



# CIRSA HAZARD ALERT

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SAFER TOGETHER

## Hazard Alert - Security Measures for Governmental Buildings



While the exact number of security incidents at governmental buildings is not available, those who work in local government know such incidents are all too common and are on the rise. Understanding this, it's important your entity have a plan in place to appropriately address these incidents in order to help protect your employees and the public and maintain the security of your public buildings. This Hazard Alert is intended to help provide information to consider if developing a security plan.

Securing a city or town hall or other public buildings requires careful planning and consideration of various factors. Some of the key things to consider include the following.

**Assessing the level of risk:** Before developing a security plan, it's essential to assess both the types and levels of risks your entity faces in securing its public buildings. This assessment could involve analyzing past incidents, identifying potential sources of conflict, determining where potential conflicts or security incidents are likely to occur, and evaluating the likelihood of different scenarios.

**Developing a security plan:** Based on the risk assessment, develop a comprehensive security plan that includes access control, surveillance, and emergency response protocols. This plan should be communicated to all staff members and reviewed regularly to ensure it remains effective.

**Training staff:** Municipal employees should be trained to identify potential security threats and respond appropriately. This could include de-escalation techniques, emergency response procedures, and communication protocols.

**Communicating with the public:** Clear communication can help reduce the likelihood of confrontations that could escalate to security concerns. This could involve providing information on how to access city services, timely addressing concerns and grievances, and creating an environment that promotes dialogue and cooperation.

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## *Security Measures for Governmental Buildings (cont.)*

**Collaborating with law enforcement:** Collaboration with law enforcement agencies can help ensure a coordinated response in the event of an incident. This could involve establishing relationships with local police departments, sharing information, and working together to develop emergency response plans.

**Providing a safe environment:** Finally, it's important to create a safe and secure environment that minimizes potential conflicts. This could include physical measures as well as security protocols, such as installing security barriers at service counters, conducting appropriate building surveillance, performing security screening at courthouses, and installing alert buttons on the desks of those who have contact with the public. (Once one of these buttons is pressed, the police are immediately summoned.) These measures are in addition to the adoption of policies and procedures that promote respect and civility and are intended to create a safe and secure environment for employees and those they serve.

For additional information relative to building and safety security, please attend one of our [Building & Infrastructure Security Seminars](#) this fall. These 7-hour sessions cover time-proven methodologies of deter, delay, and respond components of active vs. passive security, and include information on development and maintenance of a security program.

A second and equally important part of security is appropriate handling of interactions with angry citizens. For information on tips and approaches for handling difficult citizen interactions, please refer to this newly released CIRSA article "[Handling Interactions with Angry Citizens](#)," which includes an assessment tool you can use at your next team meeting.