

Do You Need An Urgent Care Security Plan?



Even though we all like to plan for the best, it's important to prepare for the worst and have an organized urgent care security plan.

There are several issues, ranging from robbery to violent crime, to consider when thinking about urgent care security. Even though it's not usually the case, there is a perception that walk-in clinics will have [supplies of prescription drugs](#) and cash on hand.

In April 2015, [police responded to a call from an urgent care center](#) in Stockton, CA, because a man was acting erratic at the facility. The man reportedly searched through personal belongings of several employees and attempted to access a refrigerator holding drugs. Eventually the urgent care center was evacuated and the man was arrested. In January 2016, a [woman with a handgun robbed](#) a medical building that houses St. Luke's Urgent Care in O'Fallon, MO.

Just this week, an urgent care center in St. Louis announced it would close on the weekends due to concerns over nearby violence.

[St. Louis Public Radio reported](#): *A gun battle outside the doors of North City Urgent Care on a Saturday last month was the last straw, said Dr. Sonny Sagar, its medical director. ... Clinic personnel decided to leave after hearing a series of shots outside.*

These incidents highlight some of the "worst-case" scenarios an urgent care operator could face. But they serve as important reminders about planning for the safety of your facility and employees. Here are a few tactics to consider:

Adding security cameras may seem like a solid defense to deter crime and capture wrong-doing when it happens. But the reality is the footage captured is often unhelpful. If a stranger enters the urgent care center and robs the place, but no one recognizes the suspect, how will the crime get solved? There's also the potential that employees will be uncomfortable with the surveillance and it could add tension in the workplace.

Installing a panic button at the front desk is another common security device, allowing a staff member to alert police by leaning against it or triggering a floor switch. However, the risks with a panic button are: the potential for false alarms; a malfunction of equipment; or the chance that the employee can't trigger it when staring down the barrel of a gun. There is a new computer desktop app version of the traditional panic button, which some say is easier to control and activate when needed.

Hiring a security guard could also aid safety efforts at an urgent care center, but not without a cost. There's the literal cost of paying for security personnel. But you must also consider the reputation cost and what patients will think of the facility when they walk in and see a guard stationed in the front area. While it might make some feel safer, it could also raise alarm bells for consumers who wonder what security issues led to the hiring of a private officer.

The security needs of an urgent care center will vary by location and hours. A good first step is simply conducting a security analysis of the facility and coming up with a plan to respond if and when a dangerous situation occurs. The urgent care security plan should be a living document, to be updated regularly and shared with stakeholders.

For more on this topic, read ["Protecting Your Urgent Care Center Against Robbery."](#)

This resource was first published prior to the 2019 merger between DocuTAP and Practice Velocity. The content reflects our legacy brands.

Stay Connected

Get the Urgent Care Minute Newsletter

Email

SIGN ME UP



Why Experity



Resources



Company



©2019 Experity Health. All rights reserved.

[Privacy](#) | [ONC Certification](#)