

Walden Galleria To Hold Lockdown Drill on Wednesday

Danny Spewak, WGRZ 10:12 PM. EST March 28, 2016



CHEEKTOWAGA, N.Y. - Citing "recent world events," Walden Galleria's security team will hold a lockdown drill with the Cheektowaga Police Department at 10:15 a.m. Wednesday during regular operating hours.

In a memo sent to Walden Galleria businesses, a mall security director said the drill should last about 15 minutes but will involve a "large police presence." Mall staff will make an official announcement over the public address system at 10:15 a.m., at which point the mall encourages businesses to shut their gates and shelter in place.

"In light of recent world events and several high profile false alarms, we feel it is all of our responsibility to inform and practice for any possible emergency event," the memo reads.

The mall intentionally chose to hold the drill with customers in the building. According to the memo, "it must be done during open hours to realistically analyze the drill and make preparations should a real event take place."

Two store owners told 2 On Your Side they plan to comply with the drill. The mall has held similar emergency drills in the past, the owners said.

Cheektowaga Police said they'll be assisting with the drill, but the mall's security staff will ultimately oversee the event.

Bernie Tolbert, a former special agent in charge for the Buffalo FBI Office, said he "commends" Walden Galleria for implementing this procedure. He also said they made a smart move by scheduling the lockdown drill during operating hours.

"It gives you a chance to see how you'd react," Tolbert said. "It'll give the stores an opportunity to see how well they can close up their doors and get people into a safe place."

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