

IS CRIME ON THE RISE ALONG THE LAS VEGAS STRIP?



In late March, just as the pandemic was beginning to force the closure of countless businesses, law enforcement agencies held press conferences in an effort to reassure the public that their agencies had not observed any significant changes in the crime rate. They clarified that while some crime types had slightly increased, others were slightly down. During this same timeframe, law enforcement in southern Nevada had seen nearly a 5% dip in calls for

service (reinforcing the overall trend in criminal activity).

Fast-forward to late September and early October. An argument inside a Vegas Strip casino led to a struggle over a gun and a shot being fired into the floor. Then there was an incident outside the Paris Casino that left one person shot and two others injured. Within a very short timeframe various types of incidents began to increase all along the strip, and as a result nearly 1,500 people had been arrested and violent crime had increased nearly 4% since the previous year (all within the city's tourist corridor).

Law enforcement and security professionals have been analyzing some of the contributing factors that may have increased these activities. Prior to COVID-19 many casinos were instituting increased security measures to make sure guests were not bringing weapons onto property. Health risks forced the closure of many gaming facilities, and then the economic impact of the virus caused these same companies to lay off many of their employees. As a result, the companies scaled back many of their security measures. Security experts have also identified that Vegas' marketing strategy may also be playing a significant role in the rise of crime within the city's gaming resorts.

In an effort to attract gamblers back to Vegas, resorts began offering cheap or free hotel rooms to players that never would have previously qualified for such compensations. With a focus on getting bodies back to the strip, casinos have been digging deeper into their databases and extending offers to players who are not as lucrative. As a result, maintenance calls due to destruction of rooms are at an all-time high at many of the high-end casino resort locations. Another contributing factor of the pandemic has been the increased unemployment and furloughs, thus increasing the number of people, especially those from outside Nevada who are in a position to take advantage of free or reduced stays in Las Vegas.

Recently, several Resorts have started increasing security measures in an effort to combat this rise in violence and restore confidence that the strip is safe. Some locations are now requiring guests to be

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screened and bags checked before they enter. While others are limiting visitors to only those who have a hotel or dinner reservation or players with a rewards card (all other guests are turned away at the door). These added measures and the additional uniform and plain clothes officers hope to reassure the public that Vegas is still a tourist friendly destination.

The GWPC will continue to monitor these developments and discuss what security measures appear to be successful, which ones are sustainable, what innovative technology is being utilized, and what our surveillance and security practitioners as well as law enforcement are reporting about the crime trends in and around the resort corridor. We are also interested to know what you are experiencing at your property. Email a member of Community Leadership and let us know what kinds of trends you have been noticing since reopening your facility.

<https://www.ktnv.com/news/cosmopolitan-of-las-vegas-increasing-overnight-security-during-weekend>

Avoiding COVID Fatigue

There are few aspects of the casino industry that have not been impacted by COVID-19. Operational departments have spent the past several months redefining and reimagining how the hospitality industry needs to operate under these new conditions. Security and Surveillance teams are not immune to the risk of burnout and overload. Our staff is already performing a mentally challenging job and they continue to manage and perform their daily tasks. The added duty of enforcing social distancing and reviewing incidents of possible spread of the virus, increased cleaning of their workspace and the facility as a whole, intervene when necessary (while keeping yourself and other officers safe), all while juggling a family life that has also been upended by COVID-19.

Unlike a number of departments within our industry, security and surveillance staff are limited on the number of individuals who can call out sick or even telework before operations are directly impacted. As a result, we are now asking more from our team members than ever before and left unchecked, the mental strain could have very negative results.

Suggestions for avoiding burnout among your teams:

Restructure your COVID Response

- With processes surrounding COVID now part of the new “Business As Usual,” consider working with your human resources and or safety departments to better filter potential risks and only engage surveillance and security on possible exposures with the greatest risk.

Staffing

- Consider modifying schedules that allow for employees to work more days in a row but have increased days off. They would work several days in a row one week and have increased number of days off the following week (all while working the required number of hours for full time employees). This will also limit the level of exposure to other employees (you can mitigate the risk to other employees).
- If your organization has received CARES ACT funding, inquire about using a portion to cover overtime costs (your schedules are being modified as a result of COVID-19)

Warning Signs

It is impossible to completely remove stress from the environment we operate. Providing training and positive coping skills can assist your staff in dealing with the increased stress, while reducing the potential for burnout. Other considerations:

- Monitor staff for signs of depression, anxiety, insomnia, and/or fatigue.
- Encourage staff to speak with their supervisor and take advantage of your organization's Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

When COVID-19 first hit many of us adapted our Crisis Plans to fit this circumstance. Even with the prospect of a vaccine in the near future it will be some time before enough people receive it before COVID no longer impacts us. With this in mind, many of our crisis plans were never designed to be sustained for such a long period. We must adapt and determine the best methods to accomplishing our goals while keeping our employees safe.

Please let us know what your organization is doing to help improve conditions at your facility. Email a member of our community leadership or make a post on our ASIS community page through ASIS Connects.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7330556/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7319488/>

Casino Fined for Unlawful Detention of Guest



The Nevada Gaming Commission fined Boyd Gaming \$300,000 for their handling of an alleged theft of another player's credits.

An internal investigation of the incident also revealed that staff failed to adequately review surveillance footage and EGM records. The guest was detained for 90 minutes and paid the casino \$200 of her own money before she was allowed to leave.

The guest reported the incident to the casino. The casino's compliance staff conducted a review and self-reported to Nevada gaming officials.

<https://www.casino.org/news/boyd-gaming-to-pay-300k-fine-for-apprehension-of-fremont-casino-player/>

Crown Casino Investigation Update

Recently there have been several news reports coming out of Australia concerning the investigation into the business practices of Crown Resorts Ltd. by the NSW Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority. Australia's financial-crimes regulator, Austrac, launched its probe into suspected money laundering violations after a 2019 assessment into how the company handled individuals deemed to be high-risk and politically exposed.



According to various media reports, it appears that at the heart of the investigation is Crown's relationship with Macau's largest junket operator, SunCity. In 2007, AUSTRAC warned Crown that SunCity's CEO was a Politically Exposed Person (PEP) and had an extensive criminal

history. Crown had told regulators that the company had a robust process for vetting junket operators, but the company chairperson, Helen Coonan, has admitted that her company facilitated money-laundering activities at their Melbourne location. She also denied that the company had “turned a blind eye” to criminal activity and blamed it on ineptitude or a lack of attention within her organization.

<https://www.casino.org/news/crown-resorts-chair-admits-aml-breaches-claims-incompetence/>

Cullen Commission Exams Reported Money-Laundering



Reports of money laundering, loan sharking and other illegal activities continue to be at the center of attention surrounding the River Rock Casino in Canada. Two BCLC investigators recently told members of the Cullen Commission, how casino staff was not reporting as suspicious any cash buy-in of small denominations under \$50,000 (when there was no legal threshold and any amount could be considered suspicious). Investigators told the commission that Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch managers only wanted reports involving larger buy-ins. Other reports indicate that the B.C.

Lottery Corp. did not have the authority to crack down on suspicious transactions and the RCMP lacked the resources to conduct investigations into illegal activities.

The Cullen Commission is expected to wrap up next year. The GWPC will continue to monitor and provide updates on any additional developments surrounding the activities at British Columbia’s largest casino.

<https://www.casino.org/news/bc-lottery-corp-denies-helping-river-rock-casino-flout-aml-laws/>

<https://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/river-rock-casino-didnt-always-fulfil-reporting-rules-for-cash-buy-ins-inquiry-told>

\$5 Million Casino Fraud- 2 Sentenced, 6 Others Also Guilty



Four employees at the Miccosukee tribal casino in Florida tampered with electronic gaming machines in order to generate false credits on the machines.

They targeted older EGM’s that had been converted from coin operations to TITO. The employees would pretend to repair a machine, when in fact they were using a wire to trick the machine into thinking coins were being inserted into the machine (thus running up false Coin-In amounts).

<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/florida/articles/2020-07-21/2-sentenced-in-5m-casino-fraud-theft-6-others-also-guilty>

Additional Headlines & Resources:

Investors put Crown on notice after inquiry revelations

Minority investors have put Crown Resorts on notice they expect answers about James Packer's level of influence on the business along with improved legal compliance...

Crime Insurance Failing to Keep Up With Cyber Criminal Innovation

Many crime insurance companies fight computer fraud insurance claims regularly.

Northern California casino shut down by cyber attack

N. California's Cache Creek Casino Resort confirmed that it was the target of an outside attack.

Ransomware Victims That Pay Up Could Incur Steep Fines from Uncle Sam

Companies victimized by ransomware and firms that facilitate negotiations with ransomware extortionists could face steep fines from the U.S. federal government if the crooks who profit from the attack are already under economic sanctions.

US Supreme Court Rejects Oklahoma Lawsuit Against Tribal Gaming Manufacturer

VGT will not be required to pay property taxes on its distributed gaming terminals. But there are numerous other tribal gaming lawsuits that remain undecided in Oklahoma.

Mashpee Gaming Authority Subpoenaed by Federal Grand Jury Over \$1 Billion Massachusetts Casino Proposal

Federal authorities have requested the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Gaming Authority turn over to federal grand jury documents related to the tribe's proposed \$1 billion casino in Taunton, Mass.

NFL Player Charged for Role in \$24 Million COVID-Relief Fraud Scheme

A National Football League (NFL) player has been charged for his alleged participation in a scheme to file fraudulent loan applications seeking more than \$24 million in forgivable Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans...

Judge Approves \$800 Million Las Vegas Shooting Settlement

A court on Wednesday approved a total of \$800 million in payouts from casino company MGM Resorts International...

Two Man Charged after Alleged Betting Scam at Star Casino

Two men, including a former employee, have been charged over their alleged involvement in a betting scam at Sydney's Star casino that reaped thousands of dollars, including casino chips valued at nearly \$170,000.

FinCEN Director Kenneth Blanco's remarks to ACAMS AML Conference

Casino/Card Club (Casinos) industry filed almost 600 SARs, accounting for less than 1 percent of all COVID related SAR filings.

Treasury, IRS silent on raising the threshold for jackpot paperwork

The low threshold for issuing an IRS Form W-2G is becoming a bigger problem for the industry.

Contactless Security Screening Measures Certification

CSSM provides standardized security screening training protocols based on certification standards that will be adopted and utilized to enhance COVID-19 health and safety practices...

Wynn Resorts' Health Expert Advising on National COVID-19 Policy

A health consultant who helped Wynn Resorts shape its response to the coronavirus pandemic will advise presumptive President-elect Joe Biden's COVID-19 task force.