

# Gateway Community Charters: Central Office, Virtual Academy, Community Engagement Office

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5112 Arnold Avenue, Suite A, McClellan Park



## Contents

Contents .....	2
Executive Summary .....	3
Background.....	5
Scope .....	5
Disclaimer .....	5
Facility-Wide Suggestions .....	7
Exterior Signage.....	7
Cameras.....	10
Emergency Medical Supplies/Lockdown Supplies .....	12
Landscaping.....	14
Lighting .....	15
Perimeter.....	16
Exterior Facility Access .....	17
Access Control .....	17
Doors & Windows.....	19
Roof Access .....	21
Facility Interior .....	22
Doors .....	22
Interior Signage .....	26
Electrical Panels and Utility Areas.....	27
Windows and Window Coverings .....	28
Safer Corners.....	31
Visibility.....	33
Kitchen/Break Rooms.....	35
Communication .....	36
Duress/Panic Alarms .....	37
Summary Recommendations .....	39
Appendix A: Sample Products .....	41

## Executive Summary

The Gateway Community Charters (GCC) Site Safety Report assesses the facility's current safety practices and infrastructure, providing actionable recommendations to enhance security, emergency preparedness, and operational efficiency. This report underscores the school's proactive approach to safeguarding its community.

### Key Recommendations:

#### 1. Access Control and Perimeter Security

- Immediately fix any outside doors that do not close properly (GCC main office kitchen access door, Community Engagement door). Remove signs that suggest doors must be pulled shut firmly to be secured.
- Address the low counter in the main lobby, which does not include safety glass or other measures to prevent someone from stepping over the counter to gain access to the interior of the building.
- Strengthen physical access controls to reduce vulnerabilities caused by propped doors and unlocked entry points, including repairing doors that do not latch securely.
- Cut back trees and secure climbable electrical conduits that allow for roof access. Ensure roof hatches and utility areas are securely locked and inaccessible to unauthorized individuals.
- Enact a visitor check-in policy that involves scanning or at least verifying IDs and requiring visitors to wear a lanyard or name tag to identify themselves.
- Improve security measures for the Virtual Academy entrance to include a different door, move window shades inside, develop a visitor ID/lanyard system, and increase video cameras and monitoring of these cameras at the main entrances.
- Add more duress/panic alarms to other entrances (Virtual Academy) and buildings (Community Engagement).

#### 2. Emergency Preparedness

- Consistently designate and equip safer corners in offices and common areas with appropriate signage, supplies, and communication tools and consider assigning responsibility for this task.
- Develop a site Emergency Operation Plan (EOP), Continuity Of Operation Plan (COOP), and more detailed, comprehensive policies to address all-hazard concerns. This is especially important given the location of the railway and the unique target nature of the GCC home office and host site for board meetings.
- Regular staff training should be conducted, including de-escalation techniques, active threat response, and "Stop the Bleed" courses.

#### 3. Surveillance and Visibility

- Expand camera coverage to include high-traffic and vulnerable areas.
- Add cameras to the interior, including the main lobby and exterior entrances, to provide a timelier response to critical incidents.

- Improve lighting in dimly lit areas to deter unauthorized activity and enhance visibility.
  - Request repair on non-working streetlights.
  - Ensure CCTV footage is viewable at the front reception desks and other locations.
4. Emergency Communication and Rally Points
- Equip staff at the location with radios and software for duress/panic alarms.
  - Explore a phone-based paging system for internal critical incident announcements (with training and policies for use).
  - Provide additional mounted panic alarms for the Virtual Academy Entrance.
  - Identify and train staff on rally and reunification points to ensure safe and accessible locations during emergencies, away from potential threats.
  - Clarify procedures for rally and reunification points and provide transportable supplies for these locations.
5. Emergency Medical Accessibility
- Ensure that all AEDs are placed to create as much accessibility as possible and wall-mount all units.
  - Enhance main first aid kits with secondary kits for the kitchen and other higher-risk areas. Note: A small first aid kit is kept in the Virtual Academy space.
  - Ensure staff training on epi-pen, anti-overdose, and AED medical devices.
  - Train staff on tourniquet use, wound packing, and stop-the-bleed with medical kits containing wound care supplies and tourniquets.
6. Visitor Management and Front Desk Security
- Implement a visitor management system to replace a simple sign-in. This needs to be at each entrance, or visitors need to be directed to the main office to sign in before visiting the Virtual Academy or Community Enhancement. Start with manual ID checks and move toward an automated scanning system.
  - Develop and implement a visitor access control system that involves lanyards or ID pins.
  - Train front desk and security staff in situational awareness, documentation, and threat assessment to maintain a strong security profile.

## Background

On, Monday December 9<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Van Brunt visited the Gateway Community Charters Central Office, Community Engagement Office and Virtual Academy to conduct a site safety review. The main building contains the main office staff as well as the Virtual Academy. The Community Engagement Office is across the road from the main building. The district has approximately 30 staff, with the Virtual Academy having around 33 staff (many remote and on alternating days) and the Community Engagement program having five staff. These three locations were grouped due to their shared location and the relatively small physical space size of the Community Engagement Office and Virtual Academy.

This site walk-through is not meant to identify every potential hazard, safety concern, training need, or emergency supply requirement. While we have noted many positive aspects of your facility, this report focuses on areas that may require further attention. It is designed to assess your facility's current state and highlight areas for improvement based on the information provided.

Private and public organizations across America are responsible for providing safe and secure environments for work and learning. These are places where employees and students should feel protected from undue harm and risk. By conducting this vulnerability assessment, your facility is taking a proactive step toward enhanced safety.

This report provides an overview of your facility's current safety awareness, including findings and recommendations derived from on-site interviews, observations, and a review of materials provided by facility administrators.

## Scope

The following activities are within the scope of this project:

- Interviews with key staff members responsible for policy, administration, day-to-day operations, facilities management, and safety.
- A visual walk-through of the facilities with staff to assess physical site safety.

The following activities are NOT part of this security assessment.

- Testing current facility-developed safety plans or emergency response plans.
- We did not independently verify information provided by employees.
- This security assessment does not include any aspect of IT/Cyber vulnerabilities, which should be assessed independently.

## Disclaimer

Any action taken by a recipient of this report or by their representatives based upon this security assessment does not guarantee nor warrant in any way whatsoever that the assessed location(s), facility, its users, or visitors may or may not be rendered safer, invulnerable, or in any fashion impervious to successful penetration, attack, or other acts which could cause property damage and/or personal injury to the facility or its

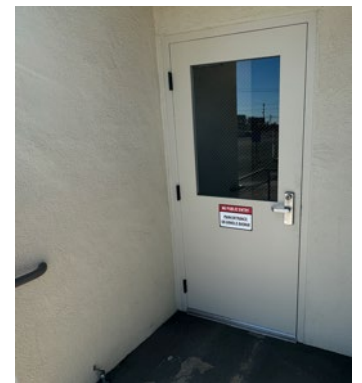
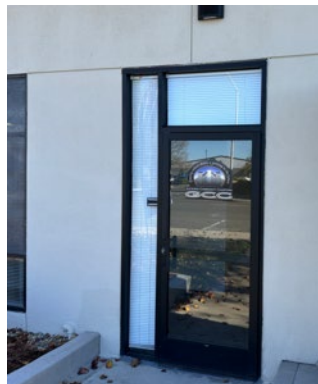
patrons. By accepting this security assessment report and/or by taking or avoiding taking any action based on its written or verbal content, Gateway Community Charters (GCC) hereby agrees to release, waive, discharge, hold harmless, and not sue WVPA, DPrep Inc., any of their officers and/or employees, for any and all loss, harm, liability, or damage caused as a consequence of the security assessment, release of the written report, pictures, and assessors' opinions, including any loss arising from a claim of negligence. Further, by accepting this report, Gateway Community Charters (GCC) agrees to indemnify WVPA and DPrep Inc, their agents, officers, and employees from any loss, harm, liability, lawsuits, damages, or costs, including court costs and attorney fees. Any recommendations of materials (included in [Appendix A](#)) are solely for reference and do not constitute an endorsement of a product by WVPA or DPrep Inc.

## Facility-Wide Suggestions

### Exterior Signage

Effective signage and wayfinding are fundamental to workplace security, as they provide clear directions, identify hazards, and establish boundaries, thereby enhancing safety and preventing accidents. Strategically placed signs guide employees and visitors, reducing confusion and ensuring efficient evacuation during emergencies.<sup>1</sup> Signage and a well-maintained site also convey a sense of preparation and attention to detail that can deter crime or other hostile actions. Clear and sufficient signage aids emergency services personnel with improved navigation and timeliness of response during emergencies and other critical incidents.

The Center for Safe Schools suggests exterior signage should be: 1) visible from the street or nearest driveway, 2) contrasting with their background, and 3) reflective for low light or smoky conditions.<sup>2</sup> All exterior doors should be numbered in sequential order in a clockwise manner, with the main entrance designated as number one.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> American Society of Safety Professionals. (n.d.). *Three ways signage can improve workplace safety*. Retrieved December 1, 2024, from [https://www.assp.org/news-and-articles/three-ways-signage-can-improve-workplace-safety?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.assp.org/news-and-articles/three-ways-signage-can-improve-workplace-safety?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

<sup>2</sup> Center for Safe Schools (2024). *Model Door and Window Classroom Numbering*. Retrieved from <https://www.centerforsafeschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/CSS-Door-and-Window-Classroom-Numbering-2024.pdf>

Overall, signage was clear at GCC. The wayfinding numbers are clearly outlined in the top corner of the main building, and the school's name and logo are plainly visible. Around the back of the building, wayfinding signage is limited. There are also opportunities to demonstrate proper upkeep and clear delineation of the school's property. The faded lines, for example, could be repainted to better convey this building as the GCC main office.



The Virtual Academy is housed within the main office building. This exterior signage was done very well. This should be an example to the other entrances.



Across the way from the main building is the Community Engagement Office. As you can see from the picture, the signage is not as clear or consistent as the other front entrances. Keeping signage clear, fresh, and thoughtful in placement would be another area of improvement.

The phrase 'territorial reinforcement' refers to establishing and emphasizing boundary lines to identify where GCC's property begins and ends. This concept is central to CPTED principles and helps deter those intentionally or unintentionally encroaching on school property. Clear signage indicating the school property (including better identification of the GCC building around the rear entrance) would improve the overall safety profile.





While we compliment the door ring cam for having the explanation in other languages commonly used by the community, creating a more professional-looking sign, particularly on the item many people will see first, would be recommended.

Improving the painting and conveying the facility exterior is well-kept with fresh paint works to deter those interested in robbery or other criminal activities.



### **Moving Forward:**

- Exterior signage has clear street address numbers. Consider adding a highly visible address number to assist first responders and visitors.
- Consider updating the painting of faded lines in the rear of the building and adding signage related to this building being part of GCC.
- Create consistent signage for the three primary entrances for the central office, Virtual Academy, and Community Engagement Office.

## Cameras

Cameras play a vital role in safety by providing real-time surveillance that can help detect and deter potential threats, ensuring a quicker response to incidents. According to the U.S. Secret Service, monitored and strategically placed cameras are essential for identifying suspicious behavior and enhancing situational awareness in critical areas.<sup>3,4</sup> Reviewing camera footage after the fact may provide investigative material or document a critical incident but will not aid in preventing an incident.

Cameras provide three general functions when it comes to safety and security.

1. Cameras record what occurred on-site during a hazard, conflict, theft, crime, or other critical event, providing detailed documentation and legal risk mitigation when assessing how employees handle critical incidents. The footage is helpful in training scenarios and as part of an after-event review.
2. Cameras deter those who may be engaged in penetration testing or assessing the site as a potential target. Multiple cameras and signage warnings about being recorded offer a level of hardening a target location that is part of a layered safety and security approach.
3. Cameras that are live monitored by office staff at their desks or broadcast to a larger screen in a public area increase situational awareness and response time when reacting to threats, physical altercations, or an active assailant. Providing this live feed link to local law enforcement improves their awareness when responding to a crisis on-site.



On-site staff did not have access to the camera feeds displayed in the front office or other areas of the school. Determining whether the cameras record and how long the footage is stored would be helpful. Another best practice involves sharing remote access for the cameras with local law enforcement to assist in response to critical incident events such as an active assailant. There were cameras near the front left of the building. There were no cameras on the side and near the right front entrance.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Secret Service, National Threat Assessment Center. (2019). *Protecting America's schools: A U.S. Secret Service analysis of targeted school violence*. Retrieved from [https://www.secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/Protecting\\_Americas\\_Schools.pdf](https://www.secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/Protecting_Americas_Schools.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Alcatraz Lock. (n.d.). *How CCTV cameras can help to prevent school shootings*. Retrieved from <https://alcatrazlock.com/how-cctv-cameras-can-help-to-prevent-school-shootings/>



There are multiple cameras on the back right side of the building (highlighted by the yellow circles).

There did not appear to be cameras on the back side of the main school building. There are numerous flood lights but no cameras on the rear of the main building.

### Moving Forward:

- CCTV access was discussed, with a staged model suggested:
  - Coverage across all areas.
  - Active monitoring access in central locations (front desk and others) for better transparency.
  - Police access to the live feed during emergencies.
- Additional cameras should be added at the rear of the building and near the entrance to the Virtual Academy.
- Ideally, there should be at least 30 days of recorded footage.
- Camera feeds should be monitored by front reception staff and made available to law enforcement via a secure link during emergencies.
- Confirm a schematic with all camera locations and coverage areas is available. An assessment should be conducted to confirm adequate coverage (DPrep Safety can assist in this process.)

### Emergency Medical Supplies/Lockdown Supplies

First aid response is dependent on two central concepts: materials and training. Having materials available without knowing how to use them is equally problematic as having people trained without providing access to materials. The American Red Cross recommends that first aid kits and AEDs (Automated External Defibrillators) be available in multiple locations and that all employees be trained in their use.<sup>5</sup>

The school has a well-stocked first aid kit in a central cabinet for the office. This cabinet is maintained by the company Cintas. They offer a plan which restocks the kit monthly/as needed. An AED was present near the first aid cabinet. Additional first aid supplies and AEDs are placed throughout the school.



As GCC works with a centralized team of nurses, the medical supplies also contain epi-pens to respond to allergic reactions and an overdose kit. These are excellent additions to the first aid supplies. Ensuring all staff have appropriate training on using these specific devices would be recommended.

Medical supplies were lacking in the Community Engagement space and should be rectified moving forward.

<sup>5</sup> American Red Cross. (n.d.). *Workplace safety training courses*. Retrieved December 1, 2024, from <https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/organizations/workplace-safety>

**Moving Forward:**

- There were no medical supplies in the Community Engagement building across from the main GCC office. This needs to be updated.
- Most AEDs have signage, but the kitchen AED needs relocation to ensure constant accessibility. Additionally, all AEDs should be wall-mounted. While portability is useful, there needs to be more security around these kits to ensure they are not tampered with or removed from their location and unavailable in times of need. Example materials are included in [Appendix A](#).
- While AEDs are useful emergency devices, another priority to invest in would be ***stop-the-bleed/wound-packing*** training for all staff (DPrep Safety offers this training). The training and materials are central in responding to any active assailant or major injury. Blood loss is the leading cause of death during active shooting events. Example materials are included in [Appendix A](#).
- Likewise, training related to choking and some of the newer technology related to emergency response to choking should be a higher priority investment for the location. Example materials are included in [Appendix A](#).
- Invest in ***several smaller first aid kits***, commonly known as 'boo-boo' kits, that would allow for more strategic placement around the facility and provide easier access to commonly used materials such as alcohol wipes and Band-Aids. Example materials are included in [Appendix A](#).
- Add ***a first aid kit, a response kit for cutting and fire injuries, and a fire blanket*** for the kitchen to have materials closer to where an injury might occur. Example materials are included in [Appendix A](#).
- Ensure all ***staff are trained*** on AED use, epi-pen usage, anti-overdose treatment, and basic first aid skills.

## Landscaping

According to the American Society of Landscape Architects, maintaining landscaping can enhance safety by creating clear sightlines, removing hiding spots, and creating opportunities for natural surveillance, all principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). Well-maintained landscaping can also reduce the perception of neglect, further aiding in crime deterrence.<sup>6</sup>



The outside of the property has several areas of overgrown landscaping, which offer places to hide away from observation, increasing the risk of break-ins or vandalism. CPTED teaches a “2-foot, 6-foot” rule to keep a clear line of sight across the facility. This means shrubbery should be no higher than two feet, and tree canopies should be trimmed to hang no lower than six feet.



Shrubbery directly pressed against the building should also be cut back and down to remove hiding places. Most trees followed the 6-foot rule and were cut back to an appropriate level.

### Moving Forward:

- Cut back shrubbery in line with the CPTED “2-foot, 6-foot” rule to reduce hiding locations and potential for fire exposure.

<sup>6</sup> American Society of Landscape Architects. (n.d.). *Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) presentation*. Retrieved December 1, 2024, from [https://www.asla.org/uploadedFiles/CMS/PPNs/Landing\\_Pages/ASLA\\_Urban\\_Design\\_PPN\\_CPTED\\_Presentation.pdf](https://www.asla.org/uploadedFiles/CMS/PPNs/Landing_Pages/ASLA_Urban_Design_PPN_CPTED_Presentation.pdf)

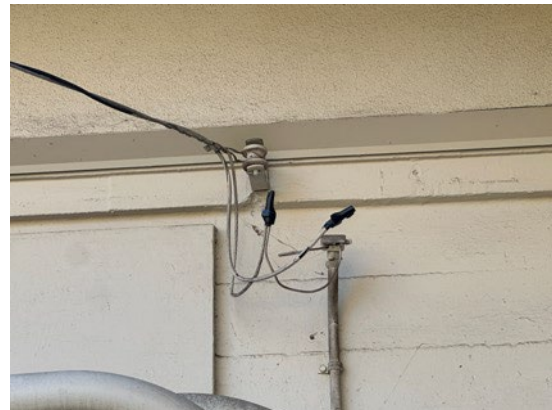
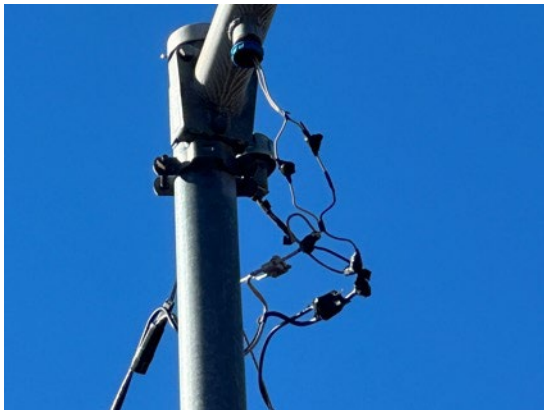
## Lighting

Lighting is important as it enhances natural surveillance by improving visibility at night, deterring potential offenders. According to the International CPTED Association, well-designed exterior lighting reduces dark areas and increases the likelihood of criminal activities being observed.<sup>7</sup>

Exterior lighting was not observed during this assessment. On a return visit for potential training or additional services, we could obtain some pictures at night to be added as an addendum for this report.



To the rear of the building, an oddly wired lighting station appeared to be a temporary measure. Having this reviewed and/or inspected by an electrician would be recommended.



### Moving Forward:

- A further assessment of exterior lighting during the evening hours would be recommended.

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<sup>7</sup> International CPTED Association. (n.d.). *Primer in CPTED – What is CPTED?*. Retrieved December 1, 2024, from <https://www.cpted.net/Primer-in-CPTED>

## Perimeter

Territorial reinforcement involves designing spaces to clearly define ownership, using elements like fences, signage, and landscaping to discourage unauthorized access and promote a sense of ownership by employees. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, establishing clear territorial boundaries enhances security by fostering ownership and responsibility among occupants.<sup>8</sup>



A locked storage area with a barbed wire fence is behind the main building. During the assessment, a long freight train came by as well. The proximity of this rail line indicates the importance of developing and training on how to respond to a hazmat spill in the area.



### Moving Forward:

- Additional signage that would further communicate this is a school property would be recommended.
- The fencing with barbed wire on top is designed to serve as a deterrent. Contact your insurance carrier or Joint Power Authority to discuss the legal liability of the barbed wire. If appropriate, add warning signage to the fence (i.e., "Danger, do not climb. The fence has sharp points that could cause injury or death").

<sup>8</sup> Zahm, D. L. (2007). *Using crime prevention through environmental design in problem-solving*. U.S. Department of Justice. Retrieved from <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/using-crime-prevention-through-environmental-design-problem-solving>



## Exterior Facility Access

### Access Control

Access control is the ability to secure a site and regulate the keys and electronic systems that allow staff to access the worksite.<sup>9</sup> Access control includes both after-hours and how employees and the public access the site during operation hours. Common systems include master keys and keys with more limited access, key fobs, locked doors, turnstiles, locked fences, sally ports/man traps, counters, and glass/plexiglass barriers.

At GCC, we observed the staff member asking people to sign in at the front lobby without checking IDs (visually or with a computerized scanner). There was no visitor lanyard/ID pin system in place.

Administrative staff had keys to the building and other staff areas. Key and key policies were not mentioned in the documentation provided to our team.



Our team found a Knox box for the fire control room at the rear of the location. There was no box on the front of the school. These boxes are typically red and found outside the school's main entrance. Fireboxes typically do not give access to police, whose boxes are often blue in color.

### Moving Forward:

- Consider a visitor management system that will include scanning IDs and a visitor lanyard/ID system and allow for the creation of reports or quick access to data.
- Explore the need for fire/police Knox box access or if there is another local process in this geographic location.
- Develop an EOP or WVPP to address staff key access. Consider using an internal key fob system for easier access control for the interior of the building.
- Place a Knox Box and police access box at the facility in the front of the building.

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<sup>9</sup> School Safety Working Group. (2020). Ten Essential Actions to Improve School Safety. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Department of Justice.

McPhaul, K., London, M., Murrett, K, Flannery, K, Rosen, J. and Lipscomb, J. (2008). Environment Evaluation for Workplace Violence in Healthcare and Social Services. Journal of Safety Research, 237-250.



## Doors & Windows

Implementing physical security measures like locked doors is a fundamental step in securing a workplace environment. Locked doors help prevent unauthorized access, protect sensitive information, and ensure the safety of employees and assets.<sup>10</sup>



The shredded screen on the window behind the building should be replaced to convey that the facility is being taken care of and upkeep is on a regular schedule.

Another concern was a door that did not shut and lock on its own. While the placement of this sign shows an awareness of the problem (the door not latching appropriately), the sign creates a significant liability risk for GCC, as it communicates the problem was identified by school officials and the response to the problem was not fixing the door latch but rather placing a sign and the responsibility for closing the door correctly on the user.



A non-closing door was identified as an access control problem that was used by the Uvalde attacker and has since been an area of risk awareness.

<sup>10</sup> National Center for Education Statistics. (1998). *Creating safe and drug-free schools: An action guide - Chapter 5: School security technology*. Retrieved December 1, 2024, from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/safetech/chapter5.asp>



Another concern is the door wedges that were found outside the facility. While these are often useful for carrying in heavy objects or opening the building to receive increased air or sunlight, the use of the door wedge negates the other safety and security measures in place related to access control, sign-in, and visitor badges.

### **Moving Forward:**

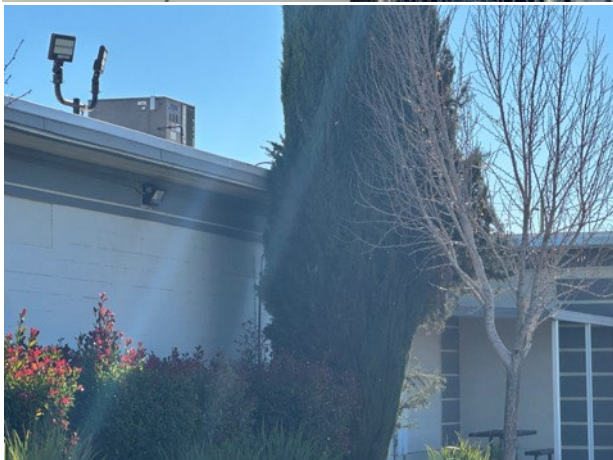
- Fix the broken door latch identified on the previous page.
- Remove any door wedges that are used to prop open doors.
- Consider an educational campaign that will aid in preventing students and staff from propping doors or letting in people without the proper ID. Our team would be able to help design and implement this program if needed.
- Ensure safety and security staff have access to keys during their shifts to be able to enter, exit, and secure the facility.

## Roof Access

Roof access, while needed for maintenance, can be problematic if it is accessible to others intent on bad acts or who may put themselves in a dangerous situation, increasing risk and liability for the facility.<sup>11</sup>



Behind the main building, power panels and fencing provide roof access to anyone on foot. Additional fencing would be useful to prevent access to the roof from this location.



Trees that are close to the buildings with easily climbable branches should be cut back to prevent unwanted access to the building's roof. These were seen more in the Community Engagement building area.

### Moving Forward:

- Climbable trees that allow access to the roof should be cut back.
- Signage with warnings about the dangers of accessing the roof should be placed by the electrical boxes and conduits.

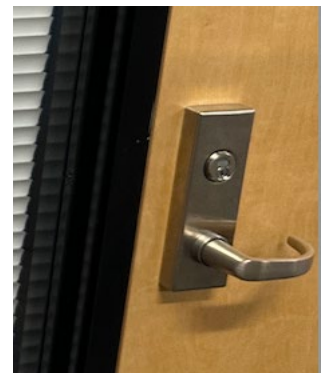
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<sup>11</sup> Utah State Board of Education. (2019). *School safety*. Retrieved December 1, 2024, from <https://schools.utah.gov/schoollandtrust/resources/02.2019.SchoolSafety.pdf>

## Facility Interior

### Doors

Locked interior doors are vital for workplace security because they prevent intruders from freely accessing the facility. By limiting internal movement, they help protect sensitive information, assets, and ensure employee safety. Implementing access controls like locked interior doors is essential for safeguarding organizational assets.<sup>12</sup>



There was inconsistency among the locks on internal doors. Some offices had locks, some didn't, and the locks differed. Some required a key to lock from the inside. Having a lock inside the door allows the door to be secured by someone in a lockdown/barricade scenario. When there is no locking mechanism on the inside of the door, it cannot be secured as effectively.

<sup>12</sup> National Institute of Standards and Technology. (1995). *An introduction to computer security: The NIST handbook* (NIST Special Publication 800-12, Chapter 15). Retrieved from <https://csrc.nist.gov/publications/nistpubs/800-12/800-12-html/chapter15.html>



The use of door wedges is problematic, as it allows the door to be accessed without control and conveys an unintentional message to the staff that propping open doors is a permissible practice in the facility. Propping doors and unsecured pass-through doors have been noted in recent school shootings as ways an attacker has gained access to a facility or has been more easily able to move through the facility.

The Virtual Academy entrance has several security concerns that should be addressed. The door pictured below swings out and does not have locks on either side. Ideally, this door should be reversed so it can be barricaded more effectively. The shades on the two windows in the room are located on the outward-facing side. Installing quick pull down shades on the other side of the windows would be recommended. Adding an in-floor locking system for this door would be useful to add to the reinforcement and address an attacker approaching from the outside.





The installation of a door-locking system, as shown below, would be recommended for some key areas within the facility (such as the entrance to the Virtual Academy). These systems lock the lower part of the door to the floor and follow most fire codes, as the locking mechanism is not attached to the door but rather to the wall.



While they may be deployed tactically to certain areas identified as critical (such as the main entrance to the Virtual Academy), these devices can be placed in each office for a relatively low cost. The door locks must be used as part of a larger plan related to lockdown/barricade and shelter-in-place processes and be practiced by all staff regularly to ensure they know how and when to use these.



The left bathroom door in the separate Community Engagement building had an odd, rushed cut-out that prevented the door from shutting. There were also no internal locks on either of these bathroom doors, preventing them from being an accessible refuge point or safe room.



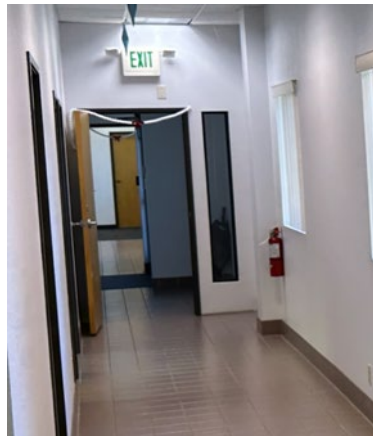
### **Moving Forward:**

- Consider a consistent access control system for all interior doors, with staff having access in case of an emergency. While there may be some reason to have different locks on certain doors (exterior access, bathrooms, fire code), the goal is to have these consistent across all rooms.
- The main reception desk is set too low to effectively deter access to the facility. Our team was told this height was required for ADA access rules. The installation of some type of glass or plastic barrier would be recommended.
- Reverse the Virtual Academy internal door and add locks. Add quick drop window coverings to the inside of these windows. Consider the installation of a floor-based lockdown system.

## Interior Signage

Signage in the building conveys a sense of order, preparedness, and professionalism to visitors and those who may look to cause harm to the facility. The Center for Safe Schools offers the following guidelines for interior door numbering: 1) always place them on the hinge side of the door near the bottom so they can be viewed in smokey conditions, 2) contrast with their background, and 3) be retroreflective for low light and smokey conditions.<sup>13</sup> This helps emergency responders and those evacuating navigate the space during a critical incident.

Signage in the main building was sufficient, but interior signage in the Community Engagement space and the Virtual Academy was lacking. There did not seem to be consistency among signage throughout the facilities, given that some signs were high-tech and displayed virtual scheduling, and others were completely blank.



### Moving Forward:

- Improve signage and wayfinding ability for the interior of both buildings.
- Highlight “shelter in place” areas or “safer rooms” in existing diagrams. Bathrooms and utility closets are good options for safer rooms. These areas should not be defined/labeled on the maps, as this could give potential assailants the knowledge of secure areas. Staff and students should be trained on their locations.

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<sup>13</sup> Center for Safe Schools (2024). Model Door and Window Classroom Numbering. Retrieved from <https://www.centerforsafeschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/CSS-Door-and-Window-Classroom-Numbering-2024.pdf>

## Electrical Panels and Utility Areas

Implementing physical access controls for sensitive areas is essential for protecting organizational assets and ensuring safety. Securing utility areas prevents unauthorized individuals from tampering with critical systems like electrical, plumbing, and HVAC equipment, reducing the risk of accidents, service disruptions, and security breaches.<sup>14</sup>



All external electrical panels were locked, but the storage room was open. Any closets with chemicals should be locked and secured during the workday. There was also a circuit breaker panel that was left unlocked.

### Moving Forward:

- All access panels must be properly closed and locked, and the keys must be secured.
- Assigning a safety staff member to review these higher-risk areas to ensure they are locked at the end of each day would be a recommendation.

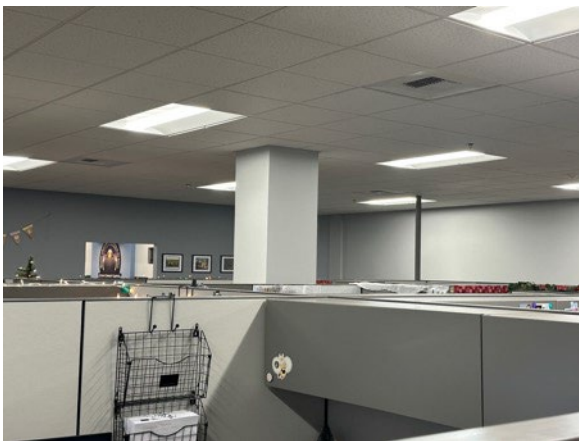
<sup>14</sup> National Fire Protection Association. (n.d.). *NFPA 730: Guide for premises security*. Retrieved from <https://www.nfpa.org/codes-and-standards/nfpa-730-standard-development/730>

## Windows and Window Coverings

Window coverings are an essential safety tool for active assailant situations. For doors with windows, best practice is to provide a covering to obstruct an assailant's view into a classroom. Temporary coverings are preferable to permanent ones to allow monitoring of classroom activities and prevent unauthorized use of empty classrooms.<sup>15</sup> Window coverings are also important during active assailant incidents to provide concealment from the attacker.



Many of the outside windows in the facility do not have window coverings or retractable blinds. Offices surround the central workspace, which does not have any windows to the outside. The door pictured above does not close properly and should be an immediate request for repair.



<sup>15</sup> Keehan, A. (2023). Secure Classroom Doors to Stop Active Shooters. Retrieved on November 15, 2024 from <https://www.ue.org/risk-management/premises-safety/secure-classroom-doors-to-stop-active-shooters/>

The boardroom is an area where installing quick-release window shades is recommended.



Installing quick pull shades would also help reduce the visibility of targets from outside the school. Some windows (like the one above with yellow highlight) have a one-way film that limits visibility into the school but still allows light into the school.

The use of drop shades for these windows would offer little in the way of line-of-sight protection during an active assailant scenario. Blast or shatter-resistant film could be used on these windows, but the cost would be extravagant. An alternative would be to ensure students and staff understand that in any event of an active shooting critical incident, they should move quickly to a safer corner away from exposed windows.

Some examples of these are pictured here and included in [Appendix A](#).

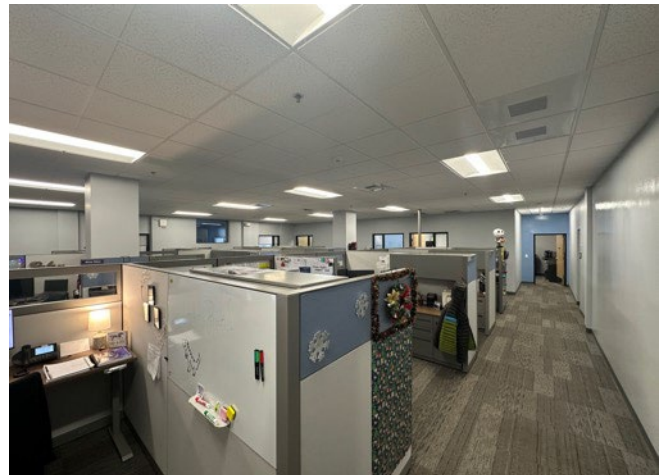


### **Moving Forward:**

- Consider quick pull covers for all outward-facing windows.
- Consider blast/shatter-resistant film for key windows near the main entrance.
- We recommend consistent window covering shades for all offices and the board room.
- Develop a larger event safety/security plan addressing times when the board room is in use. This should address additional security, parking, improved communications (via two-way radios), and training to address conflict resolution, situational awareness, all-hazard response, and local law enforcement awareness.

## Safer Corners

A safer corner is a designated area in a room where individuals cannot be seen from hallways, windows, or door openings. It is positioned in such a way that anyone firing a weapon through the door would be unable to hit people inside. Safer corners are considered essential for school safety, based on lessons learned from previous school shootings, such as the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School incident.<sup>16</sup>

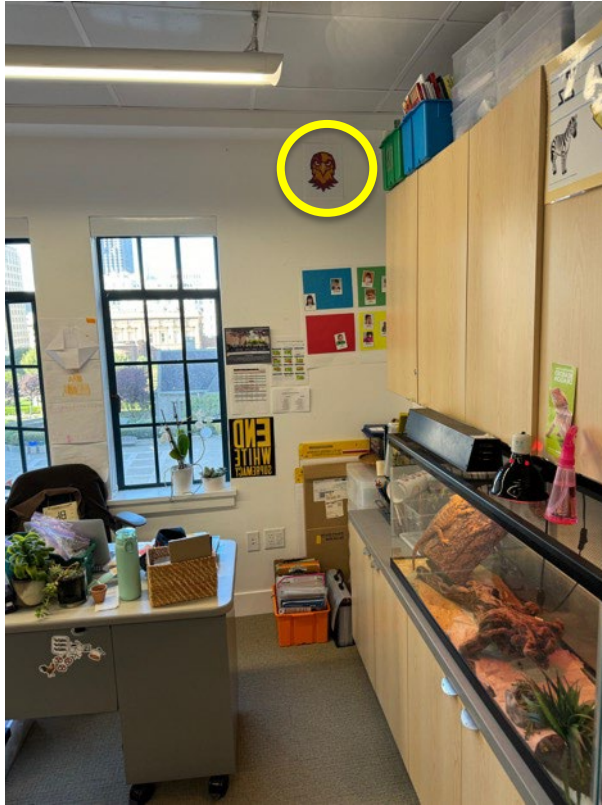


Safer corners were not designated in any of the rooms in the GCC main office.

In rooms with no clear safer corner due to the size or exposure to the outside, the identification of a "safer room" that students and staff should evacuate to should be encouraged. Bathrooms or a utility closet would be options.

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<sup>16</sup> New Hampshire Department of Safety. (2019). *Recommendations: Hard corners*. Retrieved from <https://schoolsafetyresources.nh.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Recommendations-Hard-Corners.pdf>



These photos provide an example of a safer corner marked with the school's mascot. These low-cost/no-cost safety measures should be tied to a larger training program to ensure the practices are understood by all staff and are put into place consistently across the GCC community.

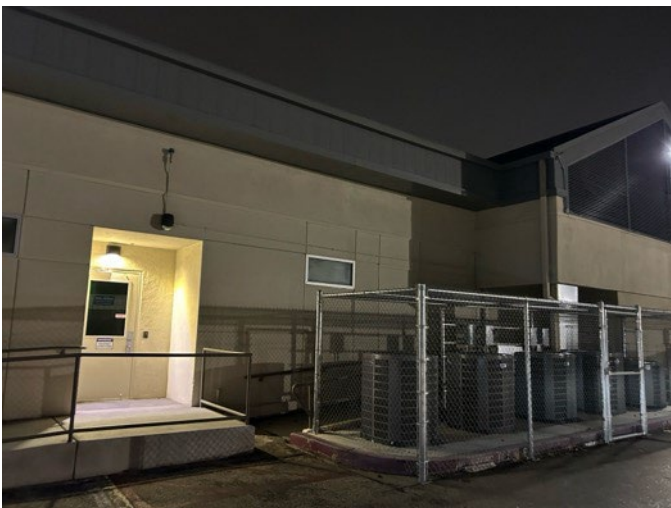
### **Moving Forward:**

- Designate safer corners in each classroom and create a policy that lockdown supplies are to be kept in these areas. These areas can be designated with a picture of the mascot so that children of all ages can be aware of the areas. This should be accompanied by additional training and align with the Comprehensive School Site Safety Plan (CSSP).
- Consider assigning responsibility to an individual or department for maintaining safer corners and ensuring proper signage.
- Consider storing basic emergency supplies in each safer corner.
- Consider reviewing possible locations and create additional safer spaces.



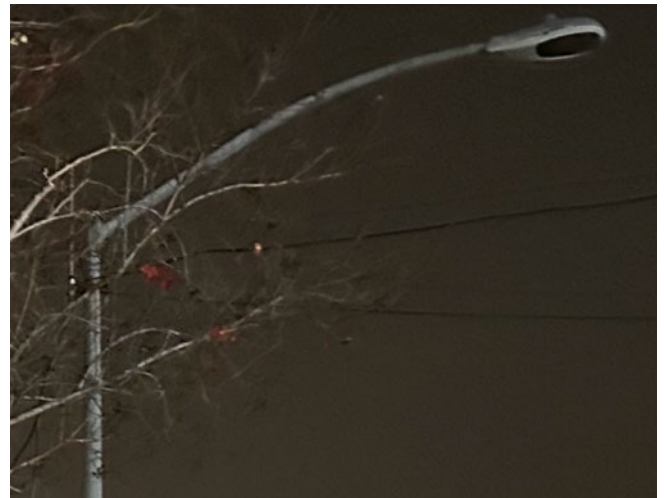
## Visibility

Natural surveillance is a CPTED concept that involves designing and positioning features and people to enhance visibility and make it easier to observe activities. The goal is to remove potential hiding spots and improve the ability of authorized personnel to monitor and respond effectively. This approach helps deter aggressive behaviors by increasing the likelihood of detection and enhancing the sense of safety for students and staff.<sup>17</sup>



During our site visit on the evening of December 21, 2024, there was sufficient lighting for the building, though one streetlight was inoperable.

<sup>17</sup> National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (U.S.). Division of Violence Prevention. (2017). Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) School Assessment (CSA).



**Moving Forward:**

- Ensuring the CCTV feed is viewable from the front desk and other key offices would be recommended.
- Improve lighting and CCTV cameras in areas where there is no coverage.
- Request repair of the streetlight that was not working during our visit.

## Kitchen/Break Rooms

Two areas were identified on site that should have additional medical supplies and fire extinguishers. The risk of more severe cuts, burns, and electrical fires is increased in these areas. These areas would also benefit from additional stop-the-bleed materials and training.



### Moving Forward:

- Install small medical kits that can address small injuries.
- Invest in stop-the-bleed training and materials.
- While AEDs are useful emergency devices, another priority to invest in would be ***stop-the-bleed/wound-packing*** training for all staff (DPrep Safety offers this training). The training and materials are central in responding to any active assailant or major injury. Blood loss is the leading cause of death during active shooting events. Example materials are included in [Appendix A](#).
- Likewise, training related to choking and some of the newer technology related to emergency response to choking should be a higher priority investment for the location. Example materials are included in [Appendix A](#).

## Communication

The ability to communicate with staff, administrators, and teachers throughout the school during a critical incident requires each staff person to have access to a two-way radio, with appropriate training on how to use this radio and which channels should be utilized.

The site does not have any two-way radios for administrative team members. These devices provide immediate contact among school staff, which helps both in everyday management and daily operations.<sup>18</sup> These radios are reliable through both power outages and network issues that may impact the internet or cellular services. They also offer a relatively low-cost solution that can scale with the schools' needs.

### Moving Forward:

- Develop a plan to purchase and train all staff on using two-way radios.
- A two-way radio should always be kept at the front desk.
- Ensure coordination among the various communication methods to be used in an emergency, including the phone pager system, two-way radios, and duress/panic alarms.
- Implement an all-hazard training plan with wall flip charts.

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<sup>18</sup> Dougherty, K. (2024). Prioritizing School Safety: The Value of Two-Way Radios in School Administration. Retrieved on December 23, 2024, from <https://marketscale.com/industries/podcast-network/icom/prioritizing-school-safety/>  
Bryant, K. (2020). The Role of Communications in Implementing a FEMA Emergency Response. Retrieved on December 23, 2024, from [www.ehstoday.com/safety-technology/article/21135511/the-role-of-communications-in-implementing-a-fema-emergency-response](http://www.ehstoday.com/safety-technology/article/21135511/the-role-of-communications-in-implementing-a-fema-emergency-response)

## Duress/Panic Alarms

Providing staff with access to duress alarms (more commonly known as 'panic' alarms) helps improve emergency service reaction time during a critical incident.<sup>19</sup> Ideally, there should be several of these alarms, some stationary and some mobile (to be used during tense meetings or customer interactions). These alarms should be tested quarterly to ensure they are in proper working order. Staff should be trained to understand how and when to use the alarm and who the alarm notifies.

There was one panic/duress alarm on site underneath the front reception desk. Staff at the time did not know when the button had last been tested, what happened when it was triggered, and who was called.



Another option is using the phone system's "page all" function, which can also act as a loudspeaker throughout the school. We were not provided an EOP or other documentation from this site about the use of the duress/panic alarm.

Ensuring the central office of GCC has appropriate policies and procedures to address critical incidents is an essential finding in this report. Given that board meetings occur at this site, safety and security efforts should be heightened. Disgruntled parents, staff, members of the public, and those upset with the state or federal education system or other political ideologies should lead to an increased safety and security profile for this site.

### Moving Forward:

- Additional mobile panic or duress buttons may be an investment to review through the alarm company used by GCC.

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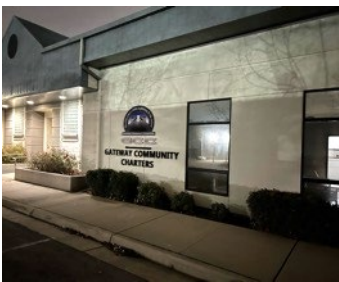
<sup>19</sup> Hattersley, R. (2024). More Campuses Adopting Panic Alarm Tech, Most Satisfied with System Performance. Published by Campus Safety Magazine. <https://www.campussafetymagazine.com/insights/more-campuses-adopting-panic-alarm-tech-but-satisfaction-with-system-performance-is-slipping/161115/>  
How Panic Alarms can Improve School Security. Campus Safety Partner Series. Retrieved from <https://www.campussafetymagazine.com/resources/how-panic-alarms-can-improve-school-security/77216/>

- Ensure proper training for all staff on how to use all the emergency alert systems and in what order they should be used during a crisis.
- Ensure consistent language is used to communicate various actions such as lockdown/barricade and shelter-in-place.
- Explore software-based panic/duress alarms at each of the computer terminals.
- Consider training for staff, including where the signal goes when they are used and the need for quarterly testing.
- Consider creating a list of where all panic alarms are if this does not currently exist.
- Develop an EOP, COOP, and Workplace Violence Prevention Plan.
- Develop an all-hazard response plan for the site.

## Summary Recommendations

Addressing the low counter in the main building should be a central goal of any improvements or additions. While the counter may be ADA-compliant, the lack of safety glass or another type of barrier allows anyone to step over the barrier and easily access the facility's interior. This makes the side locks on both of the doors ineffective when it comes to preventing someone from entering the interior of the facility.

We recommend improved mapping and interior wayfinding to aid visitor and first responder navigation. Developing a more detailed visitor access control system and plans for higher-risk events such as school board meetings should be included in the EOP, COOP, and Workplace Violence Prevention Plan.



Creating consistent signage for all four main entrances would also be recommended. This helps improve movement and planning in the event of a critical incident and directs first responders who may not know the building.

Another way to improve emergency responder efficiency in the event of a critical incident at the facility would be offering accessible times during the summer for law enforcement, emergency medical personnel, and the fire department to conduct internal training. This is not intended as drills for staff or students but to better familiarize first responders with the facility and its nuances before first encountering them during a crisis.

Overall, there was less attention to emergency preparedness at this location compared to sites where students are present within the GCC community. While this makes sense on one level since the lack of students on site does shift some of the all-hazard response. On the other hand, the idea that the central office would be the first choice of a disgruntled community member, student, or unaffiliated political activist should not be minimized.

This means having a site Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), Continuity Of Operations Plan (COOP), Workplace Violence Prevention Plan (WVPP), as well as a plan for special events such as board meetings to address potential threats, parking conflicts, arguments, or violence. Ensuring all staff understand where rally, refuge, and reunification points are would also be a priority in training.

Supplies, including identification and reunification materials, should also be available in a transportable container. There is some excellent advice and training available through

the I Love You Guys Foundation related to developing and implementing a successful reunification plan.<sup>20</sup>

Future training needs will be discussed in the Comprehensive School Safety Planning document provided along with the Site Safety Report. The following areas should be covered in these trainings based on our teams' observations.

- Clarifying for staff the differences between rally (where the school community might go after a fire), reunification (where students will assemble away from the scene to meet with parents and families), and refuge points (reinforced areas within the school that provide a safer location to wait for evacuation).
- Active Assailant Training (DPREP's Mindset is one example), along with an all-hazards emergency training with the staff.
- Adding all hazard flip charts in each office and classroom.
- Specific training for security guards and front reception staff is needed, as these staff are the first line of defense for building and community safety at the GCC office. Consistent protocols, regular training, and awareness of current threats are essential to ensure their effectiveness. Developing a clear policy and providing monthly training sessions on topics including de-escalation, situational awareness, basic threat assessment, and documentation will help staff handle frequent challenges and maintain a strong security profile for the GCC home office.

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<sup>20</sup> The "I Love U Guys" Foundation. (n.d.). *The standard reunification method*. Retrieved from <https://iloveguys.org/The-Standard-Reunification-Method.html#Intro>



## Appendix A: Sample Products

### Medical

- Smaller “boo-boo” first aid kits: [Johnson & Johnson Travel Ready Portable Emergency First Aid Kit](#)
- Tourniquet: [Stop The Bleed® Basic Kit with CAT Tourniquet](#)
- Wound packing: [Critical Essentials Bleeding Control Kit for Chest & Limb Wounds](#)
- Security seals for AEDs: [Security Control Locks](#)
- Overdose kits: [Naloxone Overdose Emergency Kit Cabinet](#) and [Narcan medication](#)
- Anti-choking kits: [VitalVac](#), [LifeVac](#) and [Arixmed](#)

### Fire

- Fire Blanket: [Prepared Hero Emergency Fire Suppression Blanket for Kitchen](#)

### Lockdown/Barricade

- Window pulls: [Nightlock window shade](#) and [Hideaway Helper window shade](#)
- Door locking devices: [TeacherLock](#), [SAFEbolt](#), [Brinks door security bar](#), [Door armor max](#), [DoorJammer Lockdown](#), [The Boot](#), [Bolo Stick](#), [Rhino Ware](#)
- Mobile panic/duress apps: [SHEQSY app](#), [Blackline Safety](#), [OK Alone](#), [Lone Worker app](#)
- Summary article on panic/duress alarms: [Deepdive: 2023 Panic Alarm and Mobile Duress Systems and Apps](#)