

## Security in Uncertain Times

**Richard Rosenfeld, a sociologist at the University of Missouri-St. Louis recently told the New York Times, “Every recession since the late ‘50s has been associated with an increase in crime, in particular, property crime and robbery, which would be most responsive to changes in economic conditions.”**

So, will our current economic hardships lead to rising crime rates across the country?

The answer depends on whom you ask. Some researchers suggest that crime increases in a *good* economy since there are more potential victims: more people walking the streets, carrying shopping bags, lining up at ATMs or driving around and parking expensive cars. And other expert opinions differ on whether there is a strong connection between the condition of the economy and crime rate at all. Whatever the case, businesses, communities and individuals always benefit when crime prevention methods are in place.

### The Crime Triangle

Just like three factors are needed to produce a fire — oxygen, fuel and heat — certain conditions must be present before an individual can commit a crime and get away with it. These three factors are:



- Motive: the potential criminal’s defined need or reason to commit the crime
- Opportunity: the ease and ability to quickly and safely complete the act
- Risk: low probability of getting caught and punished for the act

Removing one or more of these factors generally produces the following results:

- The crime is not attempted
- The crime is not completed successfully

Some experts speculate that the current economic downturn may provide a strong motive for some to give in to criminal impulses to commit theft or property crime as a way to deal with their financial woes. There's not much the rest of us can do to prevent that. But, businesses and communities that employ trained, professional security officers can effectively impact the other two factors of the crime triangle — and convince criminals to go somewhere else.

### Detect, Deter, Report

The presence of professional, uniformed security officers performing fundamental duties — like access control and patrolling — can both reduce opportunities for crimes and increase the likelihood of crime detection. Security officers provide access control to monitor who enters and leaves a property and where they go on site. They can determine who belongs and who doesn't, and can keep unauthorized people — including those with crime on their minds — out.

Alert and aware security officers on patrol detect, deter and report security and safety threats. They guard against unlocked doors, gates and windows, burnt-out lights or other security breaches that could provide the easy opportunity criminals are looking for.

Further, the presence of a professional, uniformed security officer on a highly visible patrol creates the idea that security is everywhere on site. Trained Securitas security officers can also utilize CCTV, alarm systems and other access control technologies that allow them to monitor

large or remote areas, or several areas at once. Vigilant security officers using technically-advanced equipment signal to would-be wrong-doers that they are constantly being watched — and risk getting caught if they attempt to commit a crime.

Businesses, communities and individuals are exposed to crime risks all the time — and perhaps are even more so in our current financial climate. But even as our economy is uncertain, one thing remains constant: the Securitas mission to protect homes, workplaces and communities.

### Bad Times, Bad Behavior

The majority of people won't respond to the current economic crisis by turning to criminal activity. But money woes and overall insecurity may lead individuals — customers, co-workers and clients — to feel more irritated, anxious or depressed. Heightened emotions and frayed nerves could trigger some to turn to alcohol or drugs to escape their problems; others may be quicker to argue or act out aggressively in response to their frustrations.

Securitas personnel have access to specialized training resources that can help them maintain a firm but friendly approach to customer service, detect and defuse potentially violent interactions with volatile individuals, and successfully deal with those that may be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. The Securitas Online Academy includes such relevant courses as:

- Customer Service Essentials
- Dealing with Difficult Customers
- Workplace Violence
- Substance Abuse

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