



YMCA Security Considerations

Recent news articles about Y members having items stolen from their lockers at Ys brings to focus an important issue for facility managers; security. Members and guests expect that the YMCA is a safe place and that management is making efforts to protect them and their valuables.

YMCAs should review incidents and develop a proactive plan to enhance security and reduce thefts. It is often a good idea to involve local police in discussions of how the Y can better protect their users. Security and safety can be greatly enhanced with reasonable care and proactive planning.

Who's coming in?

Controlling entry into the building is very important for facility security. Entrances should control flow past the reception desk to ensure that all entrants are processed through the Y's sign-in process. If the Y allows guests, they should be required to show a photo ID and complete an emergency contact form. The photo ID should be kept at the desk until the person leaves and a photocopy should be kept on file.

Eye in the Sky

Many Ys are utilizing security cameras, particularly outside of locker rooms and in low traffic areas. Recordings should be kept on file for at least 30 days. Management staff or on-duty supervisors should maintain a presence in the facility by walking through all areas throughout the day. This is particularly important for low traffic areas and locker rooms.

Can I see?

Proper lighting is very important for safe and secure YMCAs. Motion activated lighting is a good option for areas such as courts and emergency stairwells where traffic may be light and energy conservation is important. Other areas of the facility should maintain proper lighting levels at all times. Parking and perimeter areas should be properly lighted to promote safety and reduce incidents. Motion activated lighting is also helpful for outdoor playgrounds and fenced areas such as pools.

Under lock and key

Perhaps one of the most problematic areas for thefts is the locker room; particularly when members do not lock or forget to lock their valuables. Many Ys have taken to providing small terminal-type lockers in entrance hallways or near member service desk where users can lock small items such as car keys and wallets in a very visible area. This eliminates the valuables being in locker rooms. Lockers must be well maintained and it is a good relations idea to have a number of locks available for use.