



SECURITY AWARENESS

SECURITY AWARENESS WHILE TRAVELING

Introduction

Media reports continue to include stories about company executives, oil field workers and regular travellers who have been the victims of kidnappings, armed robberies and murder while visiting foreign countries. Recent events have seen a Canadian woman kidnapped in northern Nigeria and her captors demanding \$136,000 for her release. This woman was a financial advisor who was in Nigeria with other Canadians as part of an exchange program and she was kidnapped as she was entering a house after attending a social event. There are also ongoing reports of oil workers being kidnapped by rebels in South America and Africa; it would appear that these types of incidents are increasing rather becoming a thing of the past.

Discussion

It is extremely difficult to determine the actual magnitude of this problem; however, there are some interesting statistics available through various insurance companies, and other sources. For example, a couple of years ago, AIG's Crisis Management Division in Philadelphia reported that “there are over 20,000 reported kidnap for ransom incidents annually, with 48 percent of them occurring in Latin America”. There are other reports that would lead to the conclusion that the threat of kidnapping is actually much higher than what is publically reported. Some estimate that the actual kidnap numbers range between 5 to 6 times the reported numbers of kidnap cases. This is due, in large part, to distrust of the local law enforcement agencies or local law enforcement participation in the actual event. There are also news reports that lay out the circumstances in which visitors and foreign workers have been victims of robbery, assaults and homicide. In an incident approximately a year ago, two Canadians were attacked while on a hike in South Africa. The attackers brutally stabbed the two Canadians who almost bled to death before being found and airlifted to safety.

The risk while travelling on business, or on vacation, to several countries around the World is very real. Some of the countries that appear on the top of list as it pertains to high risk of kidnapping or becoming a victim of violence include; Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, South Africa, Nigeria, Afghanistan and Mexico. Coincidentally, these are the same countries that offer expanding business opportunities for many industries. There is often debate over the best methods that can be taken to protect yourself while travelling in these regions. There are several very simple steps that can be taken to assist in lowering your profile as a target, they include:

- Avoid traveling with airlines, and other transportation entities, that are known to be high risk and low security.

- Do not display any identifying materials or items that link you to your Company, in particular those that identify you as a member of the Company executive team.
- Try to avoid making hotel reservations under your Company name. Your corporate affiliation should not appear anywhere your itinerary.
- Try to minimize the time spent in places where foreigners or tourists might gather such as a nightclub, bars, or a well known tourist area.
- Avoid dress and behavior that might identify you as someone who would be of value. Try to keep a low profile.
- Do not discuss travel plans or agenda with hotel staff, they may be criminal Informants.
- Avoid using the same entrance or exit while staying at a hotel. It is good to change the times you leave your hotel each day and schedule your work day accordingly so that you're back before night sets in.
- Be suspicious of any chance acquaintances made in or around the hotel or while travelling. Do not divulge any personal or professional information.
- Do not allow yourself to be placed in compromising positions.

In some case it may be advisable to consider a risk assessment by experienced security professionals that can provide the most up to date information on your destination, a risk profile on you or your company staff and recommend options tailored to your particular situation. The best method to surviving a kidnapping or other violent incident is to ensure that you are not put into a situation where you can become a victim.

Additional Articles from Presidia Security¹

Ask the Question – What is Your Security Strategy?

Security is often thought of as a tactical issue that should remain at the “gates and guards” level. While these tactical security pieces may be important they are most effective as part of a security strategy that is designed to mitigate the threats and risks to your company and its operations. True security strategy is integrated into a company’s “C Suite” and is seen as an enabler. The questions and discussion that follow outline the framework for a company security strategy.

Assessing and Tracking Threats - Protecting Your Employees and Your Company

Recent incidents of violence in the workplace in Canada tragically illustrate what happens when threats materialize into actions; they serve as a stark reminder to businesses across the country of their responsibility to protect their employees in the spirit of “due diligence” and “due care and attention.” Rarely, if ever, do these violent situations manifest themselves without some sort of prior indicators. This underscores the importance of having proper procedures in place to track and assess threats to your employees. Take the time to review the following recommendations to determine whether your company is prepared to address threats to employees.

Executive Protection Considerations

In today’s fiscally challenged business environment it may be difficult to justify providing an Executive Protection Program for an organization’s key executives. However, in making this important decision one also has to consider what the cost would be to the organization’s bottom line and, perhaps more importantly, to its reputation should a key member of the senior leadership team be the target of an act aimed at harming or embarrassing the individual and the organization.

Due Diligence Investigations

If asked, many companies would say that they have “due diligence investigation” processes in place; however, these processes are often designed to review the financial and operational affairs of a particular company and fail to closely inspect the background of the main principals or executives of the company. In addition, many companies do nothing more than cursory checks on individuals they are about to hire. The lack of a robust background investigation can result in wasted time and can cause legal and financial problems. There is an abundance of legal findings across Canada, as well as internationally, that clearly articulate the liability facing companies who do not carry out appropriate due diligence investigations. In order to inspect this issue closer one must first begin with a definition and understanding of what “due diligence” consists of.

¹ Available online at our website: www.presidiasecurity.com/library.html

Take a Moment to Celebrate Success

Take a moment today to think about the successes you have had and the team that got you there. It is well worth it.

A Solid Foundation for Administrative Investigations

"Is it time for the implementation of standards, including proper training and oversight, as it pertains to the conduct of "administrative investigations"? It could be argued that administrative investigations are purely "administrative" in nature and as such there is no requirement for an enhanced capability. However, it can also just as easily be argued that these types of investigations can have a very negative impact on the lives of those being investigated, including the potential loss of their livelihood. They also bring with them a large degree of "personal and institutional liability" on the part of those individuals conducting the investigations and the "organizations for which they are employed."

Marine Port Security - Published in FrontLine Magazine

"Since 9/11, marine port security has been the subject of increased scrutiny as it is clear that contraband flows - undetected and uninterrupted - through access and egress points of both Canada and the United States. Numerous reviews initiated by the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the Canadian Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence have clearly articulated that ports are a haven for criminal activity and organized crime, as well as targets for potential terrorist activity. Both these reviews demand an increase in the level of intelligence sharing among partner agencies focused on policing and security of marine port operations."

Setting up an Intelligence Hub - Published in FrontLine Magazine

Intelligence in some form is in use today across a broad spectrum. No longer just the purview of Government entities, business intelligence is a common term and practice among corporations. Today, in the internet age, there is an abundance of readily accessible information about any given topic, organization or person. The immense growth of social networking in recent years has added to a rich information bank that is readily accessible to anyone with an internet connection. The challenge today is to sift through vast quantities of information to uncover and piece together the information you require into an intelligence picture that supports your operations. The value of your own information can increase exponentially when combined with open source research and information from other entities with whom you are willing to share.

Security Policy

"Policy writing: next to cleaning the coffee break area, doing personnel assessments or wrestling a hungry grizzly bear, it is probably one of the least desirable tasks in any organization. Its mere mention can send employees scrambling over desks and seeking cover in the hopes of being spared the mind---numbing drudgery of documenting the company's rules, procedures and practices. There is a good reason for this: writing is hard work – and writing clearly, concisely and meaningfully is even harder still. When it comes to communicating an effective security policy, capturing that policy on paper (or, in today's digital

environment, electronically) is only the first – albeit most critical – step. Disseminating the policy and ensuring compliance are close second and third priorities, followed by periodic reviews to ensure the aforementioned policy continues to meet your organization’s requirements. "

Duty of Care

"The dynamic threat environment that persists in today’s business climate demand constant vigilance and discipline. Under the Canadian Criminal Code, companies owe a duty of care to their employees. This means businesses must take “reasonable steps” to protect workers, whether they are in Canada or working internationally. If companies do not meet this duty of care, they can be found criminally and financially liable under the Criminal Code. In the most extreme cases, the company can face hefty fines and the executives can be prosecuted and potentially jailed. In addition to the criminal prosecution, individuals can also face personal civil litigation. "