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Survey:

Glass Doors and Windows Pose Significant Security Vulnerabilities on Campus

According to Campus Safety's latest survey, 43% of participants say their glass doors and windows are the security systems most likely to fail during an unauthorized intrusion. **By Robin Hattersley**

The security vulnerabilities posed by glass doors and windows appear to be a significant gap for many schools, colleges, and healthcare facilities, according to the 2022 Campus Safety Window Security and Safety Survey.

Our study found that more than a third (35%) of respondents' glass windows and/or doors are broken at least once a quarter (*see Figure 1*). Additionally, 43% said their glass openings are the perimeter security systems that are most likely to fail if an unauthorized intruder tries to enter their buildings (*see Figure 2*). Despite these concerns, 44% of respondents said they don't know or aren't sure what type of glass windows and doors they have in their buildings.

However, a slight majority of respondents appear to be fairly confident with their perimeter security. More than half of our survey takers are confident (47%) or highly confident (5%) with their current building perimeter security measures. On the flip side, however, about one in five are either unconfident (16%) or very unconfident (3%). (*See Figure 3.*)

Additionally, the protection professionals who participated in the Campus Safety Window Security and Safety Survey said they have very little confidence in the ability of their glass doors and windows to protect people inside their buildings from threats, such as bomb blasts, gunfire, severe weather, and earthquakes (*see Figure 4*). Our survey takers have the lowest confidence in their glass openings' ability to protect against terrorist attacks involving bombs (1.9 on a five-point scale). It's important to note, however, that respondents believe the likelihood of glass being broken due to a terrorist bomb blast is quite low (2.5, compared to 3.4 for vandalism/civil unrest or impact with a blunt object). (*See Figure 5.*)



Figure 1. On average, glass windows and/or doors in my buildings are broken:



Figure 3. How do you feel about your current building perimeter security measures?



Figure 2. When thinking about an unwanted intruder gaining unauthorized access from the outside, which building perimeter security system is the most likely to fail on your campus?

When asked about their glass openings' ability to protect people from attacks involving firearms, their confidence is only slightly better at 2.1, with the likelihood of glass breakage being caused by a gun at 3.1. Even with natural disasters (2.7) and forced entry with a blunt object (2.6), respondents' confidence levels aren't anything to write home about when it comes to glass window/door safety and security.



Figure 4. On a scale from 1-5, with one being "not confident at all" and five being "highly confident," please rate your confidence in the ability of your campus(es)' glass (windows and doors) to protect people and property against the following threats:



Figure 5. On a scale of 1-5, with one being "very unlikely" and five being "highly likely," please rank the possible causes of glass breakage on your campus(es).

Most respondents (71%) aren't very confident with the statement, "First responders and/ or law enforcement will arrive quickly enough to the scene to prevent an intruder from gaining access through glass." In fact, more than two in five (43%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. (See Figure 6.)

One mitigating factor to the law enforcement response issue is that more than four out of five survey respondents said they have security personnel in at least a few of their buildings (see Figure 7). That said, the survey didn't ask when or for how long security staff is present. Often, buildings only have security patrols at certain times of the day or evening.

Opportunities to Partner with Other Stakeholders

The overall findings from this survey aren't surprising, considering the age of many of our nation's K-12, college, and healthcare campuses. For example, according to the National **Center for Education Statistics**, 28% of U.S. public schools were built before 1950, 45% were built between 1950 and 1969, and 17% were built between 1970 and 1984. This survey should serve as a wake-up call for schools, universities, and hospitals to pay more attention to how they protect their glass windows and doors.

The survey, however, did find some opportunities for security and public safety practitioners. Nearly two in three respondents (63%) said, "Protecting people and property from natural disasters (hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, etc.) is a growing area of concern for building perimeter security and safety for my organization." (See Figure 8.)

Because many window security solutions also protect against natural disasters, security and public safety practitioners can leverage this information with emergency management stakeholders for greater support and buy-in for their glass window and door security projects.



Figure 6. First responders and/or law enforcement will arrive quickly enough to the scene to prevent an intruder from gaining access through glass.



Figure 7. Which of the following statements best describes your campus(es)' on-premises security?

Figure 8. Protecting people and property from natural disasters (hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, etc.) is a growing area of concern for building perimeter security and safety for my organization.

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Campus law enforcement and security executives appear to already understand the importance of energy efficiency, building aesthetics, and occupant comfort. Although these issues aren't their primary concerns, "building energy efficiency" received a 3.5 rating on a five-point scale, while "building aesthetics" received a 3.6, and "occupant comfort" received a 3.9 from our survey respondents (*see Figure 9*).



Figure 9. On a scale from 1 to 5, with one being "not important at all" and five being "very important," how important are the additional benefits listed below to you when evaluating, purchasing, or implementing a building perimeter security product?

Security, emergency management, and public safety executives who select equipment or systems that address more than just security or safety can also tap into other budgets and gain support from other internal and external stakeholders who are responsible for addressing issues that are not safety or security-related.

Motives for unauthorized access through glass openings run the gamut. Vandalism/ burglary is the most common motive mentioned by survey takers (40%). Disturbingly, however, are the motives that could most likely involve assault or physical violence against other people, including "interpersonal gripe, conflict or revenge" (21%) and "intent to kill" (4%). (*See Figure 10*).

The most common "other" response listed by survey takers involves individuals experiencing homelessness trying to gain access for various reasons, such as finding a safe place to sleep, access to water and/or bathroom facilities, etc.



Figure 10. What is the most common motive of a perpetrator attempting to gain unauthorized access to your buildings?

Overall confidence level (1-5)



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