

WHAT IS LAW ENFORCEMENT'S ROLE?

Article 5: Bank Security Training, FDIC 326

What is law enforcement's role?

If our bank sets off an alarm, accidentally or otherwise, I expect my locally responding law enforcement team to treat it as if a perpetrator was actually in the building.

If we're going to make a mistake, let's make it on the side of the bank and not on the side of the perpetrator. Now that makes sense.

Here's a question: When an alarm is triggered what do you expect your locally responding law enforcement team to do? Again, the answers to this question vary widely and in some cases evoke laughter. In fact, many banks instruct personnel NOT to set off an alarm until the perpetrator has left the building. The possibility that law enforcement in some communities might come roaring toward the bank with lights and sirens and shotguns drawn seems more likely and far more dangerous than simply giving the perpetrator what he or she demands and getting them out of the facility.

That of course is a judgment call. I've seen officers come into bank lobbies with weapons drawn. I've heard the sirens and seen the lights as police cars scramble...and I've seen the semi-parade that can be counted on to follow a siren in some communities. I've also seen officers tapping on the windows from the outside trying to see what was going on inside, and those are just a few examples.

Good planning and consistent training is the key.

If an alarm is triggered, ideally, what I recommend is two units dispatched to pre-established points (A) and (B),

outside the facility. These points should be selected to provide clear views of the facility from those positions with no visibility of the units from inside the facility. The units should proceed silently to these points. The units should wait until either the perpetrators have exited the building or a pre-established "All Clear" signal has been received from within the building. What is done to a suspect outside the building is up to local law enforcement policy. Our job has been safely accomplished if



By Charles M. Williams

we have "Gotten the Perpetrator out of the Building!"

The sad thing is, it happens. Just imagine how a robbery could instantly be turned into a hostage situation or worse should a perpetrator hear the sirens, see the lights, see a police officer looking in a window or worse yet see an officer come charging into the lobby with a pistol or shotgun drawn.

Universal law: Law Enforcement people like fried chicken

The way I recommend to make sure we all understand what is supposed to happen is to first decide exactly what that is, make it a part of your written security plan, and then, and most importantly train, train, train. Many policedepartmentshavehighpersonnel turn over. "Periodic" training and retraining is essential. Nothing beats a good chicken dinner followed by a lively security discussion. Set it up! Get all the banks in town involved! Remember: When the tide goes up on bank security issues all the boats rise!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Charles Williams is a graduate of the University of Georgia, a former banker and a successful business owner. Williams was appointed Bank Security Officer in the 1980's with an independently owned Georgia Community Bank. Since those years he has served as an expert on FDIC 326 in banks across the country.

He has provided Bank Security Training, Front line staff Security Training, Hostage Issues, and the physical security of your institution for Community Banker Associations in multiple states including Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Alabama and the Carolinas.

Williams offers a six part Bank Security Training DVD based on the FDIC Regulation.

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