

# Bee Safe,



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**B**uilding owners, managers and tenants all have a vested interest in their property's security. Just as a homeowner cares for and nurtures his house, a building owner is protective and caring of his commercial home.

Homeowners habitually take steps each day to protect their property. These steps may include:

- ★ Locking the doors and closing the windows.
- ★ Bolting the deadlocks.
- ★ Setting the alarm.
- ★ Leaving on an outside light.

These are basic procedures that homeowners perform without hesitation or neglect. The same concept holds true for commercial buildings. There are security measures in place to protect the building and its property. These security measures must be maintained and respected by the building's cleaning crew and staff.

The cleaning crews in any commercial building must be aware, alert and comfortable in their surroundings. It is their duty to understand the security procedures and carry them out without fail each time they service the property. A guideline that can be followed and customized for each property is found below:

- ★ Never prop open or compromise building entrance doors/windows. Rectify these situations when you observe them.
- ★ Account for and secure keys. Don't leave keys unattended or give them to unauthorized persons. Report lost keys to a manager immediately.
- ★ Secure all areas when one is present.
- ★ Be aware of unfamiliar persons or visitors.
- ★ Be prepared: Take time out to familiarize yourself with building evacuation plans/routes.

- ★ Report suspicious tampering with physical security (doors, locks etc...).
- ★ Never allow someone to substitute for you.
- ★ Do not open the door for anyone after hours without proper identification.

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In addition to the steps mentioned above, crews must have formal training on each building's security measures. Alarm codes, pass cards, I.D. Cards, and keys must all be thoroughly understood prior to starting a job.

Bee Line Building Service and Supply has been serving Chicago and its suburbs for over 50 years. Over the decades security devices have evolved and so have Bee Line's training methods and employee development efforts. Bee

Line employees understand that it is their responsibility to not only protect the IMAGE of their client's buildings, but to also protect the PERIMETER. Many Bee Line employees have been with the company for decades and have fostered a very real attachment to their buildings. They want to make sure the buildings not only look their best, but also are secure.

However, as a company grows, new clients are brought on board along with new employees. It is at this stage that implementation and training is critical. Security starts beyond the doors of a building. Security starts with the persons entering a facility.

Bee Line Building Service and Supply currently provides janitorial and maintenance service to over 8 bank chains in the Chicago

**BY JAMIE VAN VUREN**

area. As this market began to grow for Bee Line, steps had to be implemented to ensure employees respected the importance of protecting the banks.

All potential Bee Line employees have background checks performed before hiring. Any discrepancy on a background check prohibits the company from hiring. Once hired, employees review and sign an Employment Contract. The employee must report that he or she fully understands Bee Line's security procedures for cleaning crews and is able to perform the required tasks. Each employee is issued a company uniform with clear identification and Bee Line key holders for his or her keys.

BSCAI training videos are shown to all new employees to familiarize them with basic cleaning and safety procedures. These videos further enhance professional cleaning methods and procedures.

Training on site is then executed amongst the employee, supervisor and operations manager. Bee Line area managers generally perform nightly security and image checks on all new client facilities up to two weeks after the start date. It is only after the employee has demonstrated complete ability to execute security measures that supervision is tapered down to a scheduled visit every 2 weeks.



Bee Line strictly prohibits employees to substitute other persons to do their work, a common problem in the cleaning industry. The employment contract clearly states that only the employee may enter the respective building and perform the work.

There has even been an instance in which a cleaning crew was over-protective of the building. A bank manager came to the door while a female cleaning person was working in the evening. The bank manager indicated that he did not have his key with him, but wanted to get back in the building. The Bee Line employee refused him entry! Although the manager persisted and showed identification, our employee held steadfast and even threatened to call the police. This is what we like to hear!

Proper training is critical to protect our client's investments. Each time an alarm goes off in a building, - particularly banks - a fee is charged back to the client. This reflects poorly on the cleaning service. It is bound to happen as your client base grows, however prevention is the best deterrent. Make sure the crews know how to cancel a false alarm. Have the alarm company's phone number handy and know the user code and password needed to cancel a false alarm, if the client provides them. It is recommended that the crew wait for the officers in front of the property in plain view. Remember that the officers responding probably do not know who they are, so they must be prepared to offer some form of identification which establishes their legal presence at the business. Once a police officer arrives, the crew must do exactly as told. Remember that responding to alarms is serious business for officers. Until proven otherwise, police officers must assume they are dealing with a crime in progress. Keep this in mind when an alarm is accidentally set off.

With proper training, high employee morale, close supervision and alert employees, building security can be manageable. Always provide positive feedback to employees for a job well done and keep the enthusiasm level in your company high.

*Jamie Van Vuren is President of Bee Line Building Service and Supply, a second generation family business started in 1958. She can be reached at [jamie@beelineimage.com](mailto:jamie@beelineimage.com).*

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