

Vacant and Unoccupied Buildings

Controls for Security and Inspection

Line of Business: Property

Risk Control Strategy / Key Issues: To establish controls for vacant building security with documented policies and procedures

Suggested Program Elements:

1. **Policy Statement:** Assign responsibilities to one individual to drive the implementation of this program within your organization. This individual should coordinate the inspection procedures for the applicable locations. Additionally, similar guidelines should be established for employees who direct, secure, and monitor vacant buildings.

Include a general statement noting that the procedure establishes guidelines and procedures for vacant building security. The policy is designed to protect vacant buildings from damage of any kind by members of the general public. It may also include a statement, with sign-off, regarding the commitment of management and employees to the success of the policy.

2. **Program Components:** Details should be established for securing, monitoring, and maintaining building security; as well as repairing damage to vacant buildings. Also a process for monitoring program components should be in place to assure that the requirements of the program are being met.
3. **Building and Grounds Controls:** Controls should be in place to restrict access, control damage, reduce exposure, and improve security of vacant buildings. The following controls are recommended:
 - Entrance controls such as door locks, window locks, and padlocks should be in place to restrict access into the building. The locking mechanisms should be tested on a regular basis.
 - Windows on the first floor should be boarded up or otherwise secured in order to restrict unauthorized entry, especially in rural locations or areas known for criminal activity.
 - Fencing should be considered for buildings located in rural areas or areas known for criminal activity.
 - To reduce building damage due to temperature extremes, the temperature of the building should be maintained at 90 degrees Fahrenheit during the summer and 60 degrees Fahrenheit during the winter.
 - Playground equipment, basketball goals, and any other objects considered an attractive nuisance should be removed or securely fenced.
 - Grass, bushes, and trees should be kept trimmed to keep clear lines of site.
 - Trash or debris should be removed from the grounds to help keep lines of site clear, maintain site esthetics (being a good neighbor), and control insects and rodent populations.
 - Signs should be posted around the property to inform the general public who to contact in the case of an emergency. Emergency contact numbers should include police, fire, and/or school authorities. It is suggested to notify the fire department of the vacant building's location. Notification should include a building plan, an accurate chemical inventory (if applicable)

under Community Right-to-Know requirements) and information on existing fire and security measures that are in place.

- Adequate exterior and interior lighting should be in place to distract trespassers and make them easy to observe.
- Maintain the fire and security equipment in the building, keeping it operational and activated. Continue regular equipment testing and keep the service contracts in place.
- Active membership in WeTip: The WeTip program is designed to prevent incidents (arson, vandalism, shootings, drugs, etc.) from developing, and prosecute those involved when it does. The program features an anonymous crime reporting system, as well as rewards for tips leading to the arrest and conviction of criminals. You can find more information on this program at www.wetip.org.
- Routinely documented in-house inspections should be conducted. Any discrepancies noted during the inspections should be corrected ASAP, depending on exposure risk. Any corrections should be noted; date of correction, person-doing correction and material used.
- Security measures should be in place to include regular police, private, or in-house patrols. Also interior security systems should be in place, to include surveillance cameras at access points.

Program Activities Calendar:

- Daily checks by security or maintenance personnel
- Annual facility walk-throughs
- Annual property status evaluations

Web Site Links:

- WeTip.com
<http://www.wetip.com>

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Sample Checklist for Controls for Security of Vacant and Unoccupied Buildings

TARGET ISSUE	YES	NO
Is adequate exterior lighting in place with burned out bulbs being replaced in a timely manner?		
Is the facility equipped with security and fire alarm systems which are in operation?		
Are police / security providing a patrol at least once to twice weekly?		
Are surveillance cameras in place at access points?		
Are doors locked / padlocked and secure, being tested on a regular basis?		
Are windows locked?		
Are windows on the first story level boarded up?		
Is heat maintained in building to a temperature of at least 60 degrees Fahrenheit?		
Is the building equipped with any fencing or lockable gates to prevent unauthorized access?		
Is there a sign posted on the building with contact information (department and telephone number) for notification in case of emergency?		
Is there a procedure for notification of a named authority in case of any unusual or serious security incident or emergency would occur?		
Is grass mowed on a regular basis?		
Is trash or debris removed on a regular basis?		
Is there a written and up-to-date program/procedure regarding security for the facility/premises?		
Are there any significant loss exposures from adjoining premises?		
If yes, are controls in place to reduce the exposure?		