



COVID-19 AND THE FACILITY MANAGER

Security

ISM Services, Inc

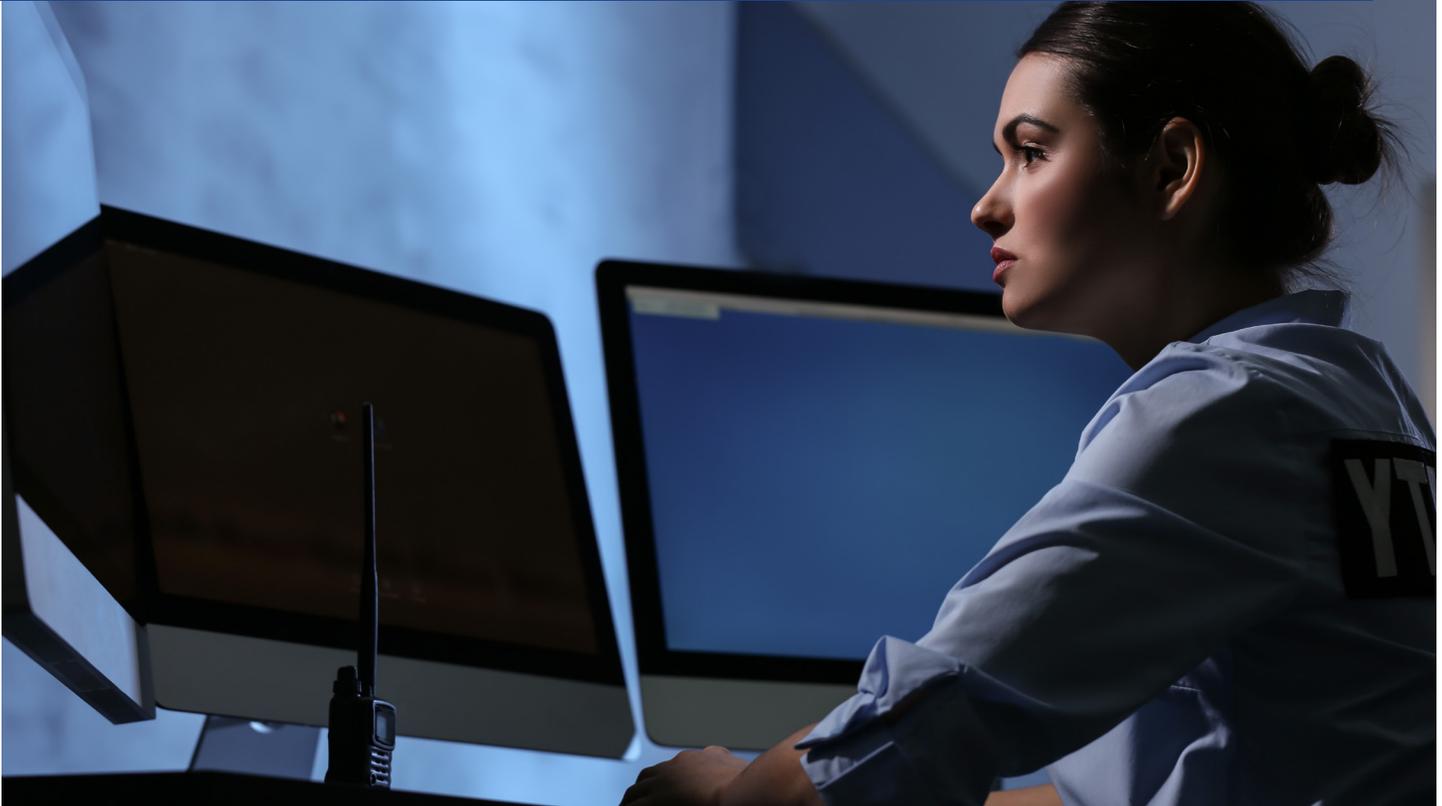
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This is the third and final article written by Paul Williams, President of ISM Services, to address the challenges facing the facilities manager as the result of COVID-19. This article covers Facility Security. The first dealt with Operations and Maintenance and the second one addressed Human Capital.



OVERVIEW

As we move deeper into the COVID-19 pandemic, people are growing tired of isolation, children home from school are growing restless, and households are beginning to run out of consumables and staples. These things will cause stress and anxiety levels to rise. While none of us want this to be the case, that stress and anxiety will be brought to the workplace. Whether it manifests itself as a heated argument between two co-workers or theft, the likelihood of security-related events will continue to rise and they will be both internal and external. The FM needs to recognize this increasing risk and work with security managers to make sure that security personnel are properly prepared, engaged, supportive, and viewed as part of the team.

Here is a series of Security-related questions that the facilities manager must consider as the direct result of COVID-19:



QUESTIONS

- ▶ How are security personnel perceived by employees? I believe that now is the time to take a softer, more passive approach to interaction with employees.
 - ▶ Are they viewed as team members who are there to help or as hostile toward employees? If there is a perceived approachability issue with security personnel, now is the time to aggressively address it. For many, this is the first and last experience they have with your organization every day.
- ▶ Have security personnel been instructed in how to deescalate a situation/confrontation with an employee?
 - ▶ Are there any publications that are available or can be made available to security personnel on this topic?
- ▶ Do staff levels for security personnel have to be reduced?
 - ▶ Is adequate staffing available for all shifts at all locations?
- ▶ If staff levels for security personnel have to be reduced, how do they remain most effective?
- ▶ Is proper PPE available for security personnel?
 - ▶ If not, what is being done to minimize risk to security personnel?
 - ▶ If not, what is being done to acquire proper PPE?





QUESTIONS

- ▶ Can access be limited to unoccupied areas of facilities?
 - ▶ Does this create any life-safety issues?
- ▶ Can some entrances to sites and buildings be shut down to lessen the load on security personnel?
 - ▶ Does this create any life-safety issues?
- ▶ Can some parking lots be shut down to lessen the load on security personnel?
 - ▶ Do the remaining parking areas have adequate handicapped parking? Choose parking lots with the best lighting and provide employees with the best protection from potential outside threats. This may or may not be the lot with the easiest/closest access to the building.
- ▶ Have security personnel been instructed in how to perform their duties while maintaining mandated social distancing?
 - ▶ What are those protocols?
 - ▶ Has this been communicated to all employees?
 - ▶ Is it posted at all entrances?
- ▶ Is visitor access to facilities being maintained or has it been suspended?
- ▶ Have first responders (LE and Fire/Rescue) changed their response policy or times as the result of COVID-19?
- ▶ Are standby personnel available to take the place of sick or quarantined security staff?
- ▶ Is there a quarantine plan in place in the event that a shift or post becomes exposed to or infected by COVID-19?



Addressing these questions will help the FM make facilities as safe as possible while preventing loss of or damage to the organization's assets.

I hope that these articles have driven some fruitful discussion among facility managers and that they helped in some way. This is an extraordinary time. It will be over before we know it, but the impacts to facilities and facilities operations will be lasting.



Paul Williams is the President and Founding Partner of ISM Services, Incorporated. ISM is headquartered in Pennsylvania and focuses on the implementation and maintenance of Facilities IT solutions. ISM is currently celebrating its 15th year in business.