



**SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION (SSA)
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (AFGE)**

MEMORANDUM

Refer to: Allapattah, FL

Date: October 28, 1999
To: Field Services Section
Atlanta Regional Office
From: SSA Field Office Manager
AFGE Representative

Subject: Security and Site Solicitation Procedures -Renovation and/or Relocation 

As directed by the May 7, 1997 Memorandum from the Co-Chairs of the National Health and Safety partnership Committee for Security, and the Atlanta Region Relocation and Renovation MOU of 9/15/95, the management and union representatives have identified concerns regarding space solicitation and/or renovation for the Allapattah, FL office. We have translated these concerns into recommendations.

We submit these recommendations for inclusion in the site solicitation and/or renovation process.

I. Location in the Community

We prefer to stay in the same location if sufficient expansion space can be found.

Located within a safe and convenient walk of adequate secured parking immediately adjacent to the office.

Located within a safe and convenient walk of coffee shops, restaurants, banks and other retail establishments.

Located so as to be safely accessible by both automobile and public transportation throughout the potential extended workday, including arrival and departure time, resulting from CWS and flextime (Monday through Friday, 6:45 AM through 5:45 PM).

Located so as to be safely accessible by disabled customers and employees, to include:

1. Safe, adjacent parking with access to the parking, and from the parking to the office, for all disabled customers and employees who drive.

2. Safe areas near customer and employee entrances for (down- and up-) loading of disabled customers and employees who choose to be dropped off and picked up at the office.
3. Located on public bus routes and convenient to a Metrorail or TriRail Station.

Located in a separate building or in a building currently occupied by or leased to other professional offices, or agencies which generate pedestrian traffic of such a type and volume as to offer a degree of safety when employees are in the vicinity of the office. Enterprises such as law offices, banks (not check cashing businesses), doctor and dentist offices (not drug counseling agencies), in this service area would be compatible with our operations, and would encourage activities related to legal commerce. The more normal business activities in the immediate vicinity, the more likely our location will be in safe and less stressful surroundings.

We prefer not to have shrubbery or tall plants that can create hiding places. We do prefer to have trees and grass (as the only ground cover).

Located in a building in which the lessor can demonstrate a high degree of security in common areas of the building, public rest rooms, and in the parking lot.

There should be a safe covered outdoor area where employees may sit and/or walk and get fresh air during break or lunch periods.

II. Perimeter Considerations

General Statement about Accessibility

All aspects of this space should comply with the stricter of: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), or the Uniform Accessibility Standards (UFAS). This includes but is not limited to: parking, public access to the building and to the space, employee access to the building and to the space itself.

Parking

The parking lot should be lighted as a minimum during the potential extended workday, including arrival and departure time, resulting from CWS and flextime (Monday through Friday, 6:45 AM through 5:45 PM) from one-half hour before sunset to one half-hour after sunrise. Lighting in the general lot area should be at least 5 foot candles in intensity, and at least dual directional. Lighting for walkways and entrances should be between 10 and 20 foot candles, and multi-directional enough to eliminate any shadows.

Entry to the lot/garage should be impeded neither by the narrowness of the street nor the presence of parked cars too close to the curb cut.

Current security precautions involving employee parking should be continued or improved, including a fenced (designed to prevent unauthorized entree) employee-only parking lot with restricted access by remote control devices issued to employees. There should be an easy to use manual override to open the gate from the inside in case of emergency evacuation.

Lighting

In addition to the lighting specified above for the parking area, all exterior entrances should be lighted at a minimum during normal working and arriving/leaving hours (Monday through Friday, 6:45 AM through 5:45 PM) from one-half hour before sunset to one half-hour after sunrise. Lighting for walkways and entrances should be between 10 and 20 foot candles, and multi-directional enough to eliminate any shadows.

Windows

Appropriate security should be provided for any exterior windows. All exterior windows should be protected by the Intrusion Detection system as determined by the Regional Security Officer in consultation with the Federal Protective Services. However, neither such security devices as may be prescribed nor the material from which the windows are constructed should preclude the proper and thorough cleaning of the windows. Add sufficient window tint to preclude public view into the office, but not hinder outside view(s) from the inside.

Windows to provide outside light to reduce stress and gloom for employees and public alike should be available for at least two sides of the office.

Doors

Exterior doors should be appropriately weather stripped and insulated so as to minimize air infiltration. Doors should be hung on metal frames. Regardless of any other specifications contained here, the lessor should show compliance with fire code requirements for egress from SSA's space, including but not limited to crash bars, and locks. This compliance must exist both during the operating hours we are open to the public as well as during times when the public entrance is locked.

All exterior doors should have inaccessible hinge pins or non-rising fixed hinge pins.

All exterior doors should have a dead-bolt lock with a one-inch throw as a minimum. The latch plate and the hinge screws should be of sufficient length to strongly secure them to the door frame and/or wall studding. Locks must not be double keyed. Doors should be equipped with panic hardware and a key override. If the doors are not glass, the employee and the rear doors should have entry scope(s). All exterior doors should have self-closing devices.

Emergency Exits should include front and back egress from any common work area (where both employees and customers are located) directly (without corridors or intervening rooms) to the outside or to a public corridor which meets all applicable fire codes. There should be at least two exits from the main work space separated by a distance equal to at least ½ the long rectangular dimension of the floor.

Separate Employee Entrance

We prefer separate employee entrances, which should provide employee access (both ingress and egress) to the space without entering or exiting from the same side as used for the public entrance (usually the front).

The employee entrance should be equipped with a push-button combination-type or a key-card-type lock capable of being opened with one hand for ingress. An entry scope should be added to the door (if it is not glass).

Security Camera

A security camera should be located so as to provide surveillance of the outside of the public entrance, and employee parking lot, with the monitor located so as to be viewed by the security guard.

III. Interior Office Security Considerations

Security Personnel and Weapons Searches

There should be a security device for scanning persons for weapons and two armed security guards located in the waiting area. Their prime concern should be the safety of the employees and public within SSA space. We cite the incidents of weapons found during our previous use of such a device to document this need.

The guard station should be located so as to allow viewing into the Front End Interviewing area.

Floor Plan Layout

The office floor plan should be single level, with as much open space as is possible.

We prefer the ground floor.

If the office is located on other than a ground floor, there should be at least two handicapped accessible elevators, separated by at least ½ the length of the long dimension of the floor.

Line of sight should be as extensive as is possible, with as few obstacles as possible (other than the barrier wall). The floor plan layout should not be a split configuration (such as a 'U' shape).

There should be no obstacles that hinder direct view(s). There should be no blind corners near the employee entrance where a person can try to conceal himself or herself.

Interior Windows

All interior doors, other than those prohibited, shall have a view panel (6" x 24" at 45" above the floor).

Rest Rooms

There should be rest rooms for use by the public, accessible from the reception area. There should be a floor drain, and an adjacent drinking fountain..

There must be separate employees' rest rooms, located in the non-public area of the office (i.e., away from the reception counter). There should be a water fountain adjacent to these rest rooms. We prefer both paper towel dispensers and electric hand dryers, easily accessible for persons who use wheelchairs. There should be floor drains.

There should be self-closing doors for privacy, safety and security of user(s) in the employee and public rest rooms.

For both public and employee rest rooms, there should be privacy panels or entrance configurations so as to prevent view into the rest rooms.

Reception Area

A full barrier walls should be constructed between the public area and the employee area.

There should be a push button keypad control on the door from the reception area into the general work area.

In addition to other specifications for the reception area and counter, a clear non-breakable Lexan-like barrier and an easy-to-slide solid core wooden pocket door (per the Atlanta Regional Relocation, Renovation, and Redesign MOU, attached) should be provided at each reception and Front End Interviewing station. A microphone and speaker system for communication through the Lexan-like barrier may be required.

A public address system should be installed so that employees at each workstation, can be heard when calling the next interview, etc. This requires a convenient microphone at each reception counter workstation and a properly designed speaker system.

Where entrance is directly from the outside, there should be a vestibule to limit weather elements from penetrating the office. Any vestibule should be large enough to accommodate wheelchair access with automatic doors. Windows should permit observation from within the office of anyone in a vestibule.

Care should be taken that air from the reception area should not recirculate into the rest of the office.

Front End Interviewing (FEI)

We request the FEI configuration with all interviewing, including by Service Representatives and Claims Representatives, through a window in a barrier wall per Atlanta Regional Memorandum 99-45, Attachment titled Atlanta Region Security Guidelines, #2 — Reception Security Practices, attached. A sample floorplan showing this arrangement is also attached. (The platform shown in the diagram is not requested, as management and union have agreed that both public and employees will normally be seated during all face to face interviewing.)

Floor Covering

We prefer nonskid ceramic tile for the multi-purpose room and the reception room.

IV. Employee Survey

Tabulated results of an employee survey are attached. There was a response rate of about 70%.

Employees do prefer to stay in the current location.

We have requested extraordinary security provisions. These precautions are justified by our incident reports and the variety of weapons discovered when we previously had the scanning device and the two security guards.

All provisions of the Atlanta Region MOU regarding Field Office Relocation and the MOU regarding Field Office Space Allocation Standards (both attached) are incorporated.

We jointly submit the above recommendations to you with the understanding that you will consider these issues in preparing the space request submission to GSA, and that you will provide us a copy of the document ultimately submitted to GSA.

For the Agency


For the Union

Vivian King
SSA Field Office Manager

Gary Sanders
AFGE Local 2014 Executive Vice President

Carol McPhee
AFGE Local Representative

Attachments:

1. Atlanta Region MOU regarding Field Office Relocation
2. MOU regarding Field Office Space Allocation Standards 
3. National Health and Safety Partnership Security and Site Solicitation Procedures
4. Atlanta Regional Memorandum 99-45, including attachment.
5. Sample floorplan, showing FEI with interviewing through windows in the barrier wall and the platform configuration for the Service Representative reception stations.
6. Employee Survey