

# MITIGATING RISK REMOTELY

Security assessments are an essential component of an organization's security program given that protecting company assets is always a critical part of risk management. In order to strengthen your security program, you must be able to identify vulnerabilities that pose a risk to your business. Keep in mind that mitigation strategies require an unbiased approach when understanding the relationship between your organization's environment, human behavior and security vulnerability.

Without a regular assessment, it may become more difficult for your organization to remain focused on potential security vulnerabilities. Such assessments enable an organization to identify its strengths and unknown weaknesses, as all aspects of the security program go through a comprehensive evaluation. These assessments not only evaluate your organization's security program, but can play a part in helping you gain support for remediation, as well as provide guidance in risk management, planning, and security design processes.

## **Pivoting in a Crisis Situation**

How can you ensure the security and safety of your company during unique situations such as a pandemic or building closure? In recent months, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced many businesses to temporarily close their doors or operate remotely with limited staffing. In such a case, it may be prudent to turn to an outside consultant to conduct remote physical security assessments.

Your organization's involvement becomes crucial with remote assessments as the consultant must be able to facilitate and work in tandem with the onsite personnel to develop a deep understanding of the organizations security posture, corporate culture, and unique threats specific to the organization. The expected outcome is to develop an understanding of the business processes and protective measures currently in place. In a remote assessment scenario, the consultant, along with your staff, must form a partnership of open, honest communication. This is accomplished with key personnel providing critical details, including pertinent documentation that is reviewed by the consultant to establish an overall security impression and develop enhancement recommendations.

How long should the process take? It will depend on the desired scope, size of the facility, number of locations and business processes conducted onsite. It is important to note that the expected report may need to be produced as one complete document, or when necessary, in segments with the final report summarizing the consultant's findings.

Certain items under evaluation may require the consultant's physical presence to verify information or test processes

discussed. As the trusted advisor, the consultant must effectively communicate your role, remote activity expectations, and realistic limitations as the report findings must be plausible and accurately represent the information gathered, documents received, and tests conducted.

Expect a thorough report of findings measured against industry standards. Look for the findings to be ranked based on whether conditions meet, exceed or do not meet industry standards. In a case where your existing infrastructure meets industry standards, your consultant should provide 'future-proofing' recommendations to align with evolving security trends.

Additional needs that may arise from an assessment include:

- Security remediation management
- Security program master planning
- Security architectural design and/or project management
- Continued security management assistance
- Business continuity planning

While onsite/in person evaluation is best, remote security assessments are a viable option in surveying and evaluating security programs when travel is restricted, or unique circumstances arise. The goal is to provide insight without having to prolong liability of exposure to security vulnerabilities. While travel is restricted in most states, you should consider taking advantage of remote assessments to fortify your organization's security program.



## CONNIE BRANDON CPP

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Connie Brandon brings more than 20 years of business experience in roles such as: private ownership, human resources, payroll management, and physical security. Ms. Brandon's physical security responsibilities have included physical security operations and management, operational risk assessment and surveys, guard force management and training; emergency management; investigations; staff and budget management; policy and procedure development; project management, compliance audits, and contract negotiation. Brandon's market sector experience includes government, construction, healthcare, utilities, data centers, residential, global logistics, and corporate.