

# Challenges and **solutions**

for controlling access  
to mixed-use buildings

Managing a mixed-use development presents property managers with *unique opportunities*, but also with *serious challenges*.

## Contents

Introduction .....	1
Challenges .....	2
Private vs. Public.....	3
How to establish a mixed-building security system .....	4
Enhancing systems and monitoring .....	5
Remote guarding .....	6
Access control .....	7
Access control integrations.....	9
Conclusion .....	10

## Introduction

There is a trend and a desire for mixed-use spaces that support a *live-work-play* lifestyle. Tenants want an in-house gym or a space for outdoor activities. People are getting used to working or studying from home and they need flexible mixed-use spaces that can accommodate all of their needs. This tendency indicates we are becoming increasingly dependent on our homes, which must cater all demands within the same building. Managing a mixed-use development presents property managers with unique opportunities, but also with serious challenges.

One of those challenges is creating a security plan with solid security solutions that can anticipate potentially dangerous situations and address threats. Mixed-use facilities, buildings that are used for more than one purpose, require a particularly personalized approach to security and a proactive rather than reactive response. There is not a *one size fits all* when there are both residential and commercial units, as well as office space underneath the same roof. Certain areas of the building may be more high risk than others and require stronger strategies and technologies. Other areas will require less effort and implementation.

The right solutions for a mixed-use facility will depend on a thorough risk assessment, a robust security plan, and whether the building is public, private, or semi-public, hours of operation, and more. Once the data is gathered, protecting mixed-use buildings from risks such as theft, loitering, vandalism, rioting, and even workplace violence could successfully be done with an adequate integration of remote guarding, access control, IP-door access, and smart elevator technologies.

## Challenges

There are two important challenges of managing mixed-use buildings. Besides communicating with retailers as well as with residents, coordinating shared spaces, and providing renters with a high level of service, it is vital to offer just the right level of security and meet tenants' expectations. In addition, when running business, work, and living spaces, property managers must be sure to protect people and assets and remain vigilant in developing security measures that address different issues and safety hazards.

**These are some of the considerations to address challenges:**

- Conduct a risk assessment to determine the level of security needed.
- Involve all shareholders.
- Embrace technology.
- Create the right level of security for each unit, depending on use of the space, e.g., a residential, commercial, or office space unit.
- Consider multiple facility locations.
- Encourage reporting of security threats.
- Have peace of mind of renters as the priority.

Providing occupants with safe communities that integrate work, home, shopping, and even green spaces requires knowing with certainty *what* needs to be protected, *why*, and *how* it will be protected to determine the level of security needed to address specific vulnerabilities, prevent unnecessary costs in installations, and enhance the safety of the mixed-use property.

## PRIVATE VS. PUBLIC



A large mixed-use building normally has public and private areas. Boutiques and restaurants, for example, are public and aimed at attracting people and not restricting customer flow. In addition, there are lobbies, elevator lobbies, parking lots, main entrances, and emergency exits and stairs that are also public and require a specific level of protection. There is even the risk of crowds in these places which might provoke a higher risk of incidents.

On the other hand, private areas such as residential units or offices are lower risk areas. Since most people are not allowed in these spaces, threats are less likely. It might even be a possibility that tenants in private areas manage their own security systems and have more control over what happens in their space, reducing the liability of the property manager.

Nevertheless, it is important to determine the operational needs of each specific tenant type and consider them a priority. With multiple functions and stakeholders in one building, owners, managers, and users want separation of use which allows crowds to be separated and security products and operations to be confined to each specific building use.

## HOW TO ESTABLISH A MIXED-BUILDING SECURITY SYSTEM

Potential security risks depend greatly on the type of building. With mixed-use premises, the implementation of commercial access control, video surveillance, intrusion alarms, sensors, video intercoms, and remote guarding must be differentiated to create the appropriate security system for each area in the property. To foster a secure living and working environment for tenants, the first step is to complete a risk assessment.



### Some of the questions to consider when executing a risk assessment are:

- How protected is the perimeter of the building?
- What is the nature of operation of each area?
- Is it private, semi-public, or public?
- What are the demographics of tenants and visitors? Are they a high-risk population?
- Do you follow a rigorous employment background check?

The answers to these questions can provide a better understanding of how high security needs to be for each area, as well as what best practices need to be followed.

## Enhancing systems and monitoring

In order to enhance the security systems of your mixed-use property, these are some of the steps that need to be taken:

1. Perform a risk assessment with a professional security company to determine the level of security the building needs.
2. Create a security plan that clearly establishes strategies, routines, and protocols to follow in order to prevent and respond to an emergency.
3. Implement a first-class access control solution that gives you the capability of disabling and enabling credentials immediately, generating audit trail reports, creating timed access to particular areas, providing retailers, workers, and residents with unique, touchless credentials for gates, units, and amenities; and locking and unlocking doors remotely with a smart device.
4. Integrate IP-based video surveillance in needed areas, at entrances, and around the building. Combine this solution with license plate recognition and intrusion detection systems.
5. Consider deploying environmental monitoring to offer a comfortable and safe place for each tenant.

Other physical security solutions worth adopting include remote guarding, different forms of access control, and cloud-based security systems.

## REMOTE GUARDING

Remote guarding is an outstanding solution, especially when mixed-use buildings are located in areas where break-ins, trespassing, pickpocketing, and other crimes are common. In such a case, finding a more comprehensive system to ensure protection, replacing in-person guarding with remote guarding, lowering risks and costs, heightening security with 24/7 monitoring, and getting access to advanced analytics on cameras is vital to effectively protect tenants, retailers, and assets.

A mixed-use space means that while there are shops, art galleries, and stores in the building, there are also private units that require constant monitoring to eliminate the possibility of guests ending up in restricted areas. It is necessary for owners and managers, at this point, to embrace technology and find sophisticated solutions that increase the security of the building.

### Consequences of not adopting remote guarding:

- Higher costs as manned security services are more expensive than remote guarding.
- Risk of reduction of property value for being in a heightened crime zone.
- Less possibilities of leasing new units. Loss in sales.
- Damage to property when break ins occur.
- Leases not being renewed as current tenants are not content.

To avoid the above issues, it is recommended that a new surveillance system is installed, outfitted with video analytics and artificial intelligence to detect anomalies and send timely alerts to trigger human intervention. Remote guards can help manage your property at all times, assisting you in simplifying your security, and providing you and your renters with peace of mind.







## ACCESS CONTROL

Some of the concerns of residents, retailers, and guests are having a safe environment and ease of entry and exit. Therefore, an advanced access control system is fundamental for increased security and convenience, peace of mind, and optimization of operations.

Staying with legacy systems is a mistake. Most legacy technologies are confusing and vulnerable to human error. Plus, they might still require staff on site 24/7 to keep the building secure and foot traffic flowing smoothly.

An intuitive, expandable, and flexible technology is required, with ideally the following features:

- Easy access from anywhere for programming or data management, which reduces the need for staff to be on site 24/7.
- Automatic software updates.
- Remote diagnostics to alert property managers when an entry code is being overused or if a suspended user is trying to get access to the building.
- Multiple access monitoring and control, for vehicular and pedestrian entry and exit points.
- Able to seamlessly integrate with other physical security systems.



For buildings that promote a live, work, and play lifestyle, security technologies should be categorized, considering the type of space they are protecting. They should also be integrated with other solutions to maximize ease and security of movements between the residential, retail, and business components.

Access control systems must be tailored to the needs and requirements of the area to be protected, but also environmental factors should be considered. For example, exterior zones are likely to be affected by weather conditions, seasonal extremes, and climate fluctuations.

In addition, man-made environmental factors, such as activity patterns, electrical fields, radio transmissions, and movements of people and vehicles have also to be regarded. Interior zones will generally be in more controlled environments, but still factors like electronic interference or vibrations should be taken into account.

It is also necessary to adhere to the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) guidelines for access control. In order to provide equal access to all persons with disabilities in your building, it is key to comply with the following requirements:

1. Provide adequate, well-lit signs (written, picture, braille).
2. Design hallways with adequate room for visitors in wheelchairs.
3. Provide adequate access to all keypads, intercoms, and elevator controls.
4. Follow ADA High and Reach requirements

## ACCESS CONTROL INTEGRATIONS

An important feature of a convenient access control system for your mixed-use property is how well it can integrate with other security platforms within the building.

**These are some of the integrations this type of buildings might require:**

- 1. Video Intercoms:** Video intercoms are an entry system that transmits both video and audio, allowing tenants and visitors to communicate through a video call. Some advanced commercial intercom systems enable tenants to open the door remotely for visitors. Provide adequate, well-lit signs (written, picture, braille).
- 2. Video Surveillance:** Having the access control system collaborate with an IPbased security camera system, enables property managers to control cameras, view live, and get historical video footage from a centralized interface. Both systems (access control and video surveillance) can provide a better perspective of the level of security of the property. Provide adequate access to all keypads, intercoms, and elevator controls.
- 3. IP-door access:** A door access system offers better security and ease of management at a lower cost than legacy options, since the communication between server and reader occurs over the Internet Protocol IP.
- 4. Elevator access control:** Authorized users verify their identities using PINs, keycards, fobs, or biometrics. Once the authentication occurs, the elevator will carry the individual to the requested level. This ensures people can move quickly and securely in the building and only access their own spaces and not wonder around the other floors, which can greatly increase the sense of security of inhabitants.

## Conclusion

Mixed-used buildings can increase a property's operating income, while naturally offering a network of business, work, and living spaces and promoting a more efficient use of land and infrastructure. However, they pose multiple challenges on property owners and managers, as every type of space within the building has disparate security needs. Serving multiple requirements for both residential and commercial residents necessitates a focused plan and differentiated solutions for each zone of the property.

When designing a security program for a mixed-use building, a risk assessment should be first executed by professionals. Performing a purposeful gap analysis of current security operations can allow the property to protect assets and inhabitants successfully, mitigate threats, avert incidents, and save money by reducing manned security on premises.

In addition, the latest technological solutions should be implemented to obtain measurable improvements and to minimize and address security-related issues. Remote guarding, access control, IP-door access, and smart elevator technologies are some of the solutions that could be adopted by administrators of mixed-used facilities to have an outstanding overall impact on safety.

Integration with other technologies is also important. Incorporating video surveillance and a visitor management system will not only enhance productivity and reduce your expenses starting on day one, but also improve the existing security in the building. Optimally managing a mixed-use property, retaining tenants and attracting new ones demands a comprehensive matrix of access solutions, constant consultation and collaboration with security experts, and a willingness to proactively meet the demands of renters.

Contact your local office today for an on-site, no-cost security assessment.  
For more information call **800.261.2041** or visit [security101.com](https://security101.com)