

Security Spotlight

An informational Guide for Securitas Canada Clients and Employees

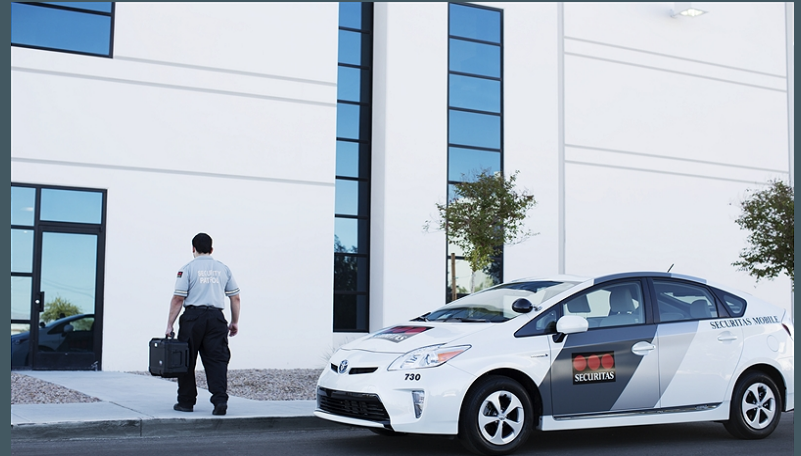


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Investigations of Incidents



One of the most common aspects of security operations will be an incident that requires a security guard (SG) to perform an investigation. The type of investigation is dependent upon the actual event and depth of the incident. It is important to understand that investigations can be either major or minor in scope.

At Securitas Canada, our objective is that when an inquiry is needed it is performed in a thorough and efficient manner, protecting the interests of our clients, the privacy of the individuals involved, and maintaining a standard that reflects Securitas Canada's standing within the security industry.

Reason for Investigation

When conducting an investigation there are several factors that drive the overall process.

- First is an attempt to establish a detailed timeline of events of the particular incident.
- Second, an SG is trying to provide a listing of all parties involved and what they witnessed.

- Third is creating a record of events to potentially be utilized in future law enforcement investigations and legal proceedings.
- Fourth is to identify any possible remedies to prevent similar future accidents or incidents from occurring again. It's worth noting that in defining the principles of safety management it can be stated as, "an unsafe act, an unsafe condition, an accident or symptoms of something wrong within the management's system" (Peterson 1997).
- Lastly, an investigation allows for the compiling of a record of the event in order to track any potential patterns to view the larger picture of the overall operations of the site.

Stages of an Investigation

Every Securitas Canada security guard should follow the same basic steps in an investigation so that there is an accurate and thorough examination of the incident.

- When first arriving on scene the primary duty is to secure the site, provide attention to persons requiring assistance, protect any evidence.

Integrity Vigilance Helpfulness

gather witnesses and statements, and provide calm and order to the area. Most of these requirements and responses will be planned and established within the site plan.

- Next, the guard must select the type of investigation to conduct in connection with the Daily Activity Report (DAR), and determine if it should be formally submitted in an Incident Report (IR). Also, it must be taken into account which managers and site contacts need to be notified, if any, of the incident. This information is usually provided in the site copy of the Post Orders. Furthermore, an SG must realize that the investigation may require the involvement of local law enforcement, and other police agencies. Guards need to know how and when to contact the local law enforcement and other police agencies, and to assist these agencies in their duties. At no time should a SG hinder law enforcement's investigation of the matter. After the initial securing of the scene, a guard needs to begin the investigation of the event. The basic purpose is to focus on the way everything was prior to and after the incident. This is primarily done through interviews and observations. When conducting an interview there are basic guidelines to follow.
- First, guards should try to question persons and witnesses in familiar surroundings, to make the interviewee feel relaxed.
- Second, when possible, make note of exact phrases and descriptions from those being examined.
- Third, focus the conversation on concrete facts and not suppositions, opinion or speculation.
- Fourth, interviews of persons involved should be separate to stop people from influencing each other.
- Fifth, questions, when asked, should not be intimidating, accusatory, or aggressive because this could potentially intimidate the interviewee or give the impression that they are being blamed for the incident. Questions should be open-ended and non-leading, thus allowing the interviewee to provide a more direct and informative answer.

The other major portion of an investigation is to enable you to provide detailed observations. It is through this that a record of the location and events will further complete the overall picture. If the incident is an accident or something like a gate door left open, it needs to have detailed documentation. If possible, and in accordance with the Post Orders and/or with management's consent, take pictures or video of the location, make sure that when doing this, a guard is following the law and rules if it involves recording people. It is also important that photos are not taken of items that are proprietary in nature to the client. Observations are all about trying to find or track evidence, which will enable a determination of an accident or provide key details in a criminal investigation. A key to observations is to take your time so that nothing is overlooked and that the area in question is properly evaluated for evidence. Common items overlooked in many investigations are what the authorities call transient evidence and conditions, such as: smells, sounds, sights, temperature, and weather. Make a methodical observation and search of the scene using a grid or other type of patterned examination. Finally, pull any video evidence from remote cameras or recordings located at the site. This concludes the interview and observation portions of the event which will allow the reporting guard to move to the next stage of the investigation.

Next, the report-writing phase of the investigation takes priority. Here a guard will create and write a detailed timeline of the event making sure to include all aspects of the investigation answering detailed information on who, what, when, where, and how regarding the incident, obtain or take any witness and participant statements, and all evidence collected to allow for a completed incident report. Timely reporting to the scene, an organized thorough investigation, and a timely submission of a well written detailed report is the best way to document what occurred. From here the report will be passed along to various groups and individuals. This can range from the client site contact, to Securitas Canada Management, to various law enforcement agencies. Remember, as the report is being finalized that this will become a permanent record, and at the same time a reflection of the individual composing it, as well as Securitas Canada.

For information on what to include or how to write an Incident Report please consult with your Branch Manager or HR Manager about taking the Investigative Report Writing course offered through Securitas.

Conclusion

One of the aspects of the stellar service that we provide to our clients is the submission of detailed and accurate reports. It is through the exceptional job performance of our guards that we can display proof of commitment and dedication to the mission and goals as agreed upon in contracts with our clients. A thorough investigation and its accompanying fully detailed report is just one aspect of the service that is provided; it is a crucial item. At the end of the day investigations are about observation and reporting, if done well it will increase the success of our mission, help protect our clients, and establish a permanent record of events at that particular site. It is why we at Securitas Canada must strive to maintain the same level of service and investigations across this vast company and all its markets and verticals.

