

Security Spotlight

An informational Guide for Securitas Canada Clients and Employees



September 2016

Securitas Canada Limited

Number 150

Safeguarding Classified & Proprietary Information



Security Guard (SG) Lopez had just returned to his workstation after completing an interview as required by Post Orders when responding to an emergency. SG Lopez works at a critical infrastructure site that has classified areas as well as information that is deemed proprietary. When he sits down to begin composing his Incident Report (IR) he encounters a problem. What should be included in the report and how will he maintain the integrity of classified and proprietary information while still complying with reporting requirements?

A common dilemma a guard might encounter is trying to determine what is considered classified and what is considered proprietary information. Classified information is defined as sensitive information to which access is restricted by law or regulation to particular classes of people. A formal security clearance is required to handle or access classified documents. No formal security clearance is needed to handle proprietary information, better known as a trade secret. This is information that a private company or business desires to keep confidential from outside persons or competitors. This can take the form of and include secret formulas, secret processes, and methods used in the manufacturing and production of a product or good (Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2015).

As illustrated by this scenario, any guard could, at some point in their career with Securitas Canada and related companies, be required to complete one of a number of possible reports. Reports should be clear, concise, correct and complete. It is necessary to interview witnesses and possible victims so that you can have a record of all relevant information. However, it is also important to maintain the confidentiality of certain private and/or proprietary pieces of information in reports. Not doing so can have several unintended effects, including leaking classified or secret information. There is also the possibility of releasing personal medical or biographical information about witnesses and possible victims. Additional unforeseen consequences include providing corporate or industry secrets, or allowing site plans or security operations protection information to become available to the public or elements that wish to exploit it. Such breaches of confidentiality could result in theft, lawsuits and criminal prosecution of those connected to the report including the guard writing the report, Securitas Canada and related companies and even client employees.

To reduce the chance of this type of security lapse, a guard should review all the details and itemized pieces of information to verify that nothing included in the report is falling into one of these categories. If in doubt, consult the site supervisor, account or branch manager or the legal department for further clarification.

Added Security

When organizing and writing a report a guard should understand that they are delivering on the promise of the values of Securitas Canada and related companies by being mindful of the need to keep classified and propriety information from being included in a report. A guard's ability to safeguard client information provides an additional layer of security. In today's high tech environment, with computers and electronic message services, the theft of data is of constant concern to IT professionals. If sensitive information were to be included in reports, and those reports intercepted, the information could potentially be used in ways that were not in the interests of the client.

Conclusions

As a security guard goes about performing his/her duties, it is important to contemplate the larger picture. By focusing on something as routine as completing required reports, we are trying to stress the importance of all duties and how they have a potential cascading effect upon what is done in the course of a day. Remember that care should be taken not to include classified or proprietary information in reports.



What is considered classified or proprietary?

In determining the classified or proprietary nature of something, a guard must consider the following:

- Is it something that has been officially classified by a government organization as confidential, secret, or top-secret?
- Does any of the information reveal trade secrets of a business or private enterprise where Securitas Canada and related companies are providing security services?
- Is it sensitive information that requires the approval of an individual or organization? An example of this could be personal medical information about a victim.
- Does the information reveal any aspect of the security operations and protection of the site? If so, reword or remove the reference to specific security practices at that location or site.
- Is the release or inclusion of the information absolutely necessary to have a complete and accurate record of events and actions taken by all parties involved?