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PSIRA 2038881

Alwinco: Taking security and crime very seriously. Are you?

Understanding Risk

Probability Vs. Opportunity

The following is a very good example that can be used as a highly instructive case study between probability and opportunity. As you are aware, many assessors make use of a point or grading system to assess risk. This practice is an overflow from Health & Safety and, in our experience, has unfortunately proved to be rather inaccurate.

As an independent Security Advisor, we view risk in terms of opportunity. By removing this one aspect, we are actually able to proactively prevent a crime from occurring.

Recently I have been involved in serious discussion concerning this very topic with a Security Manager and some of the board members of a particular company. The business in question had just had such a rated type of assessment conducted on their premises.

The assessor had used a point system ranging from 1 (no / low risk) to 5 (high risk) in regards to the probability of a crime occurring. The debate that we participated in concerned this approach as opposed to our method that examines the risk in light of the opportunity present within the physical security system.

This report ranked the doors of the company's building as a 5 (high risk), the main gate as a 3 (average risk) and the wall of the perimeter as a 1 (low risk). Recently the wall had had an electrical fence added to the top of it and this was the assessor's reasoning as to why the probability of risk for a crime to occur there was very low. This grading implies to the company that that area of the property is safe, security is effective and no more attention needed to be given to this specific spot in regards to future upgrades.

Part of the conversation led to me stating that I believe this approach to security is incorrect and definitely not valid or accurate. In my opinion, security and the risk need to be established through the analysis of opportunities presented for a crime to occur. When the desire and the ability of the criminal are added to the mix, the result is a good, clear indication of the effectiveness of the current security onsite in regards to crime prevention. This is the manner in which we, as independents, draw our conclusions when conducting a Security Risk Assessment.

Those involved in the discussion at the meeting asked if I could possibly prove this and upon presentation and availability of the opportunity for a crime to be committed, the criminal would act.

My response to the challenge was the following: I asked if the company had some expensive and valuable electronic item that would not be missed. I was supplied with a non-functional laptop that looked good from the outside. The laptop was placed inside the property behind the wall that was rated in the initial report as being low risk. The placement of the laptop allowed for this item to be clearly visible to anyone from the outside of the site.

The following morning when we returned the laptop had been stolen. Please note again that the laptop had been placed behind the same low rating wall. The electronic gate had been locked and there was no evidence that this was the point where the thief had gained access into the property. Furthermore there are Security Officers placed at the gate during the evenings. It was clear that entry was gained by scaling that specific wall. No cameras were placed facing to or on the wall and clearly the new electrical fencing was no deterrent for this particular criminal.



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This clearly proves that if there is opportunity someone will seize it. It important to remember that the majority of people have the ability to commit a crime but less so have the desire to do so, as there is the logical fear of being caught and prosecuted which will inevitably lead to be convicted to serve jail time. Criminals do not fear the law process and will take any chance they get to act on their desire and to make a quick score.

Our methodology regarding crime and opportunity are based upon the Crime Triangle. Should you require more information regarding this, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

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Security Survey, Security Audit, Risk Analysis,
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Security Inspection, Vulnerability Assessment