

## SURVEILLANCE & SECURITY DURING COVID-19

COVID-19 has forced many Casino Security and Surveillance practitioners to rethink their roles and how they can now best support the operational side of the business. While these departments continue their mission of providing a safe and friendly environment they must also examine how that mission looks in the current COVID-19 era. Security and Surveillance departments must work closely together to meet the needs and expectations of employees and guests.

Security officers now find themselves having to enforce social distancing rules and remind guests to use their facemasks. These same officers must approach certain situations differently than they would have pre-COVID 19. Departments have reimagined how they interact with the public and how they must respond to various incident types.

Many surveillance departments are at the center of casino's Contact Tracing efforts, while remaining vigilant in their search for advantage players and monitoring against employee theft. The resources and tools at surveillance's disposal make it a logical choice for gaming operators to use in mitigating the spread of the virus. Department managers are now faced with prioritizing reviews and monitoring the added workloads being placed on their individual departments or run the risk of becoming overwhelmed with review requests.

We would like to encourage all our community subscribers to participate in the discussions taking place on the ASIS Connects Gaming and Wagering Protection Council Community. Here you can post a question or respond to an issue from one of your peers. It is a wonderful resource that allows for increased collaboration among fellow Casino Security and Surveillance professionals.

### Reopening Protocols for Casino Operators

As gaming facilities continue to reopen, around the world, operators have implemented numerous safety protocols in an effort to protect employees and guests from possible exposure to COVID-19. In April, Wynn Resorts was one of the very first casinos to announce their health and safety plan. This proposal soon became the foundation that many other operators utilized to draft their own reopening plans.

As the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 continue to grow, the need to continuously examine and reassess safety protocols is even more important now as it was before casino operations resumed. Surveillance and Security practitioners have found themselves in the middle of these plans, if not in the

### Council Leadership

Robert Prady  
Council Chairman  
[Robert.prady@axis.com](mailto:Robert.prady@axis.com)

Alan Zajic  
Vice-Chair  
[alanwzajic@aol.com](mailto:alanwzajic@aol.com)

Donald Childers  
Vice-Chair  
[donald.childers@cnet.com](mailto:donald.childers@cnet.com)



development then defiantly in the support or execution of the overall plan(s). GWPC surveyed several Surveillance and Security Directors in an effort to identify “best practice,” what might the rest of us avoid, and considerations for the future.

When examining all the various reopening programs, one should always remember that one size does not fit all. In a rush to prepare a written reopening plan, several organizations were quick to cut and paste what others were doing and neglected to examine what elements best fit their operations and which ones were not. Successful plans hinge on simplicity. If a plan is overly complicated, unable to quickly pivot, or does not allow front line managers to make on the spot adjustments, it will not instill confidence in casino staff or guests and result in pushing patrons away and employees refusing to return to work.

### **What Most Operators are doing:**

- Deactivating every other slot machine
- Installing Plexiglas at cages and some table/card tables
- Increased cleaning efforts (gaming floor, office areas, hotels)
- Reduced seating at certain games and venues
- Requiring employees to wear a face mask
- Temperature screening of all employees and guests, before they enter the facility
- Providing face masks to guests (increasing number of casinos are requiring guests to wear masks)
- Reduced hours of operation (performing “deep cleaning” during non-operational hours)
- Increased signage and floor stickers that encourage social distancing
- Specific locations designated as enter or exit only into the facility
- Increased number of hand sanitization stations both back and front of house
- No self-service drink stations, all drinks are provided by F&B staff
- Employees are being asked a series of screening questions
- Casino departments are working staggered schedules- in an effort to reduce the number of employees entering the facility at one time

### **Some Unique Approaches:**

- Buffets that have been reopened require guests to be seated and servers bring their food and drinks to the table (guests are not allowed to approach the serving lines)
- Guests and employees are screened in their vehicles and provided with a wrist band to verify they were screened
- Creation of “Mask Free Zones” in order to obtain adequate facial views in certain areas (payout locations)
- Retail stores are appointment only
- Use of paging or texting services to allow guests to be screened before the casino opens and then be notified they may enter (simply show security their text message and allowed entry)
- Special seals are placed on hotel room doors (allows guests to know they are the first to enter the room after being cleaned)
- Each guest is required to present their state issued ID at the door (the ID is scanned by security- this allows for future Contact Tracing or Identification of individuals involved in suspicious activity)
- Use of magnetometers to monitor occupancy (sensitivity is reduced and each device is used to count the number of individuals entering the facility)

### **Areas of Concern:**

- Long lines forming while guests wait to be screened (this has also created some social distancing issues)
- Some touchless temperature kiosks have been found to be too slow and created long lines (some casinos have redeployed these kiosks to other locations where foot traffic is slower or as a backup for additional screening)
- A few casino operators are experiencing issues with guests complying with wearing facemasks. Many guests have found that they can walk around with a drink (sometimes an empty cup) in order to keep their mask pulled down
- Plexiglas dividers at slot machines that are frosted (limiting surveillance's ability to view activity)

As safety protocols continue to evolve, the GWPC will continue to provide information intended to help guide our members while they develop and update their own protocols.

### **Phil Who?**

It's hard to believe that before we were all forced to adjust to COVID-19 many of us were following Borgata's lawsuit against Phil Ivey and Cheng Yin Sun. After the news broke about Ivey being involved in utilizing edge sorting in order to provide him with an advantage over the house, the Borgata Casino in Atlantic City tried to seize Ivey's assets and garnish his 2019 WSOP winnings. It now appears that Ivey and Sun will pay a portion of the \$10.1 million in a settlement with the Borgata Casino (2016 judgement Borgata won against Ivey in the Federal district court based in New Jersey).



Earlier this month Ivey and the Borgata filed a joint motion in the U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals. In this motion, all parties moved for a stay of the proceedings and partial remand to the District Court. According to court records, the settlement is dependent upon the District Court setting aside particular orders and decisions. Once that requirement occurs, all parties can then move forward with their settlement and dismiss the appeal.

The settlement is also believed to include Sun's "Queen of Sorts" involvement in the scheme. In a related Nevada case, the Borgata won a judgement in late May allowing it to continue pursuit of Ivey's assets. The extent of the Borgata's legal win in Nevada may have contributed to the agreement in the New Jersey court. This settlement will allow Ivey to resume playing poker events in the United States, without fear of his winnings being seized.

### **Additional Resources:**

#### **Special Events During COVID 19**

<https://www.specialevents.com/event-tools/special-event-security-post-covid-19-considerations-planners>

## **COVID-19 Resource Links:**

**CDC:** Considerations for Casinos and Gaming Operations

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/business-employers/casinos-gaming-operations.html#know-how-virus-spreads>

**CDC:** Considerations for Events and Gatherings

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html>

**WHO:** Key Planning Recommendations for Mass Gatherings

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/key-planning-recommendations-for-mass-gatherings-in-the-context-of-the-current-covid-19-outbreak>

**Event Safety Alliance:** Reopening Guide for Event Professionals During the COVID 19 Pandemic

<https://www.eventsafetyalliance.org/esa-reopening-guide>

**Harvard Global Health Institute**

<https://globalepidemics.org/key-metrics-for-covid-suppression/>

**Hilton Defining a New Standard of Hotel Cleanliness**

<https://newsroom.hilton.com/corporate/news/hilton-defining-new-standard-of-cleanliness>

**Hilton CleanStay Program**

<https://www.hilton.com/en/corporate/cleanstay/>

