

HI-RISE SECURITY IN NEW YORK CITY – LESSONS LEARNED:

By Brian K. Buggé, CPP

This white paper will focus on Hi-Rise Building Security and Life Safety in New York City, but the principles and techniques I'll be discussing can just as easily be applied to other locales. I'll share some of the lessons learned over my time at Kroll, and also from my time as a police trainer and consultant with the Police Executive Research Forum (a police think tank based in Washington, DC where I was a nationally recognized expert on "Problem-Oriented Policing," and "Situational Crime Prevention"), in addition to lessons learned in my subsequent positions over the years as a security director and adjunct professor of criminal justice and security management.

On 9/11/01, I was Director of the Security Services Group at Kroll stationed at their worldwide headquarters in New York City. The terrorist attacks that day caused me and the large group of specialists and sub-contractors that I supervised worldwide to go into overdrive. At the time Kroll was arguably the largest and most sophisticated risk mitigation/security consulting firm in the world. Our clients ran the gamut from high net worth individuals and famous celebrities, to Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, ivy-league universities and even foreign sovereign governments. On that fateful day we had to prioritize requests almost with a hospital triage type approach. Naturally, our first concern was with the fact that the Port Authority of NY/NJ, owners of the World Trade Center, was our client. In addition, Logan Int'l. Airport in Boston, the location where al-Qaeda terrorist Mohamed Atta and his murderous crew boarded AA Flight #11 that eventually flew into the North Tower, was also a client. Paradoxically, we were even concerned for the safety of a few Saudi nationals residing in the U.S. who were our clients and who had some close or distant family connection to Osama bin-Laden.

Once we got through our reactionary stage, we quickly switched to a preventative proactive stage. That involved offering our services to every major airport in the country and every major property management firm in the country. We had immediate requests for assistance from places like the Sears Tower in Chicago and major airports and airline companies throughout the world.

We even trained the entire NJ Transit System (all 10,000 employees) in a first of its kind “Terrorism Awareness” training course. We gave similar terrorism training to property managers large and small throughout the country.

What assisted our efforts in this regard was the confiscation by police in Manchester, England of an al-Qaeda training manual. Yes, Osama bin-Laden actually produced a terrorist training manual. Back then the manual was a secret, and few outside of Scotland Yard, the FBI and CIA (and Kroll of course) had a copy. It wasn’t until it got introduced as a court exhibit in a terrorism case in England, however, that it got into the public domain. Although the manual is now outdated, and terrorists have changed their tactics, they still employ some of the core strategies contained in that manual (e.g., the terrorists who struck in Mumbai in November 2008 – called India’s 9/11, used some of the techniques outlined in this al-Qaeda manual). So the past can be a prologue to the future in trying to decipher terrorist behavior. If you want to know what they will do in the near future, look at what they’ve done in the immediate past.

Several years back I attended an invitation only event at One Police Plaza in lower Manhattan on the topic of “Terrorism Awareness for Realtors.” At that training I was approached by a member of the Real Estate Board of New York and BOMA and asked to name a book or manual that I would recommend which could be used by members of REBNY and BOMA. I quickly answered, High-Rise Security and Fire Life Safety by Geoff Craighead. It was good back then but now, in its third edition, it’s even better. But since that time many other useful guides have been written, all of which can be downloaded from the Internet for free. Here’s a list:

- FEMA Series on Protecting Buildings from Natural Disasters and/or Terrorist Attacks (Publication Numbers: 426, 427, 429, 430, 452, 453, 455, 459 & 543). Just type into the Google search box “FEMA 426 pdf.” Repeat for the other numbers.
- NIOSH/CDC Manual, “Guidance for Protecting Building Environments from Airborne Chemical, Biological, or Radiological Attacks,” 2002.
- ASIS, “From the Ground Up: Security for Tall Buildings,” by Dennis Challenger, 2008.

- DHS, “Commercial Facilities Sector-Specific Plan: An Annex to the National Infrastructure Protection Plan,” 2010.
- NYPD, “Engineering Security: Protective Design for High Risk Buildings,” 2009.

I know what you’re saying, “I don’t have the time to read all that.” So here’s what it all says in a nutshell: Have good policy, good training and good supervision in place. That’s 90% of the battle. Also, focus on three main areas of concern: #1: your perimeter; #2: the exterior of your building; and #3: the interior of your building. Last, it all comes down to utilizing three overlapping approaches to increase your security posture: you need to have good security staff in place; you need to have good electronic access control and surveillance cameras in place; you need to have good architectural designs in place (or what is known as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design – CPTED).

Don’t let the fact that I condensed it all into one small paragraph fool you. It’s not as easy as it sounds to get all that stuff in alignment and in sync. Unfortunately, when I do security reviews and assessments of hi-rise commercial office buildings I rarely find that the property managers have all three things going for them at the same time (i.e., Good Policy, Good Training and Good Supervision). The more efficient and effective buildings might have two out of those three, but some less efficient buildings might only have one out of three.



Perhaps you have some issues with writing good security/safety **Policy**. If so, we have experts on staff who can write Manuals, SOP's, and/or Post Orders customized to your environment and your building.

If you believe you have issues with **Training**, we have Certified Instructors on staff who can help. We also utilize cutting edge online training to save you time and money. Our training can be delivered in person, via webinar, or via interactive blogs containing customized videos streamed directly over the Internet (no dedicated servers or intranet needed). We can also offer informative crime prevention tips and security/life safety tips via video to your tenants (residential or commercial).

If you believe you have issues with **Supervision** we can help with that too. Our staff can do a 360 degree review and offer you current best practices and models to follow through benchmarking and through our own years of experience. We also offer supervisory training on topics like "Principle-Centered Leadership," and "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People." We have certified instructors on staff who have written books on these topics, taught college level courses on these concepts and techniques, and more important, practiced themselves what they preach. One of our staff members was selected as "Supervisor of the Year" by the VFW and he also went on to be awarded *Newsday's* first ever "Civic Spirit Award."

If you would like IRI to review any of your Hi-Rise Building Security and Life Safety issues, or perform a physical security survey, especially in New York City (which has Local Law 26, etc.), give us a call and we will be happy to arrange a personal site visit.

About the Author: Brian Buggé is Managing Director, Security Services at IRI Global, LLC based in Stamford, CT. He is also an Adjunct Professor of Criminal Justice & Security Management at the University of Phoenix and Suffolk County Community College. Brian is Board Certified in Security Management by ASIS. He is also a licensed private investigator and certified security guard instructor in New York. In New York City he received the Fire Safety Director designation by the NYC Fire Department. In 2003 Brian helped form the N/E Chapter of ATAP (Assoc. of Threat Assessment Professionals), and he served on their Board for seven years. Brian has over 12 years of security management experience and over 20 years of experience in various positions in law enforcement (federal, county and city level). He can be reached at bbugge@iriglobal.com or via mobile 917-596-8512.