours. To protect tenants from potential nuisance, injury, or death, lessors have a duty to take reasonable steps to prevent foreseeable criminal activity from occurring on or around property grounds, as well as actively reporting or removing any individuals — including other tenants or employees — who have caused problems.

After securing a leased or shared space, tenants should monitor physical security measures and continue working with the lessor for security matters. They should ensure the lessor maintains building-wide security measures, reassess physical security improvements as needed, and consider conducting an additional TVRA after some time to allow for operations to become routine.

Ensuring a safe and secure facility is the responsibility of all building tenants working together and in partnership with the building owner and/or the property management firm responsible for the building. Keeping an open line of communication with all involved parties and working as a team is vital to ensure a safe and secure facility for all.

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