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Special Section

Security

Keeping property safe through the use of window film

By Luc Goemaere

One of the growing concerns for the hospitality industry is how to improve safety and security. Window film is a retrofit solution, applied to the inside of existing glass, which helps hotel owners and managers effectively improve safety and security, while also helping to conserve energy and block ultraviolet light, which is the main cause for the fading of hotels' expensive interiors.

Every facility in the hospitality industry, regardless of size, construction or location, has areas of vulnerability. Those areas are where attacks, either from natural disasters or intentional destruction such as a break-in, can be made on guests, employees and the property. No matter how well guarded, structurally reinforced or fortified, every building shares the same chief vulnerability — glass windows.

Hotel windows pose a number of threats — when shattered, razor-sharp glass pieces can cause injury, property damage and even fatalities. And undoubtedly, windows are the easiest way to access guests' valuables and property.

Threats facing the hospitality industry

Environmental changes are resulting in more tornadoes, hurricanes, typhoons and cyclones throughout the world. Natural disasters can cause millions of dollars in property damage and destroy thousands of lives. In 2005, Hurricane Katrina resulted in insur-

ance companies dropping policies and increasing premiums, not only in the disaster areas, but across the nation.

Because of this, there is a growing need for those in severe storm zones to protect their guests, employees and property from the threat of broken glass. Once a window shatters, the building's interior becomes compromised, endangering everyone and everything inside the building.

Moreover, burglary trends and property vandalism continue to rise. According to FBI's Unified Crime Report, almost 70 percent of all burglaries involve forced entry through a window or door; unfortunately, hotels and resorts are part of this staggering statistic.

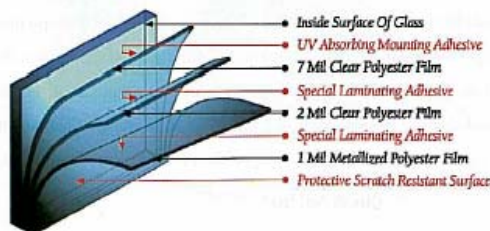
In addition to break-ins, hotels and restaurants everywhere continue to face the threat of terrorism. Should an explosion occur, the resulting shattering glass would pose a threat not only for those inside the building, but those in surrounding areas as well. When this happens, overpressure is created, projecting glass particles at speeds of up to 150 mph.

Benefits of window film

Safety film reinforces the existing glass and helps hold broken glass together in the event of an incident, greatly reducing the chance of injury and property damage. Professionally installed safety film is an optically clear polyester glass coating, making it completely unobtrusive. Unlike permanent alternatives that block the view, such as bars or shutters, or temporary alternatives that are a hassle, such as plywood, safety and security films are completely transparent, offering a constant passive barrier. The film is installed quickly, avoiding all drilling or other construction, and the normal business routine continues virtually uninterrupted.

An additional benefit of safety and security films is that they block nearly 100 percent of damaging ultraviolet light, which is the major cause of fading inside a hotel. And some films provide even more solar-related benefits: increasing energy efficiency,

Typical 10 Mil Safety Film Construction



Protecting buildings around the world

Because of multiple benefits, safety films are becoming more standard in commercial buildings. At **Salt Lake City International Airport**, it was important to protect travelers from terrorism and civil unrest. At **Pacific Resort** on the Cook Islands, safety film was installed to protect vacationers from the ever-present threat of tropical storms. And at the **Cooperative Bank** in England, safety film is protecting citizens' assets.

In Haiti, window film played an extremely important role in protecting **PromoBank** from vandalism and rioting during the overthrow of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February of 2004. The tough tensile strength and powerful adhesive of safety film sustained blows from Molotov cocktails, rocks and other projectiles. Safety and security films make illegal access much more difficult and less likely to occur.

reducing solar load, improving climate and diminishing glare and heat gain.

When high winds, hail storms, earth tremors or other disasters threaten the stability of a building, professionally installed safety and security films consistently hold windows and glass firmly intact — keeping lethal glass shards away from guests, employees and property.

Selecting the right window film

The newest, state-of-the-art safety and security film is made from only the highest-quality materials, such as tough, high-tensile polyester and ultra-strong mounting adhesives. Typically, a range of clear and solar control versions is offered, in thicknesses starting from 4 to 14 Mil (100 to 350 microns) and beyond, meaning that hotel guests will still be able to enjoy the view from their rooms.

With many options available on the market, a professional window film installer should consult with facility owners and managers to ensure that the right film is applied. In addition, professional film installation maintains and reinforces the integrity of existing glazing systems. For the best protection and retention of shattered glass, professional installers will advise on different anchoring options.

Safety and security window films have passed some of the toughest government and consumer testing to provide effective hurricane window protection, blast mitigation and overall window safety, making it one of the best investments for large facilities.

Because safety and security films are flexible and able to stretch, they can absorb a significant amount of the shockwave resulting from an explosion. Ordinarily the force would push glass inward to the point of breaking, sending shattered glass through-

out the building and jeopardizing everything in it. However, with safety film, even after the glass breaks, the film is able to bend with the force of the wave. After it is pushed from the frame, it bonds the broken glass shards to the film, protecting the interior of the building.

Solar safety and security films provide the optimum protection for the hospitality industry, acting as an active barrier against energy inefficiencies and a passive deterrent for all safety and security problems — natural and man made. ■

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