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## Mall of America Boosts Security After Attack in Nairobi

By Brian Louis - Sep 25, 2013

Mall of America, the largest U.S. shopping [center](#) and entertainment complex, said it's increasing security after Islamist militants attacked a Kenyan mall, killing at least 67 civilians.

The suburban Minneapolis mall, owned by real estate development and finance company Triple Five Group of [Edmonton, Alberta](#), is monitoring the news from Nairobi and working with [law-enforcement](#) agencies, the center's management said today in an e-mailed statement. The Bloomington, Minnesota, property, which opened in 1992, has more than 520 stores, an indoor amusement park, an aquarium and a movie theater.

"Mall of America has implemented extra security precautions," according to the statement. "Some may be noticeable to guests, and others won't be. We will continue to follow the situation, along with law enforcement, and will remain vigilant as we always do in similar situations."

U.S. mall owners face the challenge of protecting sprawling properties filled with hundreds of people without disrupting business. After an attack such as the one in Nairobi, the [companies](#) may ask local police for patrol cars at their properties or bring in additional security officers, said Malachy Kavanagh, a spokesman for the [International Council of Shopping Centers](#), a New York-based trade group.

The death toll from the four-day assault is the worst since al-Qaeda bombed the U.S. Embassy in downtown Nairobi in August 1998, killing 213 people. Three floors in the building collapsed during the attack, leaving an unknown number of bodies buried beneath the rubble, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta said yesterday.

### 'Reasonably Secure'

Security at shopping centers varies by country and the perceived threat level for potential attacks, Kavanagh said.

"Most malls are reasonably secure, given their mission that they have to cater to the public," William

Nesbitt, president of Security Management Services International Inc., a Newbury Park, California-based consulting firm, said in a phone interview. “Basically malls need to be open to the public.”

Some U.S. malls, because they’re often among the largest buildings in a city and heavily trafficked, have a police officer on site, Kavanagh said. Retail centers may house police substations as well.

The Bloomington Police Department has a substation in Mall of America, according to the property’s website. The center’s security force has been the subject of a reality television program, “Mall Cops: Mall of America,” on the TLC cable network.

## ‘Top Priority’

Mall of America didn’t disclose details of its security plans. [General Growth Properties Inc. \(GGP\)](#), the second-largest U.S. mall owner, doesn’t discuss specific parts of its safety programs “in order to avoid compromising our efforts,” said [David Keating](#), a spokesman for the Chicago-based company.

“The safety and security of our shoppers, retailers and employees are always a top priority, not just when tragedies occur,” he said in an e-mail

Les Morris, a spokesman for Indianapolis-based [Simon Property Group Inc. \(SPG\)](#), the world’s largest mall owner, and Katy Dickey, a Los Angeles-based spokeswoman for [Westfield Group \(WDC\)](#), declined to comment on their companies’ security measures.

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