

## Philosophy and Rationale for Effective Organization Security in Nigeria Local Government Councils

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Received 8 April 2012; accepted 18 June 2012

### Abstract

The success of any organization irrespective of size or nature depends, to a large extent, on the effectiveness of security within the organization. The need for effective and efficient security in local government councils in Nigeria is long overdue. Local governments in Nigeria in addition to old security problems facing the councils in the past, now face new complicated and sophisticated ones. These are: protection of sensitive information from theft, loss or damage; emergence of organized crime such as arson, murder, fraud, and drugs; riots, demonstrations, civil disorders and work to rule; losses by fire, theft, fraud, damage and natural disasters; theft no longer has the criminal stigma attached to it, etc. The society seems now to support anyone who makes money dishonestly without bothering to find out how such money was made. The inability of local government councils to employ and retain competent and trained security personnel to guard against these numerous security problems to which the system has been vulnerable over the years leaves much to be desired. The managers and administrators of the local government councils in Nigeria should be implored to take the necessary steps to educate the staff on the importance of good and adequate security at all times. For good security to exist in a local government council, it is recommended that the following areas have to be examined at all times: security planning; the security policy; access control procedures; the security manager; the security survey and preventive measures. Adequate funding and good governance are equally complementary to good security.

**Key words:** Local government council; Security; Effective organization and Nigeria

Basil C. Nwankwo, Stephen Ocheni, Moses Atakpa (2012). Philosophy and Rationale for Effective Organization Security in Nigeria Local Government Councils. *Management Science and Engineering*, 6(2), 111-119. Available from URL: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/mse/article/view/j.mse.1913035X20120602.3048>  
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/j.mse.1913035X20120602.3048>

### INTRODUCTION

The success of any organization irrespective of size or nature depends, to a large extent, on the effectiveness of security within the organization. Considering this fact, security which was originally provided by government is now also provided by non-governmental individuals and organizations. These constitute private protective services. The major difference between government and private protective service is that the former engages more in law enforcement with less emphasis on property protection while the latter emphasizes on property protection.

There are two types of private protective services –proprietary and commercial. Proprietary security programmes are developed for the benefit of individual organizations for the purpose of protecting their assets from any form of loss while commercial protective programmes are developed and sold to clients needing such services. In Nigeria, the private guard companies and all those who supply other security services and equipment belong to this group.

### RATIONALE FOR ORGANIZATION SECURITY

The need for efficient and effective security in organization especially the local government system

cannot be over-emphasized. Local governments in addition to old security problems facing the councils in the past, now face new complicated and sophisticated ones which include:

1. They have to protect sensitive information from theft, loss or damage.
2. There is now the emergence of organized crime such as arson, murder, fraud, and drugs.
3. Peace and order in local government council are frequently threatened by riots, demonstrations, civil disorders and work to rule.
4. There is increase in losses by fire, theft, fraud, damage and natural disasters.
5. Theft no longer has the criminal stigma attached to it. The society seems now to support anyone who makes money dishonestly without bothering to find out how such money was made.

The inability of local government councils to employ and retain competent and trained security personnel to guard against these numerous security problems to which the system has been vulnerable over the years leaves much to be desired. This is why managers of local government councils should take the necessary steps to educate the staff on the importance of good and adequate security at all times.

For good security to exist in a local government council the following areas have to be examined:

- Security planning;
- The security policy;
- Access control procedures;
- The security manager;
- The security survey;
- Preventive measures.

### **Security Planning**

For a local government council to enjoy good security, it must consider security as a management issue deserving a serious investment of resources. Security planning must be supported at the highest level of the organization. A local government security plan will be most effective if it is coordinated among the various departments and/or areas of activity involved in maintaining security.

The basic components of security planning include:

1. Prepares a written security policy. If appropriate, form a security planning group to help develop policies and procedures. Always ensure that the policy is endorsed at the highest managerial level.
2. Appoint a security officer to develop and implement your security plan.
3. Perform a security survey to assess your needs
4. Initiate preventive measures such as:
  - Eliminate weaknesses to ensure security of the building.
  - Install appropriate security systems.
  - Ensure that adequate inventory records are kept.
  - Establish staff regulations.

5. Identify likely emergencies and plan your response to any breach of security. Tell staff what to do, practice response plans and coordinate plans with outside officials.

6. Maintain and update your security plan.

### **The Security Policy**

Every local government council should develop a written security policy that underlines a commitment to security management. The policy should include statement supporting security planning, prevention of incidents, and the implementation of response procedures. Staff in all areas of the local government should be involved in drafting both policy and procedures. An important part of the security program will be regular policy review and updating. If a security program is to be effective, there must be widespread understanding of the importance of security to the missions of the local government.

### **Access Control Procedures**

Access control is vital to the success of any security programme. Movement of people and vehicles are to be controlled within local government council premises to eliminate confusion, and to limit hazards to people, control thefts and damages and reduce the incidence of fire outbreak.

The reasons for efficient control of all access points in local government council premises can be summarized as follows:

- To see and check who and what comes in and goes out;

- In both cases the control is to ensure that there is the necessary permission or authorization for access.

- In the case of incoming persons or traffic, the reason is also to ensure that direction is given or escort provided where necessary to correct persons or place and to cause a record to be kept of all such persons and vehicles.

The security officer posted to access points should always ensure by the inspection of delivery notes etc. that the load carried is in order and exactly as detailed in whatever papers the driver is carrying. His inspection must be thorough and efficient and he should never permit the driver to push him into rushing it until his doubts have been dispelled.

It has been observed that drivers and other visitors intent on doing unlawful things have used some tricks to enter local government premises. Such tricks include name-dropping. This is a situation where a driver/visitor uses the name of a senior member of the establishment and claims that he came in accordance with that person's invitation.

In some other cases, they produce notes from a fictitious organization which purports to be given instructions to collect goods. In other cases, a driver says, "I have come to collect that stuff I could not take yesterday" or something similar to indicate that he is returning for a second load. There are other stories all

of which indicate the need to check thoroughly before allowing a vehicle or visitors through.

It is very necessary to check the documents of the drivers of vehicles arriving at the local government premises for the following reasons:

-To check his bonafide identity: Is he the person he says he is? Where applicable to, check the load he is carrying;

-To ascertain the reason for his visit so that contact can be made with the person or department concerned before he proceeds further;

-In order to ensure that he has proper authority allowing him to enter;

-To ensure that the documents he is carrying are genuine;

-To record the particulars of both driver and vehicle.

For an access control programme to be effective, some areas are designated restricted areas. This type of restricted areas depends on the nature, sensitivity or importance of the activities, operations or information involved. Restricted areas are established to provide the following:

-Effective application of necessary security measures and exclusion of unauthorized personnel.

-Intensified controls over such areas requiring special protection.

Sometimes these areas are demarcated by physical security barriers. In providing those barrier protections a number of duties are performed by security men such as control of unauthorized entries, employee identification, control of visitors, vehicle control systems, lock and key control, and alarm communication.

Entrance to restricted areas must be supervised. Record of all who make use of these entrances must be kept. Entrance must be restricted to one gate or door for easy control of movement.

A security officer posted to the access points should always be courteous, helpful, but firm in checking the bonafides of the visitors. The officer should do his best to ensure that the visitor leaves him with the feeling that all that is possible had been done for him.

### **Electronic Access Control**

Electronic access control is achieved through alarm systems. These alarms are fixed at the entrances, doors, contacts, and window contacts and with the CCTV cameras installed in the local government a good access control system would have been put in place. All internal doors, such as computer rooms, registry, administration, finance, personnel, and supply room – any area with valuable or confidential material – are to be protected by the alarm system and the CCTV monitors.

### **The Security Manager**

A security manager which in our common parlance is often addressed as Chief Security Officer (CSO)

should be appointed to coordinate security planning in the local government council. The appointee must be knowledgeable on security matters and should possess appropriate training and skills preferably a retired police officer, State Security Services Director (SSS) and a military officer.

The security responsibilities of the officer so appointed should be clearly stated and incorporated in the appointment letter. The chief security officer or manager should prepare regular assessments of the program and work to improve systems and procedures as needed.

The chief security officer will need to work with staff members that have contact with the sensitive units in the local government. The appointee must have direct access to the Chief Executive (Chairman), and sufficient authority both to coordinate preventive efforts among the staff and to act during a security emergency.

### **The Security Survey**

Before initiating or upgrading a security program, an assessment of current and projected needs is recommended. The chief security officer should make a systematic study of the facility and its operations. This survey should evaluate current security policies and procedures, identify potential areas of risk, and rank security threats according to the probability of occurrence. This will allow the local government to concentrate on the most serious first, and it will assist in long-term planning and budgeting. A survey looks at the following:

(i) External perimeter and interior areas for inadequacies, such as proximity in other facilities which pose a risk, inappropriate intrusion detection and signaling, poor lighting and inadequate locks;

(ii) Current policies and procedure guarding both staff and visitors;

(iii) Any past problems and concerns identified by staff or others.

### **Preventive Measures**

Once a survey has been completed, it is likely that improvements in preventive security measures will be needed. Activities designed to prevent loss, theft, damage and other security problems in the local government fall into several categories which are discussed below as follows:

Conditions Promoting Theft in Local Government Councils and Preventive Measures

One of the basic duties of local government management is to discourage conditions promoting theft in the system. Those theft promoting conditions could be internal or external and local government councils must fight theft of their properties, if they want to remain functional to serve the community.

Everything possible should be done to remove those conditions promoting theft to the minimum. Local government interest on theft control and prevention must

consider the following:

1. Exposure of cash: Cash, cheques and drafts should not be exposed;
2. *Unguarded installations*: All installations must be guarded;
3. Awarded of contracts, without proper screening: Contractors must be screened;
4. *Conspiracy and stealing*: Must be discouraged;
5. *Carelessness*: Must be avoided;
6. Non-verification of authority of workmen and other non-employees unknown to the local government. All workmen must be identified;
7. Non-employees may attempt to gain access to the local government premises by impersonation. When such people are authorized to be in the premises, and in vulnerable areas, it is good practice to keep them under surveillance.
8. Non-daily security check: Proper security check of the local government is recommended.
9. *Non-appraisal of security programmes*: Local government security programmes must constantly be appraised;
10. Non-testing of alarms and security devices: Alarms and security devices must be checked;
11. It is good policy to thoroughly investigate both new security personnel and other employees;
12. It is recommended that the Chairman who is the chief security officer of the local government makes frequent checks of cash exposures;
13. *Non-making of tools and supplies vulnerable to theft*: These equipment must be marked;
14. *Dishonestly*: This must be discouraged;
15. Non-publication of names of proven thieves on the local government notice board. Proven dishonesty should be published to deter others;
16. Block and regularly check the hiding places;
17. *Allowing unreasonable devotion to duty*: For example, an employee who would not go on leave even when his leave was due for fear of his dubious activities being exposed in his absences;
18. Allowing unnecessary objection to procedural changes: For instance he would oppose to be transferred, or allow any other changes. He feels that the changes would hinder his theft activities;
19. *Stealing not discouraged at initial stage*: Punish theft adequately;
20. Negative management attitude to theft.
21. Erroneous poor judgment by the theft;
22. Malice on the part of dismissed employees or those denied promotion, incentives, social welfare, and disgruntled employees;
23. Allowing employees coming to work too early: It is not always good;
24. Non-prosecution of proven criminal cases: Prosecute all proven thefts;

25. Locks, doors and windows should be kept locked;
26. Effective key control and supervised parking areas;
27. Access control, and movement to be controlled;
28. Non-specification of security areas.

### **Loss Prevention Procedures in Local Government Councils**

Prevention, we are told is better than cure. Thefts, unauthorized persons, and vandalism could be prevented from local government council offices with the use of locks. Easy entry into the above mentioned places creates easy chances for burglary. Locks should be used to protect such places. Locks as agent of physical security should not be easy to force open, easily duplicated or easily opened. Experienced thieves could know from a very casual look whether locks or doors, windows, storage, etc. could offer easy entry. No burglary proof locks has yet been invented, but adequate locks are available and will even deter the most determined thief.

For locks to serve as preventive agents it must comply with the following standards:

- Installation must be proper to prevent prying, cutting, twisting;
- Control of lock keys is important;
- Padlock should be locked in place at all times to prevent key duplicating.

### **Preventive Action**

Expensive or small items left in the window over night invites thieves.

Heavy merchandise or equipment piled in front of unused windows will give some protection.

### **Checking Conditions of Doors, Windows and Locks**

**Doors**: Most burglaries occur by forcing a natural opening in the building, such as a door or window. Inadequate doors offer the burglars easy access to the local government council offices. Doors too fragile for adequate protection, improperly fit doors, antiquated locking mechanism, all these add to the problem. Strength and security can be achieved, without sacrificing locks. Protection, however, should over-weigh appearance.

#### *Actions to Prevent Theft through Doors*

- Install door frames that cannot be pried off hinges or removed.
- Panels and glass should be protected against being kicked.

Alarms form part of physical barriers to prevent losses. Alarms should be purchased from reputable manufacturers to ensure effective service and the elimination of false alarms. It is advisable to seek police or fire brigade approval to install direct alarm to the local police or fire station.

Adequate lighting can reduce the incidence of theft. All entrances and exit gates be properly lighted. The perimeter light should also cover the buildings.

Key control is another aspect of loss prevention process. Some responsible persons should take the responsibility of issuing out keys. All issuance of keys must be recorded and signed for. Key control is particularly vulnerable during the night and at weekends. When persons responsible for keys are terminated, new key procedures should be adopted.

Safes and vaults are good theft prevention devices. Their location within the local government premises must be given enough consideration. They should be located in less vulnerable areas for fear of attack by thieves. Although most modern safes and vaults are built to give maximum protection, some thieves actually attempt to penetrate them through many forms including manipulation.

Guard services could be proprietary or contract. There has been a recent increase in the demand for guard services in Nigeria. Whenever any local government council decides to employ the services of security guard, it would have to choose between employing contract guards or its own guard personnel. This will depend on the corporate policy and the advantages offered by each.

Business security consultations through their services contribute to loss control measures. They provide advice on solving theft problems. They analyze loss situations, develop alternatives and recommend steps to eliminate or reduce thefts. They have the experience of wider exposure to local government council loss control problem from where they draw knowledge to recommend and offer solutions to such problems when they arise. Every local government council desirous of stopping loss is advised to consider the employment of security consultants.

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## **CURBING DISHONESTY AND THEFT AMONG LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL STAFF**

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On many occasions since we came into full embrace with corporate security management consultancy, we have heard several members of management shocked, angry and disillusioned, complain that (ungrateful) employees have violated their trust through theft of money or merchandise or both. Such complaints had often been referred to us to determine: firstly how the offence was committed, and why existing security systems and procedure failed, and secondly what made the offender confident that he would not be detected.

### **Employee Dishonesty**

During investigations, it was discovered that even though most men are honest, they have a very high urge to acquire possessions and or status as evidence of personal achievement. Putting it simply, a high percentage of employees, good or bad, young or old, dedicated or not dedicated have a great urge to acquire. If the opportunity

to acquire things dishonestly is removed, ambition and dedication will improve. Management therefore has a challenge to decrease the opportunity to acquire things dishonestly.

### **Opportunity and Employee Dishonesty**

There are numerous opportunities for promoting employee theft in local government councils. These opportunities are inadvertently created by management. One of such opportunities is the attitude of local government council management to theft. Some local government councils regard theft as a cost which must be accepted. Furthermore, dishonest staff of some local government councils are not adequately punished if found guilty of theft. This action has implication of discouraging honest ones who would think that management is not serious about stopping employee theft.

Another opportunity for local government council theft is created by those who are charged with the security of council's assets. These men sometimes spot very wide and open opportunities created for theft and when reported management do not take immediate and adequate actions to remedy the situation until much heavier losses are reported utilizing the opportunities. Sometimes theft problems in local government councils are identified with the sudden change in attitude of trusted or loyal employees. Several reasons could be adduced for this dishonest act. A long serving "trusted" employee was once asked why he decided to steal after so long service and trust. He said he decided to steal because the management cheated him. He claimed he was denied promotion and was not encouraged even when he helped identify dishonest employees.

Secondly, it must be remembered that (trusted) local government council employees use their knowledge of council's security procedure to circumvent them. Employees of councils are divided into three groups in line with their level of honesty as follows:

- Those who are virtually incorruptible;
- Those who are basically honest; and
- Those who could steal at first opportunity.

If a thief is put among the three groups he would convince the basically honest who could become a problem, given a set of circumstances. The honest employee may join the dishonest employee out of greed, fear, spite of anger. If the problem continues others will join because they feel everyone else is doing it. They conclude that the local government council management really does not care and deserves theft of their assets. Isolating or eliminating the dishonest employees will help curtail the spread of employee dishonesty.

Employee theft spreads across all the departments of the local government councils. Most dishonest employees steal within four months of their employment. They usually rate their relationship with their HODs as excellent. It would have been thought that since they had

good relations with their HODs, they could not steal from the department, but the reverse is the case. It is equally surprising that many HODs rate dishonest employees as being very good or excellent. This accounts for the reason why (trusted) employees steal for a considerable length of time without being noticed.

In some local government councils where several people are employed as casual or floating staff, employee thefts have been known to be on the increase. Valuable properties are left in various places which make supervision ineffective since the workforce is mostly made of casual or floating staff, many of whom may have been to prison. Theft prevention measures, though very essential often become ineffective.

It is noticed that more junior staff than senior staff steal in terms of number and frequency of theft but not the value of stolen goods. The dishonest employee will be the one you least expected. He looks quiet, trusted, reliable, industrious and experienced. He is conversant with theft control measures and could spot the weak points with ease.

Most workers are honest and believe in integrity. However, sometimes, some factors may change their lives that they become dishonest. Such factors are high personal debts, living far beyond one's income, inadequate income, excessive gambling, extra-marital involvement, excessive use of alcohol and drugs.

To curb employee dishonesty and theft, internal analysis of suspected employee dishonesty can usually be assigned to the head of security by management. A professional investigator may also be assigned to do the investigation.

In the event the investigation results in substantiating illegal activity and identifies those responsible as employees their termination should be effected immediately. To prosecute or not to prosecute is dependent upon the quality of evidence and the corporate policy.

Many local government councils who fail to terminate an employee from proven dishonesty express such reasons as:

- He is one of our best employees;
- We think he has learnt his lessons
- He really did not steal very much
- We just cannot find a replacement
- He is tempted. Let us give him another chance.

Unfortunately a dishonest employee may not have learnt any lesson by being so very easily defended and pardoned. Again, honest employees are usually happy when dishonest ones are detected and terminated. Employees with integrity tend to lose faith in management when the dishonest is not detected or once detected does not suffer any appropriate punishment.

Specific internal theft prevention programme can be developed which reduce the possibility of internal losses. These involve the development and implementation of definite policies and procedures which should encompass all areas of local government council activities which

could result in loss of property, equipment or cash, etc..

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## FIRE SAFETY IN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL OFFICES

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Fire control and prevention is a major area of concern to local government protective services. Human and other assets must have every precaution taken to prevent or minimize their exposure to fire risks. The regular inspection of all conditions as well as fire control equipment is a primary function. Also very important is the educating of all personnel within the local government council in fire control and prevention.

Fire prevention is the basic responsibility of all security staff and other members of the local government council, irrespective of whether permanent full time fire men are employed or not. The seven days a week, and twenty four hours a day coverage given by security officers make them the most likely agents for the detection and consequently the prevention and extinction of fire.

### What is Fire?

Fire is a combination of two or more substances resulting in the production of heat and light. Normally three substances namely fuel, heat and oxygen are necessary before combustion can take place, and in the absence of any one of these substances, fire will never occur. These substances form the fire triangle and if fire is deprived of one of those substances it would surely go out.

### Simple Causes of Fire

The root causes of fire are three folds – ignorance, carelessness and a blind faith in providence. It is probably true to say that if ignorance could be eliminated, or a risk could be recognized, there would be a marked decrease in carelessness and providential trust.

It is always difficult to obtain accurately, the causes of fires because many outbreaks are not observed until so late that the real cause is a matter of supposition. Although, it is difficult to ascertain the real cause of fire, the following causes must be borne in mind:

1. Careless discarding of cigarette ends;
2. Leaving a lighted candle unattended;
3. Smoking in a prohibited area;
4. Using of multi-Adaptors;
5. Defective electric wiring;
6. Incorrect substitute of fuse;
7. Defective or overloading of electrical appliances;
8. Leakage of gas through fractured pipe or loosed connection;
9. Sparks by friction in mechanical engines due to lack of maintenance;
10. Spontaneous combustion;
11. Enemy action or arson.

### Arson

Arson is not a frequent offence but the possibility should be borne in mind where there is:

1. Fire at several original sites;
2. Simultaneous outbreak in separate places;
3. The presence of burnt-out petrol tins or similar containers;
4. The presence of flammable material foreign to the area concerned;
5. The smell or indication of flammable fluids which should not be there;
6. Indication that the premises have been broken into by intruders. In this instance the police should be contacted.

### Classification of Fires

Fires are classified under the following headings:

Class 'A': Fires involving solid, free burning materials such as paper, wood, clothes, planks, etc.

Class 'B': Fires involving flammable liquids such as oils, fats, petroleum, jellies, petrol, paraffin, etc.

Class 'C': Fires involving gasses or liquefied gasses such as propane, butane, methane, etc.

Class 'D': Fires involving metals such as Aluminum, potassium, plutonium, sodium, etc.

### Electrical Fires

These are not now treated as a class of fire, since if electricity is the causation, one of the other classes result: also many of these other types will include electrical wiring and appliances in their spread. If the electricity supply can be cut off this must be done and the appropriate extinguishing agent for the class of fire then used. If this cannot be done, a non-conducting agent must be used which will not damage equipment present i.e. dry powder, inert gas or vapouring liquid (B.C.F. or  $\text{CO}_2$ ). Water is very dangerous because of possible shock risk to the fire fighter.

### Procedures in Event of Fire

1. If you notice fire within any office in the local government council, sound alarm if there is one in your building. If there is none, warn others by shouting or in some other manner possible.
2. If phone is available call security department or local fire station.
3. Unless the fire is minor, do not attempt to fight it alone.
4. Leave the building immediately locking all doors behind you.
5. Do not go back until asked to do so by fire experts.

### Means of Escape

These are precautions which should help in ensuring the safety of all. Principles to be applied when assessing the adequacy of these are:

1. No one should have to go towards any fire in order to escape.

2. Each route should be as short as possible and of adequate capacity to allow the speedy passage of the number of persons who may have to use it.
3. Each route should lead to the open air at ground level either direct or through a fire resisting barrier.
4. Enclosed parts of escape routes should be protected against penetration by smoke or fire.

These principles can be met by:

- (i) Each occupant having a choice of escape routes;
- (ii) No occupant should have to go more than about 100 feet (30m) to reach open air or a smoke-free, fire resistant stairway, corridor, or lobby (lifts should not be considered as escape routes).
- (iii) All corridors, stairways and exit should be adequately wide to allow occupants to leave quickly without panic.
- (iv) The walls, floors, and ceiling of any passageway forming part of an escape route should have a fire-resistance of at least half of an hour with self-closing fire-resisting doors at every entrance to the enclosed area.
- (v) Exits from escape routes should be sited so that people can disperse from them in safety without difficulty.
- (vi) External escape staircase should be provided where there is no possibility of using enclosed fire proof stairways.
- (vii) All apertures, stairways, lift shafts, and hoists whereby smoke and fire could spread rapidly through a building, should have been surveyed and enclosed as far as possible.
- (viii) All escape routes should have been clearly marked and all the doors on them should open outwards to avoid any confusion.

### Fire Patrols-Checklist

A form of checklist to be borne in mind by a fire patrol should include:

1. All electric fires or heaters left on, other than those essentially needed should be switched off.
2. Gas and electric cooking facilities should be checked off.
3. Plant running but not in use should be switched off, and checked if cooled down.
4. Heaters, obstructed by overalls or other flammable materials left their should be cleared, missing fire-guards should be replaced.
5. Doors and windows, internal and external should be closed; the external locked against intruders and the internal closed to prevent possible fire spread, and also to give indication of the presence of intruders if subsequently found open
6. Flammable materials left near any source of heat should be moved to a safe position.
7. Any leakage of oil or other possibly flammable liquid should be investigated immediately.

8. Check that all fire-fighting equipment are present, serviceable, and unobstructed, that access is available to all hydrants, and that fire alarm points are intact.
  9. Any naked flames should be extinguished and soldering irons checked that they are disconnected.
  10. Recognized avenues of access for the Fire Brigade must be unimpeded.
  11. Sprinkler heads are not obstructed by piled goods.
- Inspection during a patrol should not be confined to floor level ceilings and roofs and are equally important as much electrical cabling and ventilation conduits are sited in the roof and the first indication of trouble can be when fire breaks through the exterior of the roof.

### Fire Safety Planning

Install and maintain fire safety equipment. Establish fire prevention measures as follows:

- (a) Detailed fire inspection of the local government council to be conducted weekly.
- (b) In areas protected by sprinkler heads, equipment and products should be stored no closer than 21 inches to the head.
  - (c) All fire alarm stations must be easily accessible.
  - (d) Garbage must be removed often to prevent fire.
  - (e) All fire extinguishers must be checked.
  - (f) Emergency telephone number must be established.
  - (g) All fire exits must be operational.
  - (h) Flammable and combustible materials must be properly stored.
    - (i) No-smoking areas to be designated.
    - (j) Welding operations to be protected by fire extinguishers.
    - (k) Smoke detectors to be checked. Establish employee participative procedure in case of fire.
    - (l) Plan ahead on what to do in case of fire.
    - (m) Practice fire drill often.
    - (n) Invite fire officers to the local government council often.
      - (o) Establish reporting procedures
      - (p) Establish procedure for response and evacuation
      - (q) Train the staff in fire prevention techniques
      - (r) Establish recovery operations.

### General Fire Precautions

- (1) Clearly demarcate areas where smoking is not permitted.
- (2) Provide adequate non-combustible ash trays where smoking is permitted.
- (3) Enforce a period, say half an hour, of non-smoking before the end of each working day everywhere in buildings.
- (4) Where cleaners are employed in offices each evening, make the emptying of waste-paper baskets a priority. Use metal bins instead of the conventional baskets.
- (5) Provide metal lockers for clothing and overalls to

counteract the cigarette or pipe left in a pocket.

(6) Have a regular and frequent system of floor sweeping and waste collection and removal.

(7) Store collected waste at a safe distance from buildings and either dispose of it in an incinerator or have it removed by outside contractors.

(8) Oily rags and items that might be the subject of spontaneous combustion should be collected separately.

(9) Try to convince the head of each department that he should be the last to leave and to give a quick look round to see that all is in order before he goes.

The whole essence of fire prevention is that of educating staff at all levels to the understanding that fire can kill, can deprive of livelihood, and whilst it is a good servant, it is an unreliable and treacherous one which needs constant supervision. Once this is instilled in everyone its danger is reduced to a minimum. If you see anything that appears wrong, suspicious or dangerous, report it personally, do not assume somebody else will report it, they seldom do.

Remember the local government council needs the community, but community needs the local government council for their well-being and development. All must, therefore, cooperate to keep the local government council free from fire.

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## CONCLUSION

One of the fundamental problems identified with local government councils in Nigeria is the issue of how to protect the lives and properties of its inhabitants. Most of the security arrangements in our local governments are ill-organised. There is hardly any local government council in Nigeria where effective and efficient measures are put in place for adequate protection of the lives and properties of the citizenry.

There is no alternative to adequate security in life; because if you fail to plan to protect lives and properties, the implication as the popular saying goes, is that you have planned to fail. This means that by your action and inaction you have planned to destroy lives and properties through complacency and laxity in compromising good and adequate security policy and planning.

Consequently, the need to plan and develop adequate security framework for effective operations of the local government councils through adoption of the measures outlined in the discussion in this work cannot be overemphasized.

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