



Keith Wiley, General Manager at Moatlands Golf Club in Kent, looks at all aspects of security at the golf club with an emphasis on risk assessment and the appropriate action to mitigate possible losses.

Security conscious

Below: CCTV and security lighting can prove to be an effective deterrent

Top right: Visible and audible alarm systems are all part of the golf clubs' physical evidence that risk assessment has taken place.

The incidence of break-ins, thefts and vandalism at golf and leisure facilities up and down the country is continuing to conspire to add to the nightmares involved in trying to protect effectively acreage, premises, personal property and course equipment against criminal damage.

The real question facing course and facility managers is just how much protection can be realistically afforded to property before installation and maintenance costs become more of an over-riding issue.

It is an accepted fact that general alarm systems have historically been

the most effective and economic deterrent to would-be intruders, but the latter day technical advances in other areas of loss prevention such as close circuit television (CCTV) have seen the cost for even quite intricate systems become affordable to the smallest business.

Identifying the risks

The first priority when analysing security both internal and external is to undergo a rigorous risk assessment against what will inevitably be a constantly changing background. The areas most commonly exposed will, of course, be the clubhouse, professional shop, car parks, maintenance compound sites and the course itself.

Clubhouse

In times gone by most clubhouses would consider protection by linked-alarm (either to a specialist monitoring service or direct to the police or, more preferably, both these options) to be generally sufficient to deter intruders. However, with the uncertainties in police response time in a modern day environment, it has become logical good practice to think about supplementing existing devices with systems such as CCTV to extend not only the quality, but also the quantity of protection.

From the club's perspective the vital areas of cover are the immediate direct financial risks in stock, money and equipment. Thus the food and beverage areas of bar and restaurant, Pro Shop and the administrative offices are clear targets for the criminal and this is where small TV monitoring cameras can be an effective deterrent. They can provide real time protection and hard evidence of intrusion, theft and/or damage. In most instances





these individual at-risk areas should also be covered by an isolated alarm link within the overall system.

At most clubs, the probability is that the restaurant will only be open within certain limited hours, but the bar and lounge are normally open from start till finish and consequently demand far more rigorous monitoring and surveillance. Point of sale areas therefore are a major risk, so monitoring these coupled with coverage of the actual bar itself, will ensure that managers can feel that they are doing as much to the business as could be expected.

From the member and visitor's point of view the protection of personal effects within the clubhouse, although historically an individual's sole responsibility, can be facilitated by the use of electronic entrance/exit doors governed by swipe cards and also CCTV coverage of public places such as locker rooms and entrance and exit areas. Locker rooms are always a somewhat sensitive issue, as cautionary concerns over personal privacy being invaded have to be balanced with current demands for maximum loss prevention methods. At Moatlands, for example, members have taken a circumspect view of the thinking behind installing cameras in locker and changing rooms and prefer to feel comforted that their property is at least being watched over. The incidence of property loss, since the installation of these internal cameras has been almost entirely eradicated.

From the golf professional's standpoint, he ideally requires the comfort factor of knowing his stock and equipment are adequately protected, not only throughout the operating day, but after as well. It was a major break-in and theft from this area some years

ago that was to provide the final provocation for the installation of CCTV at Moatlands and again, the instances of reported theft and damage since installation have been non-existent.

The administration areas or back-room offices tend to handle the bulk of golf club receipts and although visually not the shop window of the operation, are nonetheless crucial areas that demand protection. Insurers would have already required that a safe be an integral part of the securing process and it is again a logical step to cover the entrance and exit areas of these essential parts of the building in some way or other.

The final area needing constant reappraisal is the club's trophy cabinet. Most of the cups, plates and other memorabilia stored therein would have incurred an intrinsic historic value which may on the surface be of little use to thieves, but that still does not deter them from taking everything that is not nailed to the floor. Individual photographs of the various items housed within the cabinet will therefore give added support to the recovery process and, if isolated alarm sensors can be used inexpensively within the same function, then insurers could not ask for more.

Professional Shop

In those facilities where the professional shop is situated externally from the main clubhouse particularly rigorous risk assessment needs to be undertaken, as this area has been traditionally the most vulnerable to intruders. Many clubs would have had the unhappy experience of losing stock due to insufficient monitoring systems and during daytime those criminals who operate in pairs or groups have historically found easy pickings where

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Security conscious

Right: Some of any club's prime assets are bound up in its course machinery. All ignition keys should be stored in a safe or special anti-theft key locker when the equipment is not in use



the professional or assistant is able to be distracted. The introduction of CCTV here though is the next best defence affording the professional at least a little support while his back is turned.

Although initially expensive and time-consuming the individual identification of each saleable item within the shop will add to the chances of recovery while the extra value of external security lighting should offer sufficient deterrent to satisfy insurers and put off the potential criminal.

Car Parks

The highest incidence of intruder activity stems from break-ins to cars parked in club car parks and left unattended for many hours. The protection of these sometimes remote areas is always difficult and CCTV again proves to be the most commonly used response as the committed thief will tend to be in and out quickly, sometimes with an accomplice in tow.

The introduction of security flood-lighting, that have hitherto been considered too expensive an option, can now be considered as more economic lighting options come to market. Lights with long duration use, controlled either manually or by sensor, are now widely available from proprietary security companies at a reasonable cost, enabling individual requirements to be tailored to meet the needs of the individual club.

Maintenance Compounds

Some of any club's prime assets are bound up in its course machinery and

equipment and this vital part of the operation must demand equally high attention to protecting them both night and day. Greenkeeping staff are habitually away from the compound for long periods of time during working hours and it has become good practice for irregular visits back to the base to be part of their daily drive to ensure that there is no set pattern to the absences.

A separate intruder alarm system here is a prerequisite and this should be linked to the police services by secure monitored line provided by a proven supplier such as B.T.'s Redcare. Evidence of thefts of greenkeeping machinery en masse have underwritten the necessity to provide cover for both small and large pieces of equipment alike with either a sophisticated radio transmitting device attached to each piece and/or a series of sensors activated by infra-red movement situated within outbuildings adding to the comfort factor. These may be supplemented by a governing control panel, which can report silently or provide an audible warning to scare intruders away. If all these protective devices are also overtly advertised to the casual onlooker, the additional provision of external security lighting and monitoring cameras will serve to underline the message to potential thieves or vandals.

The Course

Given the logistics of covering the sheer size of this part of the operation the golf course and the greens in particular are the very hardest areas to

defend comprehensively. Recent horror stories from The London Club, locally in Kent, who have over recent years experienced the most serious examples of premeditated and controlled vandalism, are lessons to all course managers.

Continued vigilance from both greens staff, members and the public are all necessary for the satisfactory protection of any club's most valuable asset.

The sheer cost of employing a specific security patrol operator as a last line of defence is normally the overriding conundrum. Most clubs will take the philosophical view that you can only go so far in protecting against what may or may not happen. This is clearly the last, and most expensive option, and if there are repeated or renewed attempts to gain illegal access to the course then this option needs to be given serious consideration. Clearly the constant monitoring of all access points to the course remains a necessity and all gates, fencing and boundaries should be securely locked and checked regularly.

In the final analysis Club Managers may in due course be driven by insurers' demands towards the installation of more sophisticated protection systems as premiums increase alongside an ever-growing claims experience. The very best that can be done in the face of such pressure is to provide physical evidence that risk assessment has taken place and that all reasonable actions have been taken to cover exposed areas.