

Urban Climbers

If your site or business is targeted by “urban climbers” it can cost you resources, time and money. Depending upon the nature of the “climb” areas of operation may need to be shutdown, cordons could be required and almost certainly the involvement of emergency services – usually police and fire will be required.

Urban climbing describes the act of climbing on the outside of buildings or artificial structures. Often referred to as “roof topping”, “parkour” or “buildering” participants challenge themselves to climb the highest structures, the most unusual buildings or challenge themselves to gain access to non-public areas by evading security.

The purpose: to film stunts during the climb or challenge then release onto social media such as “YouTube” generating popularity and other challenges.

Whilst there is no apparent criminal intent from the climbers – the risks that they place your business and themselves in can be high. Climbing up structures with no safety equipment in areas often hidden from sight accessing areas where site security teams cannot follow.

In many cases participants are detained by security teams or police however lack of criminal offences results in quick release.



(www.chroniclive.co.uk) – Tyne Bridge



(YouTube) – Vauxhall Bus Station, London

A number of urban climbers have achieved worldwide fame and have made a career from greater and greater stunts. Famous climbers and social media platforms have inspired others to take up the activities however in a much less professional manner and without authority.

As participants only need their own skills and a recording device young people are inspired by the “YouTube” activities of popular urban climbers who film activities in everyday locations such as Vauxhall Bus Station (above). Two of the more popular UK urban climbers have over 4 million followers on the platform alone.

“Stunts” leading to cost for business

Unique & High-Rise Structures targeted

A potential challenge for Security Teams

Challenges such as "Rooftop Hide and Seek" and "Overnight Challenge" (where access is gained to sites during closed periods -such as cinemas, waterparks, shopping centres and stunts inside recorded) serve to encourage young people to copy and post.

Participants scale buildings using routes they have identified during a "recce". They are usually fit, athletic and determined, being able to get to difficult areas quickly. They are prepared to conceal their location for periods of time in order to complete their "mission" and evade security at the same time

Common Factors

- Predominantly operate between 0100-0500 hrs (particularly in guarded locations)
- Pre-planned, reconnaissance has been conducted by one or more of the group.
- Number of people – usually 2 or more, for larger venues 6 – 8 "youtubers" will go together as they have a range of experience to help the stunt go well.
- Equipment – usually carry rucksacks containing camera gear, drones etc – items are to film the stunt.
- Safety equipment – it is not evident that much if any safety equipment is carried (no ropes etc in general terms)
- Cover Story – is usually well thought out, false names are provided and where no offences are apparent it appears security teams can struggle to take effective action.

Awareness

Scaffolding, rigging, high tower cranes, tall structures or unusual building features are likely to look like a "challenge" to participants, even if it is to practice their skills prior to a more attractive adventure elsewhere.

Following a review of recent intelligence around urban climbers it is unlikely that arrival or targets can be predicted. However, it is clear that operations teams on sites could review procedures in advance of an event.

- Security Teams to be aware of any identified target through site risk assessment
- Teams to be aware of reconnaissance by way of attendance and possibly filming/note taking
- Weaker access points to roof areas to be identified for focus
- Ensure on site/temp works contractors are subject to id checks/ passes and do not leave branded clothing lying around
- Security teams to be aware of evidence needed to support banning orders for sites – once caught does not mean they will not return.

If you would like any further information on any of the elements mentioned in this bulletin, please email the Securitas Intelligence Unit at soc.intelligence@securitas.uk.com



Daily Mirror



Kentonline



Daily Mail

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