

## IMPORTANCE OF SUPERVISION IN SECURITY GUARDING

### Introduction

The old saying, “anything unchecked is undone,” underlines importance of supervision in security guarding in an era of multiple challenges and increasingly professional services demanded in the industry which is slowly graduating from a generalized to a specialized skill based vocation. So far supervision is seen as add on with a tendency in some to avoid this important intervention in the hierarchy to cut costs. However supervisors add not only to the depth of security cover being provided but also quality of service thus need particular focus. With the availability of tracking devices there is a perception that supervision has become redundant which is far from truth. Despite technology in an industry which is manpower intensive human factor remains the most important in efficiency as well as effectiveness. A review of the importance of supervision in guarding is thus necessary.

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### Basic Responsibility – Imparting Values

The basic responsibility of a supervisor is to oversee work of the security guards but more importantly ensure that right values have been imbibed in conduct of duty. Effective security guarding depends upon integrity with which the task is being carried out, thus apart from ensuring conduct as per SOP; supervision will ensure that the guards have the right values and approach towards their duties. This is particularly necessary as guards may not be fully socialized or trained and acclimatized to the location where they are deployed. Frequent turnover including leave and other commitment also underlines the need for effective oversight which can be provided by a good supervisor.

### Coordination of Resources

Coordination of resources in an integrated guarding environment where electronic and manual combination is increasingly used will invariably devolve on the supervisor. He/she should be trained to collate and synthesise inputs from all sources in real time and adjust deployment of guards or cameras and other devices as the case may be. Supervision also assumes importance for safety of the guards especially when deployed in large premises such as industrial establishments with spaced out posts and watch towers. A regular reporting process will ensure that the guards periodically give an all okay report to the overseer either on the radio/telephone apart from being checked by patrols.

### Secular Approach

Supervisor also ensures that in a diverse guarding force a secular approach is adopted without biases. This is essential in a communally surcharged environment today where biases are likely to creep in. Security of women is an important challenge in guarding. Supervisors need to be particularly sensitized

towards this issue. Where women guards are being employed management needs special consideration to avoid gender conflict or abuse adding to the role of the supervisor.

### **Motivation, Morale and Team Building**

Motivation to create an environment of efficiency is an important function of a supervisor. Guarding is a routine and monotonous task, thus boredom can easily set in resulting in laxity. Constant supervision is a check against laxity in addition a supervisor needs to keep the guards motivated through means such as individual competitions, situational exercises or mock rehearsals. Thus good supervision will also impart a feeling of satisfaction and achievement on a daily basis making the task seem easy and interesting while catering for exigencies. The aim is to avoid a high turnover rate in the company at large as well as the customer location which would be detrimental to the overall image of the guarding company.

A supervisor is also best placed to assess morale of a guard observing if he is low in spirits due to personal or professional causes thereby undertaking remedial measures. In the era where personnel are being indoctrinated by deviant social and religious groups, close watch over inclinations and activities become an additional responsibility for the superintendent. Team building is another important component of tasks of the supervisor. As a leader he can develop a team to perform optimally by setting the example and ensure cohesion.

### **Communication – Horizontal and Vertical**

Effective communication is a major task of supervisors which is horizontal with the client/agencies as well as vertical with the security manager on the top and the guard below. Problems are likely to recur and complaints pile up where communication is poor or lacking both with the client as well as the guards and the manager in the absence of the superintendent.

### **On the Job Training**

On the job training as per company policy will be carried out under the supervisor. Where this is not feasible, imparting experiential skills imbibed through observation and learning which may not have been incorporated in normal training remains an important facet of a supervisors work. This will be in the nature of a coach where guards are provided guidance rather than formal tutoring which forms the best route for learning.

### **Investigation and Report Writing**

Preliminary investigation of incidents will devolve on the supervisor who should be able to carry out the same in an unbiased manner. An attempt to cover up a guarding infringement if it has occurred should be avoided. The aim is to satisfy the customer on the ability of the guarding company to detect flaws, take remedial action and prevent the same in the future. Supervisors will need the right attitude which goes beyond the normal process of investigations.

Report writing is another major task of a supervisor. While ideally every guard should be capable of writing a report the task will invariably devolve on the supervisor who should be trained for the purpose. This would also include lodging of a first information report (FIR) with the nearest police station where necessary.

## **Emergency and Incident Management**

Emergency or incident management would be one of the primary responsibilities of a supervisor, who should be trained to control the crisis through deployment of all existing resources, calling up additional assistance where necessary and maintaining a semblance of order without allowing the situation to get out of control as far as possible. The emergency can be of varied nature from a terrorist attack, a fire incident or trapping of an individual in a lift etc. Supervisors need to be trained to handle each situation with ease.

## **Performance Assessment**

With security guards switching job frequently there is a necessity to ensure that they have the degree of skills and integrity for which a supervisor is the first layer of assessment. A supervisor needs to undertake individual performance assessments of the guards under his watch which should preferably be in writing so that a running record is maintained. He should give a feedback to assesses based on company policy and will be an effective tool for motivation as well as efficiency enhancement. Recommendations for selection of guards for special assignments can also be made in the report. Those guards who are not performing up to laid down standards can be discharged based on the report of the supervisors.

## **Training and Selection of Supervisors**

Given the multiplicity of tasks envisaged for supervisors as given above an effective training programme must be drawn out to ensure that these are able to perform their duties with required degree of efficiency. A selection process should be established based on performance cum seniority so that only the most deserving who can attain the objectives of the company are appointed as supervisors.

## **Conclusion**

Security contracts need to specify not only the number of guards but supervisors that are to be allocated at the site. Clients who tend to cut costs indicating that supervision will be carried out by their staff need to be sensitized on the advantages that may be gained through professional coaching cum guidance as indicated herein. Security managers in turn will be required to monitor performance of supervisor and ensure that they meet up to the standards laid down.