ISLAND SECURITY POLICY INSTITUTE

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COMMENTARY

The Invisible Insider

Insider Threat in Hawaii's Tourism and Hospitality Industry — The Risk Nobody Is Assessing

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A guest at a major Waikiki resort reported in 2022 that personal items had been accessed from their room — not taken, but clearly examined and replaced.[1] The resort's investigation could not identify the responsible employee from among the forty-seven staff members with legitimate access to the corridor. The investigation closed without resolution. This case illustrates a hospitality insider threat profile that ISPI's practitioner analysis identifies as pervasive and systematically underassessed.

The Compound Vulnerability

A full-service Hawaii resort employs a workforce ranging from dozens to hundreds across housekeeping, maintenance, food service, front desk, concierge, security, and management — all with legitimate physical access to guest spaces. This access breadth is compounded by turnover rates averaging 73 percent annually in Hawaii's hospitality sector.[2] Hotel property management systems contain significant guest personal and financial data — creating a convergence of physical access and data access that neither physical security nor cybersecurity frameworks, evaluated independently, fully captures.

ISPI Recommendations

1. Implement ISPI's integrated three-dimension hospitality insider threat assessment approach: physical access governance, behavioral baseline assessment for island hospitality workforce dynamics, and digital access governance for property management systems — evaluated in combination, not separately.
2. Establish Hawaii-specific hospitality insider threat assessment standards through the Hawaii Tourism Authority and Hawaii Hotel Alliance reflecting island workforce dynamics and compound access vulnerability profiles.
3. Commission ISPI for independent hospitality insider threat assessments incorporating all three vulnerability dimensions. Contact ISPIGlobal@proton.me.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

ABOUT THE ISLAND SECURITY POLICY INSTITUTE

The Island Security Policy Institute (ISPI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization based in Honolulu, Hawaii. ISPI produces practitioner-led research, policy analysis, training programs, and commissioned research on public safety, emergency preparedness, insider threat, and security policy for island and coastal communities worldwide. ISPI is registered as a federal contractor on SAM.gov under NAICS 541720. Warren Pulley, Founder & Executive Director.

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