

July 30, 2015

CASCP Roundtable on Senior Center Safety & Security Minutes

Rick Liegl welcomed everyone and began the discussion by asking people to share their experiences and safety and security concerns.

- Rick mentioned that he contacted a security company and when the gentleman came to visit, he was very surprised he could walk right into the building. Rick was quoted \$14,000 to have a security system installed.
- Rick asked Rebecca Joyce, Windsor, CT, to share her experience regarding the mugging that occurred in December 2014. Rebecca recounted the unfortunate incident.
- Chief MacNamara mentioned that mixing seniors with teens who have issues is not a good thing.
- Chief MacNamara mentioned that awareness is FREE!
- Chief MacNamara mentioned that cameras do not stop a crisis from happening and that you should know what is normal in your building.
- The topic of accessibility for the seniors was brought up. Chief MacNamara stated that municipal buildings being accessible to the people is not a good argument over the safety of the people.
- It was mentioned that all staff should wear an ID and all visitors should have a visitors' pass.
- Security assessments were also discussed. The Town of Berlin did a security assessment of all town buildings. All employees now have emergency buttons that when pushed alert emergency personnel.
- Claire, from the Town of Canton, mentioned that she has to have a "highway mirror" in her office so that she can see people when they enter her office.
- A brief discussion regarding people found sleeping overnight in Senior Centers ensued.
- The amount of staff various Senior Centers have and where they are located within the building was discussed. Not all areas of our Senior Centers are monitored at all times.
- Other problems were discussed such as teens smoking marijuana on Senior Center grounds.
- It was mentioned that The Town of Glastonbury has recently put into effect a brand new security system including a fob system for all employees. The fob system also operates when rooms are locked/unlocked. The maintenance staff has a schedule of the rooms.
- One person mentioned that knives in their kitchen are required to be locked up.
- Chief MacNamara discussed the topic of being a "crisis manager" and what steps to take after recognizing a crisis. He also explains that cameras are okay but not if nobody is monitoring them. He also suggested that panic buttons are good, too, but that an immediate follow up call to the police should be made if possible. It was also discussed that staff need to know what to do/say to 911 dispatch when the call is made – "Need to Know Training".
- Chief MacNamara used the Virginia Tech incident as an example in that people need to react immediately – don't ignore signs that a crisis may be occurring. He stated that "Fear is the Mother of All Safety".
- A question was brought up – Which Senior Centers do a full evacuation of the building, a fire drill, at least once per year?

- Chief MacNamara mentioned that placing convenience over safety is a BIG NO-NO! Safety should always come first.
- The number of entrances that each Senior Center has was discussed – a show of hands indicated who had one main entrance and who had 2-3 entrances or more. Most facilities have multiple entrances. Having a person at a main entrance desk welcoming people and asking people to sign in was also discussed.
- It was mentioned that kids/schools receive large amounts of funding because the State notices they are vulnerable – Seniors are almost *more* vulnerable.
- Chief MacNamara mentioned that we have to control access. A discussion ensued about the fact that the “bad guys can’t hurt you if they can’t get to you” and that all visitors should be identifiable. We need to know who is in our buildings and need to approach people throughout the day.
- A conversation was also had and that good safety and security policies and procedures should be in place. Employee training needs to happen so that people know what to do during a crisis.
- The topic of sexual offenders frequenting our senior centers ensued. Is it a requirement that sexual offenders report their status to the director?
- Chief MacNamara explained that there needs to be better lines of communication between school, police, and the same for Senior Centers, police and other departments. We need to be reporting disruptive people, teens, and even seniors to our PD’s.
- A school has a liaison to connect with PD in regards to immediate situations or conflicts: (Ex: over the weekend).

Rick now asked that folks share what they are doing to improve or enhance safety and security within their facilities.

- Rick started off the discussion by mentioning that he updated all of their forms for enrollment and added a podium at the back entrance requiring all to sign in.
- One person mentioned that they utilize a computerized shared folder containing information such as incident reports and that this helps to easily document issues all in one place for all to be aware of.
- Also mentioned was the importance of staff awareness and greeting people who enter the building.
- Chief MacNamara was asked what he thought were the top 5 protocols to improve/ensure safety and security of our facilities – he mentioned the following:
 - #1 is awareness – at some point a staff member may be called to do crisis intervention
 - #2 is to limit access – have one main entrance and lock all the other doors
 - #3 is to identify staff who require security awareness training
 - #4 is if you see something, say something
 - #5 ??? – the discussion sidetracked
- A conference on training all Senior Center staff was mentioned – please forward ideas to CASCP