

5 Steps

to Access Control

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*Upgrading your facility or building to an access control system can be a daunting task. There are so many things to consider that you may become overwhelmed. Our **5 Steps to Access Control** will help you plan the transition and enable you to move forward and get started!*

1 Assess your current situation

1

Access control is all about securing assets – people, merchandise, sensitive material, and physical objects – so take stock of the assets you have. What value do these assets have in relation to your business or operations? Are high-value assets stored in one place? Do you want to control who has access to these assets?

In this stage, try to also consider the short-, mid- and long-term vision for your access control system. Do you need to consider future expansion scenarios? Do you want it to be based on open standards so it can evolve in line with technology advancements? And speaking of technology, what kind of credentials do you want to use? A contactless card, key fob, or maybe a mobile phone?

2 Watch how people work

2

This step sounds kind of strange, but it's all about trying to uncover the culture of your workplace. Is the environment open and accommodating, or it is closed and controlled? Are IDs checked, especially when people kindly hold doors open for others? Are some doors more heavily used than others? Are any doors propped open during the workday?

It's important to understand these dynamics as the access control solution ultimately needs to reflect how people work and interact. There will always be a conflict between convenience and security – the trick is to create procedures and rules that balance these goals.

3 Take a security walk

3

Walking through and around a facility can be invaluable when developing an access control plan as it allows you to see how openings are used everyday.

Look at your building's surroundings – have they changed? Is the area being developed (gentrified) or is it experiencing a decline? And, what about the building itself – is it old? Does it have architectural or historical significance? How thick are the walls? All these factors have an impact on the type of access control system that could be installed.

While you're reviewing the security environment, think about what codes and standards apply to the building. For example, if your building is ADA compliant then the access control system will need to support that.

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Determine your requirements

4

Getting an access control system is a BIG decision. It takes a lot of resources to get it installed, so the choices you make today will likely be in place for many years. Think about:

- **Aesthetics:** Do you want your facility to stand out from the rest? Do you want sleek modern designs for your levers and card readers, or would a more traditional look fit better with your building?
- **Turnover:** Do you have heavy staff turnover? If so, think about having a system whereby access information is stored on the card itself, instead of in the lock. This way, you only have to update or delete the card if someone leaves.
- **Budget:** This is perhaps the most important business consideration when moving to an access control system! You may have to take a long-term planning approach – and upgrade your facility in stages instead of all at once. Develop a priority list to help you design your perfect system.

Engage with experts

5

It's always good to have a trusted partner that knows the many options available to help you find the best solution for your needs. They may recommend a single type of access control solution, or a combination of different technologies if your requirements are more complex. Many system integrators and lock manufacturers have a wealth of knowledge and experience that can help guide you through this entire process – from planning to project completion.

Whether you have a large or small facility, the considerations for developing and designing an access control system should be the same. The end goal is a system that offers the security you need, while providing a platform for future growth.

If you're ready for more information on preparing for a new access control system, please read our [Access Control System Planning Guide](#).

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