

CONDOBUSINESS

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The trouble with tail-gating

Tail-gating is when an unauthorized person follows a resident into a condo building to bypass security. Traditional remedies for this issue include security awareness education for the residents as well as detailed signage.

BY SCOTT HILL

However, this continues to be a problem for condo corporations, because even if the authorized condo resident notices that someone is following them, rarely do they feel comfortable confronting the person. And recent innovations in delivery services may raise additional security concerns, placing renewed importance on access control.

Uber has faced an uphill battle when it comes to security acceptance. One of the most cited criticisms (by their competitors) of Uber's transportation system is the lack of registration of the drivers.

Now condo corporations may face a new security challenge as Uber enters into the food delivery industry. One issue that may arise is the fact that the people delivering the food are not employees of the franchise that is delivering the food.

For instance, if a resident was to order a pizza from a franchise organization, that pizza is usually delivered by an employee of said franchise. This means that there is accountability, as the employer is responsible for the actions of the employee and presumably has insurance to cover any intentional or accidental security incidents.

It would appear that Uber drivers act as contractors and, as such, there is no accountability from the food provider. If any damage was caused to the facility by the driver, it would appear that the only recourse the condo corporation would have would be against the driver specifically.

Additionally, even locating the driver would be a challenge for the corporation, as the food provider does not have a record of who picked up and delivered the order. The corporation would need to obtain that information directly from Uber.

Optimizing access control

A security measure is meant to delay, deter or detect any unwanted intrusions to the facility. As a rule, condo corporations usually rely on two security measures: access control and video surveillance systems. Access control is the facility fob system, key, locks — any mechanical or electronic device that would prevent an unauthorized person from being able to enter the building. The purpose of access control is to both delay and deter security breaches.

In order to accomplish this goal, security-conscious condo corporations expend considerable resources, both in time and money, to ensure that their access control system is performing at optimum capacity.

These efforts include undertaking projects such as fob audits, ensuring that each fob is only authorized to access the area required (for instance, a guest fob does not need to access the locker room), and ensuring that their system is up to date with system upgrades and computer patches.

When discussing the protection of a facility, it is often useful to discuss security layers or protection in depth. A property boundary would be considered the outlying or extended layer — this area is protected by fences, signage, hostile vegetation, etc.; the building envelope

would be considered the outer layer, which is protected by the above-mentioned access control system; and the inner layer would be the condominium unit doors, which is protected by the locks of the residents. The concept of protection in depth dictates that each circle of security becomes more stringent the closer a person moves to the interior.

With all these security concepts in place, a condominium manager or board of directors can rest easy knowing that they have taken all reasonable steps to protect the residents and their property. Or can they?

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Responding to new risks

One security solution to the rise of third-party delivery services has been that residents are now (more often than previously) meeting their delivery drivers in the lobby. This is safer for both the resident and the corporation.

It is safer for the resident as the lobby is usually under video surveillance and is a more public area than a condo hallway. Without casting any derision on any driver for the many companies currently offering these services, if there was one driver that had ill-intent, he or she would likely be hesitant to do anything inappropriate in this situation. It is also safer for the condominium, as it restricts unauthorized personnel, such as the delivery person, to the outer boundaries of the property.

Other, newer services for groceries will allow delivery people to bypass both the outer and inner boundary of a unit. With this service, not only are the groceries delivered to the building, but the delivery person will also put the groceries into a person's unit (refrigerator, cupboard, etc.). This could cause condo security concerns due to extra foot traffic within the property, as well as a lack of key control.

Should items go missing from a unit, and if the condo corporation maintains a master keys system, it could be unclear on who is responsible for the theft. If the missing item is not noted at the time of the delivery, it may be assumed that it was taken at another time — maybe during an annual fire inspection (when all units need to be entered) or by a site superintendent that needed to enter the unit for innocent purposes. It would be wise for a condo manager and/or board members to discuss policies regarding entry into the units to prevent any future liability issues.

While new services are very convenient for residents of a condo, there is still the potential for security issues to arise. The solution for these issues may be as simple as including a blurb in the condo newsletter, or it may be more complex, such as updating the corporation's integrated security plan. It is recommended that condo corporations regularly review and discuss any new issues — such as the changing nature of delivery services — that could affect the safety and security of the residents.. □

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