

By Lawrence J. Piotti

Recognize The Threat

Teach employees to observe, react and report.

Creating an effective security awareness program for your company starts with educating employees. In July 2010, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), at Secretary Janet Napolitano's direction, launched a national "If You See Something, Say Something" public awareness campaign—a simple and effective program to raise public awareness of indicators of terrorism and violent crime, and to emphasize the importance of reporting suspicious activity to the proper state and local law enforcement authorities.

A suspicious activity is often described as an action or circumstance that is perceived to be unexpected and outside of a normal routine. Individual circumstance will affect how a suspicious activity is perceived because your daily routine sets the baseline for

the definition of normal behavior.

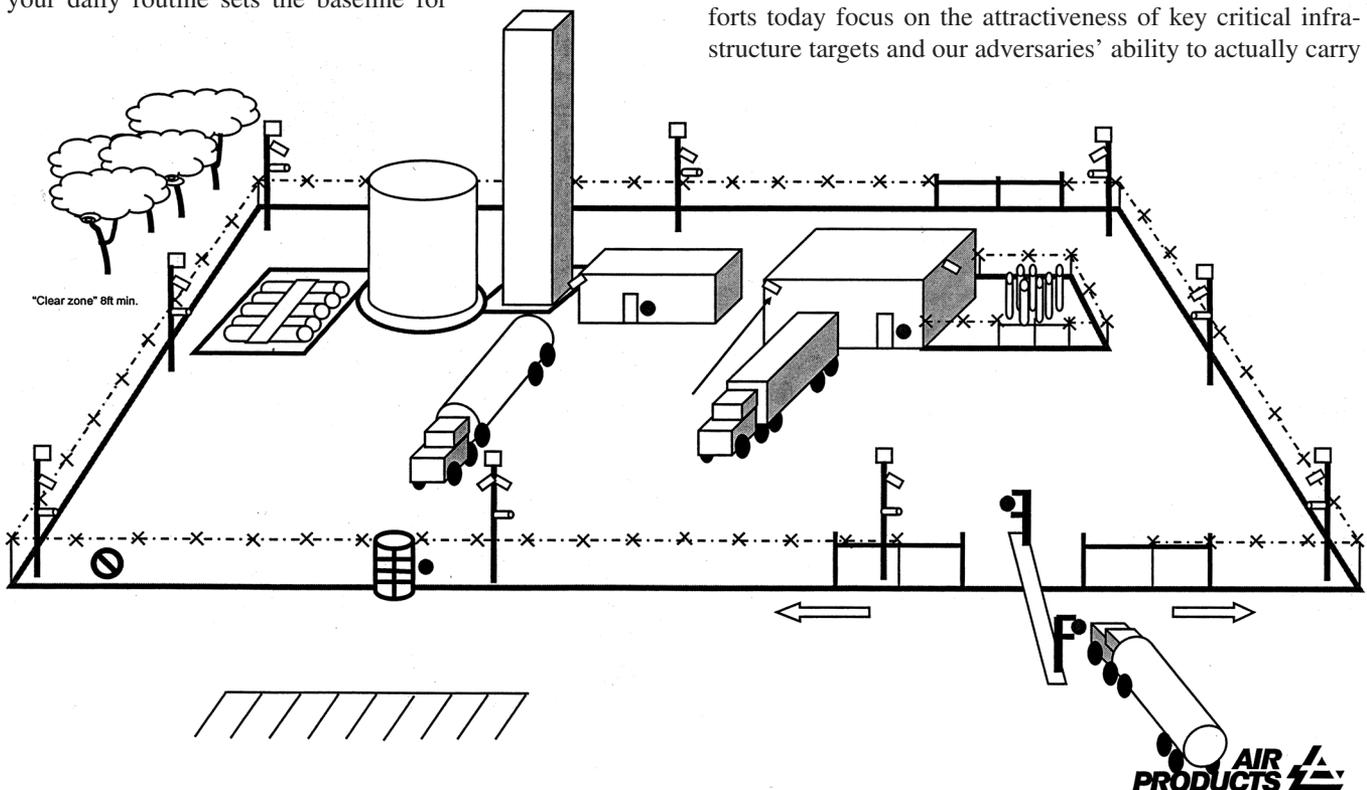
It is quite natural for all of us to feel a bit more relaxed about our own personal security, given that most of the terror acts that we see, read and hear about today occur outside of the United States. But, relaxing too soon may be our greatest vulnerability. We cannot lose sight of the fact that most of our risk planning efforts are rightfully geared toward accident prevention, natural disaster coordination and working in collaboration with skilled emergency response teams.

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CUSTOMER DUE DILIGENCE

Most of the security, risk and vulnerability planning efforts today focus on the attractiveness of key critical infrastructure targets and our adversaries' ability to actually carry



out their intended plan. Now, let's ask ourselves a very realistic question: How prepared are we? Vulnerability can mask itself in many forms—from the theft and diversion of our products to suspicious and unauthorized photography of our facilities. One key area that is often overlooked is our ability to recognize and respond to pretext phone calls and inquiries about our products, our people and our business. The inability to recognize this exposure can be overcome by enhanced employee awareness and ongoing training. Establishing a qualification process for your customers can help ensure legitimate transactions involving your products and give you comfort that they are not being used for anything other than their intended purposes.

Consider the following: A phone call is made to customer service requesting a rather large shipment of a hazardous gas. The caller's preferred method of payment is cash on delivery. You review your product safety protocols and quickly recognize that this request is not from an existing customer, so you ask appropriate questions about its use and destination. The caller is hesitant to respond to your questions and becomes reluctant to pursue the order. Again, you realize that this call seems a bit odd and that it's best to pass along this information to a supervisor. The supervisor acknowledges the suspicious nature of the call and takes immediate action. He or she specifically asks for the name, telephone number and other distinguishing characteristics of the call. This information is documented and reported to local law enforcement and DHS.

We all know that it is always good business practice to ensure that each customer service representative speaks to customers in a professional manner. Conducting customer



due diligence is just as important. Some companies choose to have each prospective customer interviewed with pre-established questions. This process can help to determine the legitimacy of the sale and to ensure the appropriate use of the requested product. Employees may have their own perception of what may or may not be acceptable when gathering customer information. Eliminate the guessing game and formalize a "Know Your Customer" program by clarifying all

the required questions and expected answers.

EMPLOYEE AWARENESS OF RISKS AND VULNERABILITIES

DHS Division Director Steve King says, "Employee awareness around understanding industry risks and vulnerabilities is the essential first step in combating the many threats facing our country." DHS has made security awareness materials easily available online.

For more information, visit <http://www.dhs.gov/files/reportincidents/see-something-say-something.shtm>, or consult the Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative, which offers free online training and printable resources at <http://nsi.ncirc.gov/>.

It may not be possible to staff every facility with a trained 24/7 security team to protect it, so we need to rely on the eyes and ears of our employees to recognize suspicious activity. Keep in mind that vigilant employees are able to report more accurate details. Build cultural awareness by identifying all of the key risks and threats facing your employees and your business. Emphasize the type of details that should be recorded and then how the appropriate person should be notified. Incident reporting must be made easy and the reporter kept confidential. Provide site-wide placards listing contact information for security or site supervision in the event that immediate attention is required.

It's important for all of us working in the private sector to take the necessary time to get to know our public sector partners. They include, but are not limited to, local, state and federal law enforcement officials; fire, ambulance and hazmat responders; and, of course, the protective security advisors from DHS who are specifically responsible for your local area and sector. By strengthening these strategic partnerships, you will improve and enhance your ability to recognize and respond to troubling situations before they can escalate into a more serious issue for your business. ☺

READ MORE ONLINE

In 2008, Air Products underwent an extensive review of its security methods to protect its people, property, information and corporate reputation. An article called "Security Assessment And Response" explains that process and is intended to help GAWDA members, regardless of company size, develop measures of protection in their own facilities. This article can be read online at www.WeldingAndGasesToday.org



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