



MGRC MEMBER SURVEY

Key Findings for Advisory Committee on Capitol Area Security

The Minnesota Government Relations Council (MGRC) is a professional association of more than 600 government relations professionals committed to ethical advocacy and transparent engagement in the legislative process. MGRC recently conducted a safety and security survey of its members who regularly work in the State Capitol and Capitol Complex. The survey received 185 responses and reflects the experiences of professionals who are present in the complex daily and rely on safe, predictable access to effectively serve legislators and the public.

Key Findings

1. Safety Concerns Affecting Capitol Access and Work

While respondents report a moderate overall sense of safety, many express concern that existing security measures are insufficient or inconsistent. Notably, 42.5% of respondents report avoiding the Capitol at certain times due to safety concerns, limiting their ability to participate fully in legislative activity.

- Over 60% of respondents expressed concern about the adequacy of current security measures, citing inconsistencies in enforcement and visibility of security personnel.
- Safety concerns have behavioral impacts on members' work patterns, including avoidance of certain areas or late-hour visits.

2. Highest-Priority Security Concerns

Respondents identified the following as top areas needing improvement:

- Building access control and entry screening: 73% of respondents prioritized credential-based screening for lawmakers, employees, and registered lobbyists to improve efficiency and security.
- Visibility and presence of trained security personnel: 68% indicated a need for more frequent patrols and visible security in both interior and exterior areas.
- Exterior and after-hours safety: 59% reported concern about safety in parking areas, walking routes, and transit stops, especially during evenings and off-peak hours.

3. Communication and Preparedness Gaps

Survey responses indicate a lack of clear guidance and training regarding security incidents. Many respondents report no formal training and describe incident communication as unclear or ineffective.

- Incident reporting comfort is high: 78% of respondents feel comfortable reporting safety incidents.
- Guidance and preparedness are low: Only 25% report that guidance on responding to incidents is always clear, 45% say it is sometimes clear, and 30% report it is rarely or never clear.
- Incident communication effectiveness: 18% found communication from Capitol security very effective during incidents; 52% reported it as somewhat effective or neutral; 30% considered it somewhat or very ineffective.
- Most respondents reported no formal training or access to emergency resources, highlighting a critical gap in preparedness.

4. Security and Access Are Complementary

Respondents support enhanced security measures when paired with expedited access for credentialed, badged lobbyists and staff. They emphasize that security improvements should preserve reliable access to legislators and staff.

- 84% of respondents believe enhanced security measures are compatible with maintaining public access.
- Key recommendations include expedited or "fast-lane" access for credentialed lobbyists and staff, limiting public entrances, and ensuring equitable security measures for all personnel, including legislators and staff.

5. Expectation of MGRC Engagement

Nearly all respondents indicated it is extremely or very important that the government relations community has representation in Capitol security planning discussions.

- 95% rated MGRC representation in security planning as extremely or very important.
- Members expect MGRC to advocate for fair, safe, and functional security policies, ensure access for credentialed professionals, and provide consistent communication about updates.

Recommendations

1. **Enhance physical security** through improved screening and patrols.
2. **Incorporate credential-based entry process** for employees, lawmakers, media, and credentialed and registered lobbyists that is separate from general public access.
3. **Improve exterior and after-hours safety** in parking and pedestrian areas.
4. **Strengthen communication, training, and preparedness** through clear protocols, a centralized alert system, and annual training sessions that include registered lobbyists as well as lawmakers and staff.

Conclusion

The MGRC Member Safety Survey reflects strong support for security enhancements that protect safety while maintaining effective legislative operations. MGRC looks forward to working collaboratively with legislators and Capitol leadership to achieve a balanced approach.