



# **Sawyer County Courthouse**

10610 Main Street

Hayward, Wisconsin

## **2016 Courthouse Security Assessment**

Prepared by

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The following are the results of findings of an in-person security assessment of the Sawyer County Courthouse located at 10610 Main Street, Hayward, Wisconsin. James Brigham conducted the review on August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016. The Honorable Judge John Yackel and Sawyer County Chief Deputy Craig Faulstich provided access and guidance to examine all parts of the building. The objective of this review is to offer options for consideration to improve the security of the courthouse.

## **OVERVIEW**

The Sawyer County Courthouse serves the citizens of the county by allowing them public access to the courts, legal records and numerous other services provided to them by Sawyer County. This courthouse is a typical courthouse for jurisdictions of this size and as such, it contains many county offices. Being a multi-use building means that many people come to the courthouse to do business other than business within the court system. Because of the nature of the human interaction that occurs in this setting, it is imperative that Sawyer County and its staff have plans in place to react to volatile situations which could occur in and around the courthouse at any one of the county offices, including the courtrooms. They also need to be prepared and trained to deal with a potentially armed subject(s). Unfortunately, violence in a courthouse setting is an extremely common occurrence given the emotional state of people who come to the building. Interactions within this building may quickly become emotionally charged. Workplace violence between employees as well as volatile personal relationships at home could easily bring violence to the within the confines of the Sawyer County Courthouse. Sadly, a recent incident with the Sawyer County Clerk of Court resulted in her tragic death. That incident could have easily occurred at the courthouse had the perpetrator decided to commit the homicidal act at the victim's workplace. Perpetrators of this violence only need to be successful in penetrating a building once. Violence that we see occur at a workplace setting is frequently hastily planned, if planned at all, which makes it wholly unpredictable.

It is this unpredictable violence, from vocal disturbances to shootings, for which Sawyer County and its staff needs to be prepared. The building and its employees, representatives of the government of Sawyer County, can create a situation whereby someone may want to carry out acts of violence simply because it symbolizes a government entity.

Citizens and staff should have a reasonable expectation of safety and security when working at or attending to business within the courthouse. From the authors perspective, staff at the Sawyer County Courthouse are committed to making their building as safe as possible for their staff and the general public. The staff were helpful, knowledgeable and very willing to discuss issues within their building. From all appearance, communication between staff seems to be very good. Communication amongst staff is crucial in making a building safer.

Since funding for security upgrades is not unlimited, many of the following suggestions are no or very low cost items. Some items may cost a significant amount, but a suggestion would be to list items in order of priority and do what can be done in a reasonable amount of time to ensure the safety of all who come to the facility.

## **EXTERNAL AREA**

The Sawyer County Courthouse sits on an entire city block in Hayward and is surrounded by public parking on all four corners, with a parking lot at the rear of the building. The courthouse sits directly across the street from the Sawyer County Sheriff's Office which also contains the jail. The building exterior is comprised of a combination of rock/concrete block walls and wood siding. The rock/concrete block areas provide excellent ballistic characteristics and should be utilized from the interior as places for cover/concealment in the case of a lockdown or active shooter situation. The area appears to be well lit and the landscaping is very minimal. Large bushes or shrubs placed close to buildings can be utilized as areas for people to hide or place things that may cause harm, such as an explosive. These areas should be kept as is to allow clear sight lines for those coming to and from the buildings.

The building footprint provides for two three-sided 'courtyard' areas: one originating from the northwest towards the center of the building and one from the southeast, going inward towards the center of the building.

The building has three public entrances and all doors are metal frame with full glass inserts. There is one employee entrance at the rear of the building which is electronic key card accessed. This door is also metal framed with a full glass insert.

### ***OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:***

Trim Main street landscaping down to provide better sight lines from the interior of the building. A balance between being aesthetically pleasing while allowing for a good line of sight can be accomplished with minimal change.

Tank-stoppers, large heavy planters or comparable items should be installed at the Main street entrance. They should be positioned in a manner to allow handicap and other pedestrian traffic while being able to stop a vehicle from breaching the front doors from as far away as possible.

Courtyard areas should be closed off to not allow members of the general public unfettered access to interior office windows and other areas near the interior of the building. At

minimum, solid, high fencing with secure doors should be installed to block the public's view as well as access to these areas.

The Northwest courtyard area contains the prisoner entrance, which is directly across from the jail. While convenient, the current practice of walking inmates from the jail is something that should be discontinued as quickly as possible. Over 80% of inmate escapes attempts occur outside of a correctional setting. Most of them occur during transport to or from another facility. Typically, Sawyer County inmates are walked to court on the same or very similar time schedule which makes the practice even more unsafe. Defendants who are taken into custody from court are also walked outside, across the street, and to the jail. The potential for problems is unlimited. The safety of Sawyer County staff as well as prisoners or arrestees is directly affected by this practice. This courtyard area could be converted to a secure garage where prisoners could be transported via vehicle to and from court. A secure, temporary holding area for inmates could also be built into this area. This secure garage could also be utilized as well by the judiciary for secure parking. Wisconsin Supreme Court Rule chapter 68 states that secure parking for the judiciary should be provided because of the potential of violent acts being directed towards a judge or their vehicle being compromised in some way.

Another potential option would be to build a secure tunnel under 5<sup>th</sup> street. This tunnel could be used as a secure means of transporting inmates, escorting arrestees from court and allowing a safe response of law enforcement personnel to the courthouse in case of emergency.

A much larger and significantly costlier project would be to connect the courthouse to the Sheriff's office/jail. This would allow for safe, secure prisoner transport, secure inmate holding cells and secure judicial parking, as well as potential other space for expansion.

As with most modern courthouses, public entrances are minimized and secure entrances are limited to entry by law enforcement only and in some instances, a limited number of employees. In order to best provide security for the Sawyer county courthouse, it is recommended that the current three entrances be scaled down to one, main entrance. The changes to this main entrance will be addressed later in this report.

The rear northwest door (labeled door 37) should be updated to a solid steel entrance security grade door and used only for purposes of fire escape or emergencies only. Currently this door is being used by the judiciary, some limited number of employees and was previously used as a route to bring inmates to and from court. If the Northwest courtyard is converted to allow for secure judiciary parking and secure inmate transport, this entrance could be eliminated except for reasons as stated earlier. In either instance, the current glass door should be converted to a security grade steel door, with a small, security grade window to allow view to the outside. If the courtyard is not converted to allow for secure judiciary parking, this entrance should be electronic pass carded to allow for a judiciary entrance into the building.

The rear public entrance (labeled door #62) should be eliminated as a public entrance and replaced with a solid steel entrance security door with a small, security grade window to allow sight going to the outside and used only for purposes of fire escape or emergencies only.

The south east entrance on fourth street (Human Services entrance) should also be eliminated as a public entrance and converted to an emergency exit only. Understanding that this may cause considerable inconvenience for some working in that area of the building, convenience should never undermine security. This entrance should be eliminated and the two current glass doors replaced with security grade solid steel entrance security door with a small, security grade window to allow sight going to the outside and used only for purposes of fire escape or emergencies only.

All of these doors should be alarmed along with security camera coverage in case there is an attempt to allow entrance by other parties in an effort to avoid going through a secure, single, main entrance. These exits should never be utilized by employees as a way of getting out of the building, other than in times of an emergency.

## **MAIN ENTRANCE**

The building entrance off of Main Street is considered the primary entrance. This is a double door or 'sally port' style entrance, containing metal framed glass doors four-wide. There are two side-walks that converge from the street area approximately 15 feet from the front entrance. There is a key pad combination style and electronic key card system lock on two of the doors to allow after hours' entrance (doors 3 and 4).

### ***OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:***

As stated previously, this should be converted for use as the one and only public entrance. Several changes should occur with this transition.

First, it is recommended that doors 3 and 4 be used solely as entrance doors, while doors 1 and 2 be used solely as exit doors. A solid, reinforced wall should be located within the sally port area, separating that area into the entrance and exit zones. Given the number of people who come to the building, this should not create any type of building traffic problem. The exit doors should not be able to be opened from the outside unless someone has a key or electronic card reader access and they should be clearly marked as "Exit only". The reasons for this change are two-fold: first, to allow for a clear, directed area to a weapons screening area and two, in case of a lock down situation, only two doors would have to be locked instead of four.

The current glass doors provide for little—if any, ballistic resistance. While bullet resistant glass would be the first choice, another option would be a ballistic window film being placed on all of the windows of the doors. While not making the window completely ‘bullet proof’, it does make the glass much more difficult for human penetration after being shot or hit by a large object. In other words, if the doors were locked, a person could shoot one or two rounds into the glass and the entire panel may shatter completely, or at minimum, be easily breached due to the glass being compromised. Ballistic film makes that possibility much more difficult, thus giving the police, employees and others time to react.

Chapter 68 asserts that screening stations should be equipped with a magnetometer and x-ray machine to screen persons, carry-in items and packages. A screening/security station should be positioned to allow screeners the opportunity see members of the public as soon as possible, either prior to entering the building or as soon as entering the building. There should also be enough room within the immediate area to pat search people who need to be searched after electronic detection of a potential weapon. Ideally the screening station would have the ability to lock the outside doors quickly. This could be accomplished by installation of an electro-magnetic lock placed on the two entrance doors, with the button placed at the screeners station. The screening station should contain at least one shoulder-height wall to provide cover and ballistic reinforcement for the screeners. The screeners should have radio communication with the capability of communicating with each other, other security staff and all local law enforcement agencies. The screening station should also contain an alarm system which should alert all office areas of the building, as well as the County Communication center. Activation of this alarm would alert all areas to ‘shelter in place’ and alert law enforcement that an immediate response is needed.

If security/weapons screening is enacted, the recommendation would be to make sure the public is aware that this procedure will be occurring. This could be done thru media release: however, the media release should be done on the day screening starts—not before. If a media release isn’t done, the recommendation at minimum would be signage outside the building which would indicate that “persons entering this building will be subject to search of themselves and their belongings” or something similar. It is recommended that all people entering the building, including employees, be screened the same as the general public. People who enter the building—employees or the general public—need to understand that screening is for everyone’s protection and that the end goal is that everyone has a safe experience in the building.

Screeners need to be consistent in their screening, meaning that everyone is thoroughly screened in the same manner, every day, with no exceptions. There should be no employee or attorney by-pass. A written policy should be developed to give direction to those screening, including what items will not be allowed and dealt with as simple contraband, and what to do when an illegal item (such as a firearm) is located on a person. Banning of all liquids should be considered as well as any glass items. Liquids that are explosive or toxic in nature could be

brought in undetected through screening. Besides an outright ban, another possibility to prevent this from occurring would be to require persons to take a drink of their liquid and swallow. Glass items should not be allowed as they can be broken and used as edged weapons. It would not be a recommendation to hold or store items considered contraband for people after they enter the building. The suggestion would be to allow people to return to their vehicle to place the restricted items there and then be screened when they re-enter.

The recommendation would be to have two, armed law enforcement trained staff members at screening. As one searches, the other serves as an observer. Supreme Court Rule Chapter 68 states in part, “The public entrance should be staffed by at least one sworn officer, armed with a triple retention holster and access to law enforcement band radio and other qualified court security officers as necessary. At least one sworn officer should be available to patrol the public areas and assist with public entrance staffing as needed.” Based on prior experience, it is recommended that these employees be county employees and not a contracted service or private security firm. These employees should be under the control of the Sheriff. One possibility to help with labor costs would be to hire retired law enforcement officers to serve as screeners. They would have a law enforcement background and training, the ability to carry firearms, the ability to deal with emergent situations and the ability to communicate with the general public. It is recommended that if the building is open, that screening be taking place—even after normal business hours for after-hours court activity or county board meetings that are open to the public. In other words, if the building is open to the public, screening should be taking place.

Lastly, current benches in this area should be secured in some fashion—either to the floor or wall as to prevent person(s) from picking them up and throwing them. If practical, loose furniture, plants, pictures, coat hangers, etc., should be removed completely or secured in place.

## **Large Courtroom**

The Sawyer County Courthouse contains two courtrooms. The large courtroom has bench style seating for the public, one public entrance and a public emergency exit. The public entrance courtroom doors are wooden with narrow, near door length windows. One deadbolt lock secures these doors and it is manipulated by a single key.

The judges bench area is elevated along with the clerk’s area, while the witness stand is at floor level. There is a judicial entrance to the bench area that is secure. There is a hardwire alarm system in the courtroom which when tested, functioned and gave the appropriate location. The bench area provides good sightlines throughout the courtroom. There is a jury box with a separate entrance/exit for jurors that exits to a separate juror room.

The public viewing area is separated by a short wall and dual swinging doors to allow for participants to enter the well of the courtroom.

There is also an entrance that allows for prisoner entrance to the courtroom.

This courtroom is also used as a public meeting area whereby members of the general public may attend.

### ***OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:***

If facing the bench, there is a walk-up area that allows for unfettered access to the clerk and/or the judge. This should be closed in some fashion via a permanent wall or secure door that reaches the height of the current bench. This would provide a barrier to either deter, slow down or prevent someone from attacking staff or the judiciary.

The current alarm system is adequate, however, as with any alarm system, it should be tested on a weekly basis to assure that it is working properly. The system should also alert to more than one location. This would help ensure that the alarm is responded to in an appropriate manner. Staff should be exceedingly familiar with where the alarm system is located without having to look to find it, and should know the locations in which it alarms. All staff who work within the courtroom should have electronic card reader access that would allow them to exit through any door in the courtroom., including the jury door. Ideally, all court rooms would have two alarms---one for the judiciary and one for at least one other staff member.

The current swinging door that allows for access to the well of the court from the public seating area should be changed to allow the doors to swing outwardly only towards the gallery area. This could be accomplished fairly simply by current maintenance staff.

The juror door leading out of the courtroom should be controlled by electronic key card pass from both sides to allow jurors and/or other parties to be quickly escorted out of the courtroom in case of emergency.

The current courtroom public entrance doors should be replaced with more hardened doors containing a reinforced center post between them. These doors should be fitted with not only a key lock, but also an electronic magnetic lock that could be activated from the judge's bench. This would allow for the ability to quickly lock these doors in case of an active shooter situation or a building lockdown. The current doors and locking mechanism could be too easily breached. Windows should be large enough to allow a sightline, but not large enough to allow for physical human penetration. Courtroom doors should always be locked whenever the court is not in session. The courtroom in its entirety should be searched every day prior to court starting.

The current locks on the inmate entrance door are unacceptable. The door currently contains three different locks. This door should have an electronic key card access on both sides to allow for quick, hands free exit and entry by security staff with prisoners. The door itself is

adequate. However, the hallway leading to this door should be closed off from the general public at all times. The current door (244) that is used to allow for public access to the judicial area that is controlled by the judicial assistant should remain a secure door with key card access and electronic lock. The outer door should then be fitted with a camera and electronic lock controlled by the judicial assistant. This door should also have electronic key card access to allow both exit and entry via key card. This would prevent public access to the inmate hallway. Currently this area is accessible by the general public during certain times which is not an acceptable practice.

The inmate/attorney visit area should have a secure visitation area for them, unless a deputy or court security staff is present during this visit. At times, these visits can become heated and could potentially become violent. Visits should be done in a secure area, preferably in a jail setting. If it's not done in a separated secure area, court security staff or deputy should be present.

The removable panel located under the judge's bench where AV cords and equipment are accessed should be secured and a secure solution found. Having access underneath the bench is not an acceptable, secure practice.

Loose, self-standing chairs in the back of the courtroom should be removed or secured. These chairs could easily be thrown by unruly actors.

The private, judicial area should be electronic key card access by all doors. That access should be limited to not only necessary staff, but also restricted to certain hours. A maintenance closet (door27) contained in that area has no lock on the door, which should be rectified or the practice of keeping supplies in that area removed altogether.

The judicial assistant should be given better access to cameras other than a small, multi-plex monitor. In an ideal situation, this would not be the duties of a judicial assistant, but rather a member of a court security team done from a secure location. Access to the private, judicial area should be kept to an absolute minimum and only done when absolutely necessary.

Currently there are no dedicated law enforcement officers assigned to the courthouse to monitor court proceedings. Supreme Court Rule chapter 68 states in part, "There should be no fewer than two sworn officers in each courtroom and each court commissioner hearing room when court is in session." All court hearings have the potential for violent outbursts. As current practice now, the only time law enforcement is present is when there is a prisoner in court. This practice is not a viable option to protect the judiciary, staff, and members of the general public during all court proceedings. A minimum of one sworn law enforcement officer should be in the courtroom whenever court is in session and at least two should be present when a prisoner is in attendance. Court bailiffs could be armed, however this should only occur if they have prior certified law enforcement experience and pass annual HR 218 standards as directed by the Sawyer County Sheriff. However, court bailiffs should only be used as supplemental court security during jury trials---not as security for all court proceedings.

There are certain court hearings that could be done via video conference which may help in dealing with prisoners who have court hearings. However, this option should not be seen as a complete solution to having no law enforcement staff within the courthouse. Video conferencing only eliminates the need in hearings for a second, sworn law enforcement officer to be present for prisoners who have court hearings.

All these security staff, as well as all civilian staff, should undergo court security training and active shooter training for courthouses.

## **SMALL COURTROOM**

Sawyer County has a second, smaller courtroom that has bench seating for the general public, an elevated bench for the judge with secure entrance for the judiciary. The public viewing area is separated by a short wall, however access to the well of the courtroom is completely open. The Clerk area is at floor level as well as the witness stand. There is no alarm system in the courtroom.

### ***OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:***

The layout of this courtroom from a security standpoint does not provide adequate protection to court staff, the judiciary, victims or witnesses. The design allows for direct access to the well of courtroom. The judiciary is required to leave the private secure office area in order to get to this courtroom, which in any courthouse, should be avoided. There is no alarm to notify of a possible problem. At least two alarms should be installed as soon as possible. This courtroom, under any circumstances, should never be used for court hearings for jail prisoners.

There is a flip lock on the inside of the public courtroom doors. A member of the public could lock the door, thus preventing exit/entry. This could include anyone from the general public, as well as litigants, witnesses or crime victims. It would make a law enforcement response much more difficult. This should be a keyed lock from both sides. Also, an electromagnetic lock that can be activated from the bench should be installed on this door to allow the judge to close this door quickly in case of a lockdown or active shooter situation.

In an effort to best make this courtroom secure, it is recommended to re-configure the courtroom in the following manner:

Elevate the clerk area and close the opening off. Move the witness area from its current position to the other side of the bench next to the clerk and leave it at floor level.

Move the court reporter to the position near where the witness stand is currently located, elevate the area, and surround it with a half wall. Open the judges bench wall on the left to allow the court reporter access to go around the judge's area to the secure door that exits into the secure area.

Rotate counsel tables to angles to face the court. This will in all likelihood require the current wall that divides the well from the gallery to be moved back, resulting in the loss of one row of seating in the gallery.

Close the well of the courtroom off by extending the current dividing wall all the way to the wall on which the public enters the courtroom, leaving the courtroom well access where the current swinging door exists. The current electronic lock mechanism on that door could then be utilized in its appropriate manner.

There may be other potential ways to re-configure this courtroom to make it more secure, however it is believed the above would result in the least amount of cost, and could be done in a relatively short time frame.

## **COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY TREASURER AND REGISTER OF DEEDS**

The Sawyer County Clerk's Office, County Treasurer and the Register of Deeds offices are located down a single hallway. Even though they perform separate functions and duties, these offices essentially share one location. While many may think that transactions at these offices may be rather mundane, those who work in these areas understand and know that things that occur with the general public may become upsetting to some, thus creating the potential for a violent outburst.

### ***OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:***

From a security standpoint, the County Clerk's office has two high counter space windows that would be difficult for most persons to climb over. However, immediately to the left of the counter, a door (10) that leads directly into the employee offices typically remains wide open during business hours. This door should be closed and an electronic key card pass should be installed on the outside. This door should remain shut at all times and only accessed by those with proper credentials. Employee areas should be a private, separate area from the public and should not allow unregulated access into its work areas.

The counter in the clerk's office is well designed, with manual pull-down security grade metal roll-down louvers. However, it is recommended that security grade glass be installed horizontally across the entirety of each opening, allowing for a pass through on the bottom for documents and other materials. The glass would prevent someone from climbing over the counter, or at minimum, provide time for staff to react.

There is an alarm in the clerk's office, however staff seemed unfamiliar with its location. The alarm was tested and did function properly. Staff should be exceedingly familiar with where the alarm is without having to look to locate it. These alarms, as with all alarms should be

routinely tested to ensure that it is working properly. This area should have multiple alarms contained in order to allow for activation from different locations within the office.

To the contrary, the County Treasurer's office and the Register of Deeds office provides unfettered access by anyone to quickly enter their work areas. This should be considered a major area of concern. It is recommended that both of these areas be re-designed and closed off to members of the public. Counters similar to the County Clerk's window, containing security grade glass with a document pass thru at the bottom should be installed. The only entrance(s) to this area---if provided with a re-design, should be controlled by electronic key card access. That door or doors, should be shut at all times and only accessed by those with proper credentials.

These areas should also contain multiple alarms that staff should be familiar with and they should be routinely tested. All staff should be familiar with and trained in an active shooter preparedness plans.

## **ZONING AND LAND RECORDS OFFICES**

The Zoning and Land records offices are located near the center of the complex, down a long, single hallway. The Land Records office also contains the offices of the County Surveyor and County Information Technology. Both offices contain a high, single counter window in order to deal with the general public. While business may be considered routine and not pose a security risk, citizens do get distressed about zoning and land issues. This could create a potential for a violent outburst.

### ***OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:***

The current counters are acceptable barriers from potential harm from the general public. However, the recommendation would be the same as that in the County Clerk's office--install security grade glass horizontally across the entirety of each opening, allowing for a pass through on the bottom for documents and other materials. The glass would prevent someone from climbing over the counter, or at minimum, provide time for staff to react.

And like the County Clerk's office, immediately to the left of the counters, a door that leads directly into the employee offices typically remains wide open during business hours. This door should be closed and electronic key card pass should be installed on the outside. This door should remain shut at all times and only accessed by those with proper credentials. The employee area should be a private, separate area from the public and should not allow unregulated access into its work areas. While understanding this may cause some inconvenience in dealing with those who need to view records, security should never be compromised for inconvenience. The intent of having the counters are to provide a barrier

between employees and the public. Having an open door next to the counter area completely defeats that purpose.

The Zoning office contains an alarm, while the Land Records office does not. The Zoning office alarm was tested and does not function properly. This should be fixed immediately. At least one alarm should be installed in the Land Records office as well. As with all employee areas, there should be multiple alarms in each office area.

These areas should also contain at least one office or room with strong, quickly lockable door in case of lockdown situation. Also, all staff should be familiar with and trained in an active shooter preparedness plans.

## **Human Services**

The Sawyer County Human Services area is comprised of two areas with two reception areas--- one on the first floor and one in the lower level. The reception areas are similar in style. Access to the employee areas is restricted by doors that are opened via key code touch pad lock. Issues involving the services provided, or lack thereof, could cause members of the public to become angered. In the past several years, statistics have shown a significant increase in the number of violent outburst related to family court cases. The Human Services area is where much of this work involving family cases occurs.

### ***OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:***

While key code touch pad locks are adequate, general flaws with them are two-fold. First, the code never gets change. And second, customers can many times see what code is being entered into the key pad. This is not an ideal system. The electric key card system is much more secure and is much more difficult to defeat.

The reception area alarms were tested and did not function properly. This should be fixed immediately.

All staff office doors should be equipped with the ability to quickly lock their office doors from the inside. A lock on the door knob itself or a separate dead bolt flip type lock should be installed.

Clients are routinely taken back into the employee areas. An alternate practice should be created that would not put all employees in those secure areas at risk. The potential use of a room outside of the employee area, with an alarm and monitored via camera would be one potential solution.

Staff should be familiar with the alarm system. As with all employee areas, there should be multiple alarms in each office area.

Also, all staff should be familiar with and trained in an active shooter preparedness plans.

## **WIC AREA**

Located in the basement area, the WIC area interacts with many of the same clients who are involved with Human Services. As there is in the Human Services area, there is also a potential for conflict which could lead to a violent outburst.

### ***OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:***

While reviewing this area, numerous problems were observed. For the most part, the general public has unfettered access to many areas in which they should not. The staff at WIC, in talking with them, understand completely that there are many security concerns. The doors are left open from 8a-7p, all the while allowing for public access throughout. This practice is wholly unacceptable. Many of these areas could be secured via card reader access. The only area that the public should have access to is the waiting area. Currently there is a 'call button' to summon WIC staff and alert them that someone is in the waiting area. As it is now, someone could simply walk through the waiting area into any area that they would choose. This again, is not acceptable. Signage on doors that say "Clinic Staff Only" are not considered acceptable security measures. With some discussion with WIC staff, this area could be better secured at potentially minimal cost with some basic security policy changes and security upgrades using electronic key card access in that area.

It is also suggested that a secure door and wall be constructed just past the public bathrooms in the hallway area near office number 110. This door should be a heavy, fire door, with electronic card reader access for those with proper credentials.

Near the WIC area, there is also what could be described as a doored hallway/maintenance area that contains book shelves and a caged area for electronic type equipment. This hallway is left completely open for the general public to access for really no apparent reason. This hallway should be restricted to employees only via electronic key card reader access. This should be done as soon as possible.

This area should also contain alarms and staff should be familiar with the alarm system. As with all employee areas, there should be multiple alarms in each office area.

Also, all staff should be familiar with and trained in an active shooter preparedness plans.

## **DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

The Sawyer County District Attorney's office is on the main level of the courthouse. Like all District Attorney's offices, there is a potential for conflict at any given time. The employee area is accessed by electronic card reader. The counter area is high and is protected with glass.

### ***OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:***

The fire exit door should be alarmed and only used in cases of emergency. If it is being used in another manner other than for emergencies, the practice should be discontinued immediately.

The office contains an alarm that functions properly. However, staff previously complained that placement of alarm was causing unintended activation. Its current placement eliminated accidental activation, but it also made intentional activation almost impossible. Any alarm should be placed in an area that can be quickly accessed without looking under a stressful situation. This location does not fit that criteria and a solution should be found. Staff should be familiar with the alarm system. As with all employee areas, there should be multiple alarms in each office area.

Also, all staff should be familiar with and trained in an active shooter preparedness plans.

## **CHILD SUPPORT**

The Child Support area is located on the main floor of the complex. There is a high counter area with a glass document pass through. There is a 'greeting room' next to the counter area. This is an open area with lower wall/counter.

### ***OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:***

While the counter area is excellent, the greeting room provides the ability for a member of the general public to jump the counter and enter the employee area. The door between this greeting room and staff counter area should have electronic key card reader access on the outside of the door, and this door should be closed at all times. This change would prevent the above type access from occurring.

The alarm test revealed that the alarm functioned properly. Staff should be familiar with its access and should be able to activate it without looking. As with all employee areas, there should be multiple alarms in each office area.

There is a 'half door' to back offices. Even though it is locked, these doors should not be considered a secure door as they can easily be penetrated. This door should be replaced with a strong, fire door with electronic key card access.

Also, all staff should be familiar with and trained in an active shooter preparedness plans.

## **CLERK OF COURTS/REGISTER IN PROBATE**

The Sawyer County Clerk of Courts and Register in Probate share office space on the main floor of the courthouse. The Clerk of Courts area has two, small window areas with a document pass through. They have electronic key card access to the Clerk of Courts area. The Register in Probate has a 'half-door' that serves as an entrance as well as a counter area for dealing with the public.

### ***OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:***

The alarm test revealed that the alarm functioned properly. Staff should be familiar with its access and should be able to activate it without looking. As with all employee areas, there should be multiple alarms in each office area.

While having an excellent window area, the Register in Probate half-door eliminates much of the security that has been built into this area. The half-door puts all the staff in the area at risk as these doors can easily be penetrated. The door should either be eliminated and replaced with the same type of window as the Clerk of Courts office, or replaced with a fire door and electronic key card reader for employee access, with a third window being added for the Register in probate. The practice of opening the top half of the door to do business with the public should be eliminated as soon as possible.

Also, all staff should be familiar with and trained in an active shooter preparedness plans.

## **EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT/LAND CONSERVATION/COUNTY FORESTRY**

The Sawyer County Emergency Government, Land Conservation and County Forestry offices occupy a single hallway in the basement. Currently the general public has unfettered access to this area.

### ***OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:***

Typically, County Emergency Government offices are located in a much more secure area. There are two persons sharing a small office in which anyone from the general public has access. The recommendation would be to find a different space for Emergency Government--- one where employees and important information can be kept behind secure doors. The other option would be to expand the current area, have a high counter with window with lower document pass thru. The employees should not be exposed to direct contact with the public and should have a secure, private area for work space.

The Land Conservation office and Forestry office, while having more space, are wholly unsecure areas. During the tour, it was observed that the offices were open, but no one staff was occupying them. This could create numerous problems for staff in these areas. Also, current counter areas had an opening that would allow members of the public to access the employee areas. A recommendation, and one that may be the most cost effective, would be to combine the offices and have the two areas share a single window, with a high counter and document pass thru. The current doors could be used as employee only entrances, with electronic key card access to those with proper credentials.

The other, potentially costlier solution for all three offices would be to remodel the area and give all three offices their own window, with a high counter, with a window and document pass thru. This option would be much more difficult given the limited space in the Emergency Government area.

Each of these areas should have an alarm to summon a response in case of an emergency. As with all employee areas, there should be multiple alarms in each office area.

Also, all staff should be familiar with and trained in an active shooter preparedness plans.

### ***OVERALL BUILDING RECOMMENDATIONS:***

It is understood that there may be a current budget request to replace the existing phone system with a Voice Over IP (VoIP) System. If this is installed as a replacement, this system would then have the capability to install a duress alarm on each and every phone within the building, replacing the current alarm system, which is dated. These alarms are extremely fast and can summon multiple responses if programmed when activated. Systems typically work as long as the phone is operable and can be activated when someone is talking on the phone, whether the receiver is on or off the base. This system could work from the courtrooms, staff offices and any area where a phone could be placed. This duress alarm system could notify on-site security staff as well as an outside law enforcement response. Regardless, at least two entities should be notified if a duress alarm is activated. Implementation of this system would seem to solve a multitude of problematic issues with alarms in the Sawyer County Courthouse.

Consider ballistic film/panels for any windows or other areas that currently do not contain such material. Suggestion would be to prioritize areas of the building which should be considered vital for staff protection. Ballistic panels have become much more reasonably priced in recent years and can be installed by current maintenance staff. A typical 4'x8' sheet of Level III ballistic material costs \$500-\$750 and can be cut to fit by the installers.

Anything that could be used as a weapon should be removed from the public lobby areas and receptionist desk areas. Many times, violent outburst are unplanned and offenders arm themselves with something accessible to them within their reach. Place items out of reach and/or in drawers.

Electronic key card access should replace the majority of keyed doors. This system allows for much quicker access and employees are more likely to keep doors closed and secure. A card reader system should have strict limitations placed on where employees have access. Employees should also have access restricted by hours of operation, unless deemed necessary. In other words, law enforcement should have key card access to all areas, 24/7. However, an employee in the clerk of court office, should only have access to areas during their normal work hours, Monday thru Friday. Because this system also tracks who accesses areas—or attempts too—this system functions well and is much more secure than a door key system. Also, if someone loses a key, there is potential for high cost to replace door locks. If an electronic key card is lost, it can simply be deactivated and a new one issued. A terminated employees access card can be quickly voided as well. A system should be in place for managing keys and card reader access in an effort to better control access to the building. A policy should also be developed for this purpose.

Video surveillance cameras should have adequate data storage and should be accessible by on-site staff; data access however, should be limited. Data storage of this type typically is stored for 30 days, but may be less based on use. The vendor should be providing training as to how to access data and how long data storage will last.

It is recommended that a limited number of employees have access to the video camera live feed via desktop computer. Typically elected officials, department heads, and upper management people are included within this group.

A cell phone/video recording policy should be strongly considered for inside the courtrooms. The general recommendation would be to not allow audio, still photos or video recording of any proceeding unless permitted by order of the court.

Judges should never wear robes outside of the courtrooms, even in the private areas. This is a safety concern as it easily identifies a likely target. Robes should be kept as closely to the courtroom as possible and put on just prior to entering the courtroom and taken off immediately after exiting the courtroom.

All alarms should be tested regularly. Employees who work in their respective areas should be physically pressing the alarm during tests. They should be familiar with where the alarms are located and how they work. They should be able to locate alarms without looking for them. All employee areas should contain multiple alarms in different locations within their respective areas.

If on-site security is granted, they should have the ability to communicate amongst themselves as well as with other agencies responding to emergencies. Security staff should have earpieces and wired microphones from their radios to allow for private and quiet communication. They should have the ability to communicate with any local law enforcement agency who may respond to an emergency. The recommendation would be for each court to have security personnel in the courtroom whenever court is in session, as well as general building security.

Staff should develop emergency plans for fire, natural disaster and violent incidents if they do not currently exist. If they do exist, they should be reviewed and updated if needed. All staff should be familiar with those plans and they should conduct scenario based training for each. Plans should include designated shelter in place areas in case of lockdown. Those areas should have a strong, reinforced door and 360-degree ballistic protection with a quick locking mechanism contained on the inside. These areas should also have access to a land line phone. All emergency training should include local law enforcement and/or first responders if possible. Plans should be updated accordingly.

All offices should be equipped with doors that are quickly lockable from the inside. Exterior office windows should have shades or blinds closed, or they could be fogged with security window film. Windows in office area doors should also be fogged, frosted or tinted to not allow someone from the outside to easily view inside the room.

The private, employee areas should never be allowed to be seen by members of the general public as they should not be familiar with the layout. Bringing members of the public back to the private areas could create a potential security risk and should be discouraged. Staff should meet with members of the public in public areas whenever possible, preferably in a room with an alarm and security camera coverage. Doors into the private areas should never be propped open or locks disabled due to a secure door(s) being inconvenient. There should be a written policy regarding access to the private areas that includes this provision.

Sawyer County should require every employee to have a photo identification and that it be carried openly. Maintenance staff should have at minimum a uniform shirt so that employees recognize who they are as well. A key card reader and photo identification card should be two separate cards.

Currently Sawyer County has a walk-thru magnetometer which is occasionally used. As previously recommended, weapons screening should be enacted as soon as possible. If that is the case, an x-ray screening system should be obtained to view bags and packages, as well as hand-held wands for additional person's search. Many times thru Federal Government

equipment programs, local agencies can get this type of equipment for no cost. Simply contacting the Western District U.S. Marshal's office or T.S.A. headquarters may result in obtaining very useful, and fairly modern screening equipment for no cost.

All building staff should be trained and participate in scenario based active shooter training. Court personnel should undergo courtroom security training as well.

## **SUMMARY**

Sawyer County has a dedicated staff that is doing their best to make their building as safe as possible for all parties, given what they currently have. There is however, work to be done. They should continue to review and update their security policies and protocol and develop new polices as needed. They should prioritize needed updates and work to obtain those in a timely fashion.

Sawyer County should be continuously preparing themselves to deal with situations which may arise based upon the volatile situations that present themselves in a courthouse setting. The staff needs to maintain the attitude that given the emotional nature of this building, there will be problems, be they violent or otherwise.

These findings should in no way reflect a lack of knowledge or understanding of the problems they may face. They should continue to strive to be more safe and secure through knowledge, training, education and building or equipment upgrades whenever possible.

Respectfully submitted,

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