

# Preparing for a Possible Increase in Criminal Activity as a Result of Unemployment



In addition to deaths and cases of critical illness, unemployment is one of the most severe effects and an issue that will remain with us even after the virus begins to loosen its grip. Businesses are struggling with the current stay at home orders that, as of today, cover almost 90% of the U.S. population. Fewer people out and about translates into less economic activity, and many people are already unemployed because of the crisis. According to the latest reports, the unemployment rate for April is forecasted to be around 16%. These early numbers are a likely omen of what's to come with some estimates of a possible 20-30% unemployment as a result of COVID-19. Similar concerns are true for other countries dealing with this issue.

What will come from this?

The unemployed will have a difficult time making ends meet, creating a secondary and very difficult financial crisis for many. And, it is likely high unemployment will also result in an increase in crime, particularly property crimes. There has been extensive analysis on this subject in recent years. In 2015, a Georgia Tech study found that a rise in the unemployment rate led to an increase in violent crime and property crime rates. Similarly, analysis on this subject done in 2016 by Patrick Bennett, Assistant Professor, Norwegian School of Economics, and Amine Ouazad, Associate Professor of Economics, HEC Montreal, found a correlation between job displacement and crime. The result of a likely rise in criminal activity, especially regarding property crimes, can be problematic for all of us.

Businesses of all sizes should be aware of this possible increase in criminal activity and work towards ensuring their security stance is effective as they return to normal operations in the coming months. The actions below should be followed as soon as possible and on a periodic basis (yearly is a best practice):

- Conducting security assessments of facilities
- Reviewing security policies to identify gaps
- Providing security awareness training to employees
- Generally adopting a stance where keeping the workplace safe and secure is a priority

Ensure the physical and psychological safety and security of your organization. Talk to us.

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