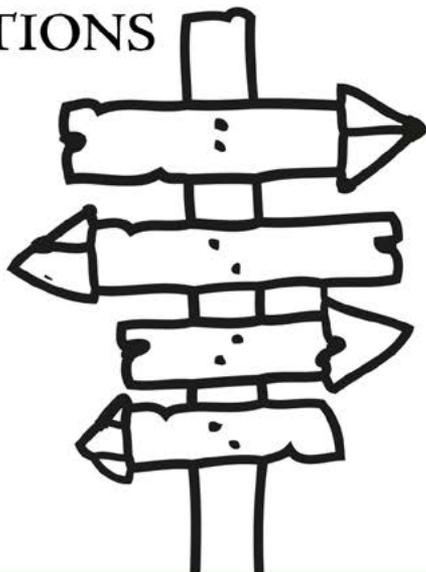


A GUIDE TO

SECURITY GUARD COMPANY

OPERATIONS

*It's about more
than putting
a warm body
on post*



BY COURTNEY W. SPARKMAN

FOUNDER OF OFFICERREPORTS.COM

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CHAPTER

INTRODUCTION

Is your security guard business struggling? Or, are you doing well but wondering if you could be doing even better? Are you sure you know what it takes to win and keep customers even when other companies offer a lower billing rate?

In this competitive market, you can use all the help you can get in developing your business to deliver maximum value to your customers at minimum cost. Over the twelve years that I sold security guard services, I learned a lot of lessons—some of them the hard way. Get the benefit of everything I learned, ranging from tips I developed from trial and error to a reading list of the books I found most valuable in establishing and growing my family's security business.

This book is intended to give you the benefit of my experience without the hassle of trial and error. I'll talk about some of the most common mistakes and pitfalls specific to this industry and how to avoid them. I also lay out specific, actionable steps that you can take to improve and grow your business, develop stronger relationships with your clients, and win new clients even when competing with low-cost security guard companies.

First, because your security officers are your business, this book contains valuable tips for hiring and training security officers, including developing a supervisor program and why you should be doing this. We'll also lay out the Dos and Don'ts of managing your officers, from how, who, and when to hire to best practices for terminating an officer (and when not to!), to how to provide your security officers with the tools they need to succeed as partners in your company.

Second, we'll explain how to deliver maximum value to your clients and make sure they know just how valuable the service is that you are providing as well as how to make yourself more valuable to your clients—without adding to your costs. And,

we'll give you the scoop on what equipment really is essential to your business so that you can figure out how much you need to be spending on things such as uniforms, communication, and training and management tools.

Third, we'll share with you what you need to know to run a great security guard company, sure signs that your company is in trouble and what to do about it, the secrets of keeping a full staff of qualified officers, how and why to keep your SUTA rate low, and much more.

OfficerReports.com is proud to offer this comprehensive and practical guide to operating a great security guard company as part of our ongoing commitment to helping security guard company owners and managers build their businesses and provide standout service.

You can always find more knowledge and up-to-date information on security guard company management at our online magazine, Security Guard Services Magazine, and our blog, The Soapbox.

We look forward to working with you!

CHAPTER

**YOUR OFFICERS ARE THE
FACE OF YOUR COMPANY**

TIPS

FOR A

NEW SECURITY

GUARD



Security Tips to Share With a New Security Guard

I was talking with a client once about the importance of providing officers with an appropriate level of training prior to their starting work. That conversation started me thinking about the employee orientation that we provided to our officers before they started working at our clients' sites. In hindsight, while the orientation was pretty comprehensive, there are a few things that I think we missed. If I were going to do it again, I think I would include some real world, common sense security guard tips in our orientation. Here are a few of the tips that I would give to my security officers.

- **Remember that the client is not your friend.** Never confuse the client's kindness or congeniality with friendship. What the client is showing you by being friendly is that they respect and value the service that you provide. Those kind gestures do not mean that they are willing to overlook any shortcomings or lapses in service. So when the client calls complaining about something that you did, don't feel betrayed because the client is just doing their job. It's nothing personal, because as a security officer the client is not your friend.
- **Learn to be professional without trying to be friends.** Don't attempt to build friendships. Attempt to build professional relationships that make the client love having you there. That type of relationship makes you more valuable to the client and the security company.
- **The difference of the billing rate minus the wage rate is not what the company makes on the contract.** So

despite all of the rumors security officers hear about how much the company is raking in, the company is not that profitable. Security guard companies have a lot of expenses beyond what they pay their officers. Which takes me to the next point...

- **Pricing a security contract is a science that security officers should familiarize themselves with.** When you evaluate a security guard contract you have to look at more than just the billing rate and wage rate. You have to look at FUTA, SUTA, General Liability, Workers Compensation, and a dozen other costs. So in the end the \$1 – 3 that the security guard company makes per hour really isn't that much.
- **Complaining to the client about how much you make as a security officer doesn't get you a raise.** Nine times out of ten they probably already know. I can't count the number of times I've heard about officers complaining to clients about pay. But I do remember that on a number of those occasions, the client asked for the security officer to be removed from the site. To get a raise, one of three things has to happen:
 - 1) A yearly increase is built into the contract that allows for officers to receive raises;
 - 2) There is a wage increment program built into the contract; or
 - 3) The client agrees to a billing rate increase that will allow the officers to receive a raise.
- **Not signing your write-up doesn't really mean anything.** If and when you are ever disciplined, whether or not you sign your write-up, it makes no difference. If

you don't sign it, a witness signs it stating that you were informed but didn't sign. This isn't a battle you can win, so don't waste your energy objecting.

- **Take responsibility for your own actions and the success of your security team.** Taking responsibility will help ensure that the contract for the site that you are working is successful. Because although the management team can provide support for the officers at the site, it is ultimately the officers' performance that the client uses to judge the success of the contract. Taking responsibility will almost guarantee your success with any security company.

There are probably a dozen more security guard tips that I could come up with, but you will probably come up with your own as you go. Make sure to write them down and incorporate them into your orientation program for your new officers. Of course, one of the most important things you will cover in your orientation is how to write daily activity reports, so let's talk about how to do that.

HOW TO WRITE A

DAILY

ACTIVITY

REPORT



How To Write A Daily Activity Report That Matters

During your security officer's shift, he or she is responsible for capturing a substantial amount of information via the many reports that they write, including daily activity reports, incident reports, maintenance requests, truck logs, and a multitude of others. The most important is the officer's daily activity report. The daily activity report (DAR) is the most common of all security guard reports because one is completed by every officer, every shift. Security officers act as the eyes and ears of the customer, therefore it is critical that your officers provide your customers with relevant and valuable information. As such, it is important that every security officer knows how to write a good daily activity report.

Here are some tips that your officers can use to provide your customers with quality daily activity reports. Whether your organization is using [daily activity report software](#) such as that provided by [OfficerReports.com](#) or you are still using handwritten reports, you should find these tips helpful.

1. Branding is important.

Every report that your organization provides to its customers should be branded with your company name and logo. By doing this you will help your customers associate your organization with high quality products. [Building your brand](#) helps build incredible value for your organization.

2. Make sure reports are time stamped.

Every DAR should be time stamped. It should also contain the location that the report pertains to as well as the name of the officer who submitted the report. This step is critical in maintaining the evidentiary value of the report in case it is used in court.

3. Include shift start notes.

At the start of the officer's shift, there are many details that they should be recording. The three most important details are:

- The shift that the officer is working;
- Any special instructions that the officer receives from the client or a supervisor (these instructions should also be added to the Pass On Log); and
- An inventory of the items that the officer receives and the condition of those items.

4. Make information easy to find

When your officers write a DAR, they should make it easy for the reader to quickly find the information that they are looking for. If you are using digital reporting, ensure that the officers are specifying the tasks that they are performing. For example, if they are doing an "Employee Escort," that activity should be distinct and separate from their other activities. By setting up the DAR in this way, it is easier to quantify the officer's activities throughout the shift. If you are using handwritten reports, think about having the officer use highlighters to color code their activities. For instance, incidents might be red while maintenance issues might be blue.

5. Show consistent activity

Every observation that the officer makes should be accompanied by the time that the officer is making that observation. If you are using daily activity report software, this time stamp will help demonstrate to your customers that your officers are active throughout their shifts. In addition, if the DAR turns out to have legal significance, an accurate detailing of activities will be important.

6. Be descriptive

During the course of a shift, there are a number of details that officers can add to their daily activity reports. Officers should provide the Who, What, When, and Where for observations that they are making. Keep in mind that the phrase “**Made rounds all secure**” is **unacceptable** and demonstrates a lack of effort on the part of the security officer. Even on uneventful shifts, the officer’s report can include things like:

- How long it took to complete a patrol
- People that the officer sees or talks to
- What the officer has observed looking out of the window
- Things that the officer hears

7. The K.I.S.S. (Keep It Simple Stupid) Principle

As with many things, the KISS Principle also applies to writing daily activity reports. Unless the officer has won a Pulitzer Prize, they should refrain from attempting to show off their vocabulary. An officer’s observations should be concise, descriptive, and factual.

Additionally, the officer should only report what they know as a fact, and should refrain from stating their opinions or making speculations. The report should contain *nothing* but the facts.

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