

Know how to call 911 from your workplace

There are special considerations you need to remember when calling 911 if your workplace is in a building with other businesses or you have a central switchboard for your telephone system. If your phone system requires you to dial a number to access an outside line, remember to do this when you call 911. For example, if you need to dial "9" to get an outside line, you will need to dial 9-911 to get police response. Some companies also have security guards who may be able to respond to your call more quickly than police and handle some situations. Find out what the procedures for private security personnel are in your workplace.

It is essential that the police know where to respond to your call. If you are in a building with several offices, the main street number may be all that shows up on the screen of the 911 operator who answers your call. Make sure you tell the operator your exact location-what floor, what office number, which elevator to use, etc. If at all possible, it is a good idea to have a security guard or other employee meet the police at the main entrance of the building to show the police exactly where to go. If your building has several stories and numerous businesses, this information is crucial.

***911 is not only for emergency use.
Call 911 whenever you need police,
fire, or medical response.***



Purse and wallet thefts

A serious problem for office workers is purse and wallet theft. Thieves can be in and out of your work space in just minutes and know just where to look. They may try to access your work space by asking to use a restroom, or slip by the reception area.

- Never leave your purse or wallet unattended even for a moment.
- Lock your purse or wallet somewhere secure, such as a desk drawer or file cabinet, if you cannot take it with you.
- Don't bring any more cash to work than you need for the day.
- If you need to carry credit cards, make sure you inventory them, listing card numbers and phone numbers to call in the event of their theft. Keep this list in a safe place.
- Be alert to anyone who tries to get you to leave your desk for errands. Some thieves will pose as clients and try to get you to go to another room for a copy, etc. Do not leave your desk unattended. If this is unavoidable, lock it before you walk away from it.
- Be alert to all people in your work space. If you see someone you do not know, unaccompanied by a co-worker, do the "friendly challenge."

The friendly challenge

If you see someone whom you do not know, do a friendly challenge. The easiest way to do the friendly challenge is to simply ask, "May I help you?" If the person is a legitimate client, you will then be able to escort them where they need to go. If they do not belong in the building, they may offer a vague excuse. In most cases, a suspicious person will leave as soon as they know they have been observed. If they do not, you may ask for identification, or go to the nearest safe phone and call 911 or your company's security guard.



English: Attention. If you want help translating this information, call 612-673-3737

Spanish: Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llame 612-673-2700

Somali: Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' aan wac 612-673-3500

Hmong: Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2800

Sign Language: TTY 612-673-2626

If you need this material in an alternative format, please contact the Minneapolis Police Department at 612-673-2912.

Workplace Security and Personal Safety

A good workplace security plan doesn't need to be expensive or elaborate. These are a few basic guidelines that you can follow to help make your office a safer place for yourself and your co-workers.

What employers can do

Develop clear safety policies and procedures

- In developing an office security plan, invite input from employees through meetings or a survey. You can also get assistance with your plan from Community Crime Prevention/SAFE or RECAP.
- Set a procedure for handling phone threats such as personnel threats, bomb threats, harassing phone calls.
- Have an evacuation policy with one floor monitor for each floor or work area to assist with fires, bomb threats, or possible dangerous intruders in the building.
- Report all suspicious incidents to security or the police department by calling 911. Make police reports on all thefts or break-ins. This helps the police and your security service establish crime patterns.

Limit Access

- Maintain good office traffic control with signs limiting public access to work areas. A sign may state that visitors or delivery people must check in at the front desk. Passes or name tags could be issued to authorized visitors and/or a sign-in sheet used. Request that staff receiving visitors come to the front desk to escort them.
- Block passage to inner offices or work areas by a locked "gate" or inner door. Provide an automatic bell, buzzer, or other noise-making device to signal the opening of this entry door or gate.
- Inspect your office building inside and outside to make sure it is well-lit with no dark stairwells or areas that would invite crime.
- Consider using a spot in your office that could be made into a "safe room" that would contain a telephone and locks on the inside. A staff person who is in jeopardy could retreat to this room to call 911.

Control your inventory

- Establish a key control system for all locks and hardware. Limit key assignment to authorized personnel and maintain a current list to indicate who has keys. Change locks if a key was lost or was retained by a former employee. Consider installing a computerized card access system.
- Provide a safe or other locked area for storing key company documents, equipment, valuables and employee possessions. Be sure not to store keys to locked cabinets in places that would be obvious to burglars.
- Maintain an up-to-date inventory of equipment, listing serial numbers and descriptions. Mark same with an Operation Identification number, which you can get from Community Crime Prevention/SAFE.

What employees can do

- Read the company's security plan, if your company has one.
- Be alert for strangers in the building. Immediately notify the proper person or security personnel if you notice suspicious individuals loitering around the lobby, waiting areas, or private offices.
- Assure proper identification of visitors or delivery people before admitting them to the work/office area. Watch out for people posing as repairmen, delivery, etc. Never release equipment or files in exchange for an official-looking receipt until you verify the name, location, and phone number of their company.
- Trust your instincts and if you feel problems may occur, have a prearranged signal to contact either security or the office manager to assist you.
- Always pay attention to detail. Make a mental note of each person who arrives. It will aid security or the police department if a problem should happen.
- Observe building rules for nighttime and weekend access to offices and elevators.
- If you're going to be working late or on a weekend, tell someone. Notify the security department in your building, tell a family member, co-worker, or friend in case you run into problems. Make sure your working area and halls near your office are well-lit. If possible, lock the door to your office to limit access afterhours.
- Never leave incoming or outgoing mail on a desk or where it is available to a thief.
- Make police reports on all thefts or break-ins. This helps the police and your security service establish crime patterns.
- Never prop open doors.

Dealing with hostile/angry clients

- Clients can react with anger because of difficulty in finding help with their situations, emotional pain or discomfort, fear, and anxiety.
- React and respond to the client in a calm but firm manner.
- A lower volume of voice can help the client calm down.
- Encourage the client to sit down.
- Rehearse ahead of time what you'd say or do in these situations.
- Don't tolerate abusive behavior.
- Make command statements in a firm but non-challenging tone, saying what you want or don't want — "I want you to leave." "I don't want to argue with you."
- Use strong body language. When standing, place your feet slightly apart, one foot slightly in front of the other. Relax your joints and position your shoulders over your feet.
- If you are sitting down, use the same foot stance, body upright, ready to move.
- Think over situations that could occur and how you would react. Go through the movements you would need to make to get help or get out of the situation. Practice. One strategy might be to keep a desk, chair, or other object between you and the person to keep distance.
- If you anticipate problems with a client, let co-workers know ahead of time.
- If you feel you may be in jeopardy, leave the area, go somewhere safe and call 911 and notify your security department.