

# Security Spotlight

*An informational Guide for Securitas Canada Clients and Employees*



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## Avoiding Complacency: Maintaining Skills Proficiency



**Security experts are forecasting a stormy year of increased terrorist activity in light of the Brussels attack. Certain kinds of activities can indicate terrorist plans are in the works, especially when they occur at or near high-profile sites or places where large numbers of people gather. The ability to recognize and report these precursor intelligence gathering activities may interrupt potential terrorist events, crimes and other threats before they occur.**

In most organizations, there exists a constant challenge of avoiding the creeping issue of complacency. This is why Securitas Canada has made Vigilance one of its primary values. Complacency usually begins with small minor events that can, over time, snowball and lead to major problems that can inhibit an organization's mission and goals. In the security field, this death knell may potentially open the door and increase the likelihood of becoming a softer target for terrorist activity.

### **Causes of Complacency**

Like most people, when someone is newly hired, they are eager and proactive in their position. However, complacency can set in as time progresses and individuals become more comfortable in their duties. Unfortunately, there is not only one cause or reason for complacency. There is, however, several specific signs that one must watch out for to combat this creeping of complacency in employees. If such complacency is spotted by an individual, regardless of his/her position within the organization, it is his/her responsibility to address this with the proper manager.

One cause for complacency is when a security officer (SO) does not understand the goals or the mission. It is important for newly hired officers, as well as supervisors, to ensure that all SOs are informed of the specifics of the site plan. The site plan includes all aspects of the service agreement with the client and details the roles and duties of the

*Integrity Vigilance Helpfulness*

SO. Additionally, a site supervisor, account manager, or Branch Manager should provide the newly employed SO with an overall picture for the particular client site. This knowledge and awareness constitutes the foundation for contentment and helps the SO avoid a lackadaisical attitude.

Furthermore, most sites at which SOs work do not necessarily experience major crises or events on a regular basis. This lack of activity can lay the foundation for an employee "going through the motions" and failing to be proficient in the necessary skills needed to excel in the position. The lack of need to perform in emergent situations can lead to a deterioration of abilities. This, combined with an employee not participating in refresher training to maintain skill levels can create a dragging effect upon the mission.

The last major cause of complacency is when officers are not provided with feedback when needed. If an SO does not know if he/she is performing his/her job functions incorrectly or in a specifically designated manner, then the SO will not understand what to improve or modify. Additionally, if an officer is told of a weakness in his/her job performance, but refuses to address it or to receive refresher training, then there will be the potential for complacency.

### **Stay Informed, Stay Vigilant**

Certain kinds of activities on the site can indicate terrorist plans are in the works, especially when they occur at or near high-profile sites or places where large numbers of people gather. Authorities urge citizens to keep an eye out for such precursor conduct like that listed below and to report it immediately.

**Surveillance:** Are you aware of anyone that may be recording or engaged in other monitoring activities, taking notes, using cameras, maps, binoculars or other obser-

vation equipment at a key facility?

**Deploying Assets:** Have you observed abandoned vehicles, stockpiling of suspicious materials, or persons being deployed near a key facility?

**Suspicious Persons:** Are you aware of anyone who does not appear to belong in the workplace, neighborhood, business establishment, or near a key facility?

**Suspicious Questioning:** Are you aware of anyone attempting to gain information in person, by phone, mail, email or other communication method regarding a key facility or its personnel?

**Acquiring Supplies:** Are you aware of anyone attempting to improperly acquire explosives, weapons, ammunitions, dangerous chemicals, uniforms, badges, flight manuals, access cards or identification for a key facility, or to legally obtain items under suspicious circumstances that could be used in a terrorist act?

**Dry Runs:** Have you observed any behaviour that appears to be preparation for terrorist activity, such as mapping out routes, playing out scenarios with other people, monitoring key facilities, timing traffic lights or traffic flow, or other suspicious activities?

**Tests of Security:** Are you aware of any attempts to penetrate or test physical security or procedures at a key facility or event? Recognizing and reporting precursor intelligence-gathering activities can interrupt potential terrorist events and other threats before they occur.

While on the job, security officers should follow post orders for reporting suspicious activity. In addition, authorities encourage citizens to contact police, to report suspicious activity or behaviour. If there is an emergency or immediate threat, call

911.

## **Combating Complacency**

The number one method to stop complacency creep rests in skills proficiency. Securitas Canada's goal is to ensure that all employees are properly trained in both the company and client mission goals. This is accomplished through all levels of operations, but specifically must be addressed at the branch level.

The Branch Managers and Account Managers are the ones that should have an eye and ear out constantly checking to ensure that Securitas is being proactive in addressing all officers training and client concerns. Security officers must ask and receive refresher training if needed or when there is a change in the site plan. Staying ahead of and addressing concerns that may affect the mission will keep employees from lapsing into boredom.

## **Conclusion**

All employees can address their training and skills through multiple avenues. First, every employee must take it upon themselves to understand the site plan, goals, and mission of our organization. If they are not sure of something then they must speak up and ask.

The lack of knowledge is not a viable excuse for poor job performance. Next, all employees must be adaptable to ensure that any challenges in a mission can be surmounted and accomplished. This can be in the areas of scheduling, cross training, flexibility in temporary assignments, and completing required or necessary training as needed by the client or company.