

People under the influence of drugs and alcohol should be treated with extreme caution. The reason, they are in an altered state of reality and will potentially pose a threat to your safety and the safety of others. Should an individual become unconscious while being under the influence, begin first aid measures.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Report Writing**

Security guards are required to complete written reports of occurrences, duties performed, and comprehensive descriptions of their tasks/observations. Security guards are required to write a variety of reports for different audiences. It is imperative that reports are written in a clear, standardized format to ensure information is conveyed accurately and without bias.

#### **Note Books**

Security guards are required and expected to maintain a notebook or memo book during their shift. The purpose of this reporting tool is to keep a current record of occurrences, incidents and regular duties as they are happening during a shift. It serves as the source of information when generating reports, referencing incidents and providing evidence in court. An entry should be made in your memo book no longer than every twenty minutes.

This pattern should be consistent but any incident that is outside the norm or a change in function from when your last entry was made should also be recorded immediately. It is acceptable to use abbreviations in your memo book, however if you elect to do so, ensure that a legend is created with a written description of what each abbreviation means.

Always be consistent and ensure you capture the maximum amount of information as you might not be able to accurately remember an occurrence after a reasonable amount of time has passed.

**Note:** Experience has shown that inaccurate or incomplete notes cause inaccurate and incomplete reports. Notes are a record or recording of everything you saw, heard and did.

#### **The Purpose of a Note Book**

##### **Assist in preparing notes**

If a Security Guard has the occasion to investigate a number of events, incidents and people, s/he has to ensure s/he has all the facts, details, names, addresses, etc. that will be required when it comes time to report. Experience has shown that the memory cannot be trusted, experience and outside influences will alter the way your mind remembers events. Notes made properly are seldom forgotten as

writing aids the memory. Writing also helps organize the who, what, where when and why.

### Detecting contradictions in statements

If the guard has been conscientious in making notes regarding the events, then any contradictions or changes in fact or details will be found and further questioning may result in the apprehension of the culprit or recovery of assets or information. Courts value written accounts of details higher than memory.

### Be used as an investigative aid

An investigation into a particular event may take days and many hours to complete. During the investigation, notes are to be made of each step and reports to be completed. Good notes will allow the guard to keep everything in line and organized so that they do not forget the necessary facts, ask the wrong person questions which might reveal information or evidence, or repeat steps already taken. In addition, they will allow an instant check of previous notes to check the answers given by other witnesses.

### To refresh memory at a later date

They become an invaluable tool when trying to recall an incident or specific detail of an investigation at a later date. The notes will remind the security guard of what they actually saw, did and heard.

### **The importance of your note book**

- The note book is extremely important because it is tantamount to a legal document, and it is your source document for all other reports.
- It must be able to be read and understood in a court of law without explanation or clarification being required. In other words, it must be able to stand solely on it's own merits.
- It must be able to stand up under close scrutiny in a court of law. If it is complete and legible, and follows the approved format, it will withstand the scrutiny. However, one error on fact, or one deviation from the approved format, can destroy the usefulness of your entire evidence and an otherwise well-prepared case may be thrown out of court on a technicality.
- The evidence written in your note book is accepted as accurate (under oath), if presented in the approved fashion (unless proven wrong) in the same way that the evidence contained in the Police Officer's memo book is accepted at face value. Legibility, consistency, and good format can only reinforce your note book's appearance of accuracy.

- As your note book is the *source document* for all other reports, no fact or observation should appear in any other report that does not also appear in your note book.

### **Tips on the use of a Note Book**

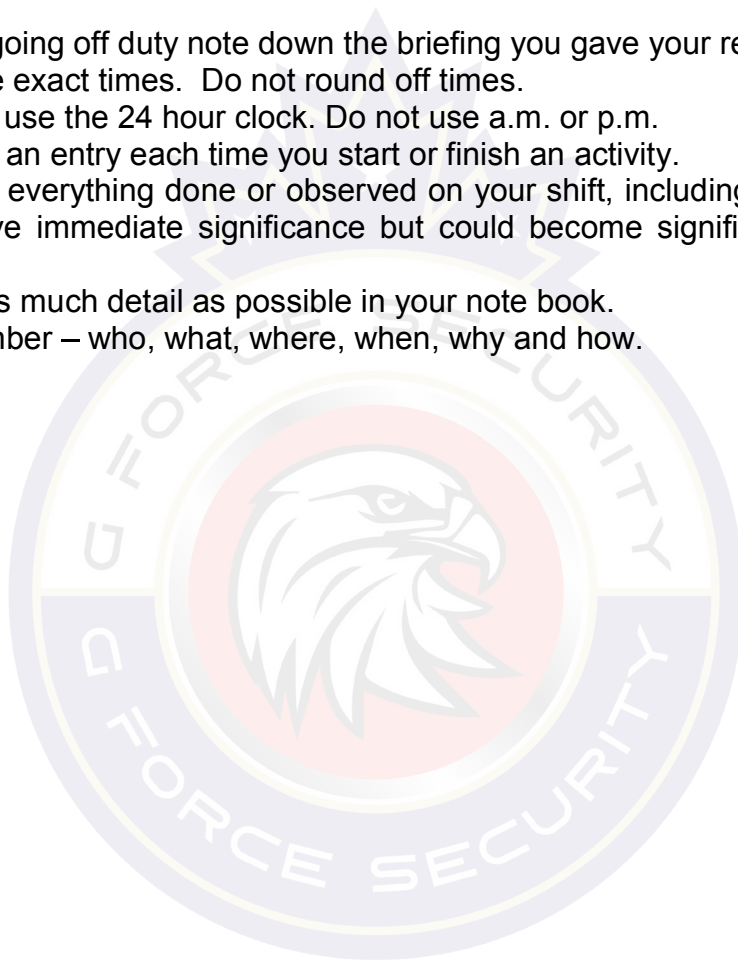
- ALWAYS WRITE LEGIBLY - notes are no good if you can't read them. You may not have time to rewrite them.
- KEEP YOUR NOTES COMPLETE - there must be enough information in your notes to give you a complete picture of the event that you will later have to describe.
- BE SYSTEMATIC - record your information in chronological order - bouncing around in the report becomes confusing - descriptions which are not separated may become confused between persons/items.
- ABBREVIATIONS – Only use abbreviations that are clear, common and in the index of your memo book.
- USE ALL PAGES AND SPACES - by leaving blanks you are wasting space, and leaving yourself open to questioning regarding the accuracy of your notes (i.e. was information added later, were blanks left so you could add later, etc...).
- DEVELOP YOUR OWN STYLE - these are your notes, and must be of benefit to you.
- MAKE NOTES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER THE INCIDENT - the longer you wait, the less you remember, write down observations as you make them, note details from witnesses as you get them, make time as soon as possible afterwards if not practical during.
- REMOVING PAGES - don't do it - if you have to [emergency use - police - etc..] record it in your memo book on the following page.
- ERRORS - do not erase - single line through error and initial.
- PERSONAL NOTES - use the back of book only, there are blank sheets provided for notes.
- OPINIONS – avoid entering your opinions, stick to the facts.
- REVIEW - re-read so that you are sure you understand them - do it as soon after writing them as possible.

## **Basic Rules for Your Note Book**

Here are some basic rules that you should follow when you are writing in your note book.

*It should be noted; that security companies will have their own process.*

- Should start with the date and the location where you are working.
- First entries in your note book should be the briefing by the off going guard.
- When going off duty note down the briefing you gave your relief.
- Use the exact times. Do not round off times.
- Always use the 24 hour clock. Do not use a.m. or p.m.
- Record an entry each time you start or finish an activity.
- Record everything done or observed on your shift, including items that do not have immediate significance but could become significant at a later date.
- Have as much detail as possible in your note book.
- Remember – who, what, where, when, why and how.



Here is a generic example of what a memo book would look like:

	TUESDAY 15 JANUARY 2012
	0600-1400 HOURS
	52 SHEPPARD AVENUE WEST
	TORONTO ONTARIO
0548	BRIEFED BY SECURITY GUARD JOHN <u>SMITH</u> AND RECEIVED
	RADIO, 6 KEYS, AND PATROL ACCESS CARD ALL IN GOOD
	WORKING ORDER. <u>OTHER GUARD'S SIGNATURE</u>
0600	ON DUTY.
0607	PERIMETER PATROL.
0609	FRONT DOOR AJAR WITH LIGHT ON INSIDE THE BUILDING.
	STRONG SMELL OF BLEACH FROM INSIDE.
0610	FOUND MISTER CASEY <u>CHARLES</u> OF ABC CLEANING INSIDE
	MOPPING THE FLOORS. IDENTIFIED WITH BUILDING ACCESS
	CARD #12345. DOOR WAS LEFT OPEN TO AIR OUT THE BUILDING.
0613	SECURED THE FRONT DOOR AND OPENED SOME WINDOWS
	INSTEAD. NOTIFIED THE CLEANER OF THE ABOVE. MISTER
	<u>CHARLES</u> SAID HE WOULD BE FINISHED AROUND 0630 HOURS
	AND WOULD SECURE THE WINDOWS.
0616	CONTINUED PERIMETER PATROL.
0623	PERIMETER PATROL COMPLETE. ALL APPEARS TO BE IN ORDER.
~~~~~	~~~~~
1345	BRIEFED SECURITY GUARD CLAIRE <u>SIMMONS</u> AND HANDED
	OVER RADIO, 6 KEYS, AND PATROL ACCESS CARD ALL IN GOOD
	WORKING ORDER. <u>OTHER GUARD'S SIGNATURE</u>
1400	OFF DUTY. <u>YOUR SIGNATURE</u>

## Reports

### Purpose/Implications of Reports

Complete and accurate reports are used for the following purposes;

- To accumulate data to be used as a guide for future activities
- To record an event
- To retain information i.e. issuance of keys
- Record evidence (potentially for court purposes)
- Detail an operation or procedure
- Summarize occurrences
- To reach conclusions such as the need for anti-intrusion alarms or other security suggestions
- Relate the results of an investigation
- Transmit information
- Record and/or describe a message or threat

- Determine the cause of accidents, incidents
- Account for security activity
- A report may be required as evidence in a court of law.

### **Classification of Reports**

Reports are generally classified into 4 types. They are:

#### **OPERATION REPORTS**

These reports originate at the operational level of an agency and relate to routine security matters. They include crime or incident reports and all reports normally prepared by Security Guards as a result of their daily activity. The operational report is used to communicate laterally - within the same level of the organizational structure. It may be directed from one guard to another or from one shift to the next. It also travels upward in the chain of command and becomes the raw material from which administrative reports are developed.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

Administrative reports, as the name implies, affect the administration of the service/agency. They range from personnel and budgetary reports to crime analyses.

There are several types of reports used within the security industry. The names given to these reports may vary from one employer to another but the basic concept remains unchanged. Some of the various types of reports one might encounter are:

#### **USE OF FORCE REPORTS**

These are designed to capture any application of force that a guard might have to employ in the execution of his/her lawful duty. The purpose is to have a record of what happened and why and be able to justify a reasonable amount of force if litigation ensues.

## WITNESS STATEMENTS

A witness statement is a statement summarizing the oral evidence that a witness will give. Your employer will have specific forms that are to be used for this purpose. However, here are few key components to them, they are:

1. Basic Information - Date, Time and Place statement was taken;
2. Description of and relevant information on witness;
3. Narrative - Description of what happened;
4. Clarification - Questions and Answers;
5. Confirmation of statement accuracy;
6. Signatures;
7. Concluding Time and Date statement was taken.

### **Qualities of a Good report**

- A Report must be self-explanatory as it is often directed to a person removed from the source of the incident.
- CLEAR - the language and the format must be simple and to the point.
- LEGIBLE - when handwritten or printed they must be easily read by others.
- COMPLETE - all available and related facts should be included, memory alone is not sufficient to assure completeness, notes taken at the scene should be consulted.
- ACCURATE - factual information should form the basis upon which the report is written. Feelings and opinions of the writer are proper only when called for and clearly labeled as such.
- BRIEF - brevity is desirable to the extent it eliminates unnecessary words, not when it is achieved through the loss of facts.
- PROMPT - A report should be dated and prepared as soon as possible after the completion of work.

## Basic Elements of Report Writing

Regardless of the type of report that you are writing here is a list of important parts that may/must be included in it.

Example: Monday, 01 January, 2010.

**Date** – The exact date of the incident, written out in full.

**Time** – The exact time the incident began at. Also record time that events happened

Example: Time of calls made, arrival of fire department, and/or resolution of situation.

**Location** – The address of the building you are working in. The exact location within the building should also be noted.

Example: 123 Center Street in the loading dock.

**Actions/Behaviors** – This can be the action taken by all those involved. When it comes to behaviors, this can be the behaviors of the subjects you are dealing with.

**Description of Individuals** – This is self explanatory. Descriptions should include items such as height, hair colour, eye colour, and/or clothing. A good practice to get used to would be to make note of any distinctive markings on the individual such as tattoo's or scars.

**Observations** – This is what the security guard saw or witnessed during the incident/situation.

A good tip to remember is: Always remember your 5 W's and H\*, and you will have a detailed report.

\* 5 W's and H = Who, What, Where, When, Why and How

***The following page will have a generic example of what a report would look like.***



### **Incident Report**

ON TUESDAY 15 JANUARY 2020 AT 0529 HOURS THE WRITER (SECURITY GUARD JOHN SMITH) WHILE ON DUTY AT CENTER PLAZA 123 MAIN STREET TORONTO ONTARIO HEARD THE BUILDING FIRE ALARM ACTIVATE. THE WRITER ATTENDED THE ANNUNCIATOR PANEL AND FOUND THAT THE FIRE ALARM ORIGINATED FROM THE 29TH FLOOR MECHANICAL ROOM. THE WRITER CONTACTED 911 AND REQUESTED THAT TORONTO FIRE DEPARTMENT ATTEND THE SITE. AT 0536 HOURS THE WRITER GROUNDED THE ELEVATORS. AT 0537 HOURS THE WRITER UNLOCKED THE SOUTH WEST DOORS IN PREPARATION FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT. AT 0538 HOURS TORONTO FIRE DEPARTMENT PUMPER #2, LADDER #4, AND EMERGENCY VEHICLE #6 ARRIVED WITH CHIEF JACKSON IN CHARGE. AT 0540 HOURS THE CHIEF CONDUCTED AN INVESTIGATION. AT 0549 HOURS THE CHIEF GAVE AN "ALL CLEAR" AND THE FIRE PANEL WAS RESET BY THE WRITER. THE PROBLEM WAS FOUND TO BE A SYSTEM MALFUNCTION. AT 0551 HOURS THE FIRE DEPARTMENT LEFT SITE AND THE PERIMETER WAS SECURED. AT 0552 HOURS THE WRITER PATROLLED EVERY FLOOR AND CHECKED THE STAIRWELLS AND ALL PERIMETER DOORS. AT 0555 HOURS THE WRITER RESUMED NORMAL DUTIES.

**YOUR SIGNATURE**

### **Distribution of Reports**

Contrary to popular belief not all your reports go to your employer only. Reports can get distributed to various people depending on the nature of the report.

Always remember, most reports will be carbon paper, your employer will get a copy and the second copy goes to its respective person. With the advancement of technology there are various other ways to distribute these reports for example e-mail. If this is the form of distribution in your work place, a good practice would be to ensure that a hard copy of the report is printed off, in the event of electronic loss.

Here is a list of people that might get the copy of your report:

*Client* – Would get copies of reports that would involve any incident occurring at the building that you are working at. Example: fire alarm.

*Building Operators* – Would get reports that would involve something wrong with the building. Example: temperature problem in a tenant space.

*Building Maintenance* – Would get reports that require maintenance of the building. Example: graffiti found on a wall.

*Security Supervisor* – Would get any internal reports that are employer specific. Example: vacation request.

## Chapter 5

### Health and Safety

The policies and procedures of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) are necessary to ensure the occupational safety of security guards and those they interact with.

#### **Understanding the Occupational Health and Safety Act – Ontario**

An occupational health or safety hazard is anything in the work place that has the potential to cause harm to the human body. Health and safety hazards vary greatly depending on the type of work involved. We usually associate work hazards with mines, construction sites and other industrial workplaces. However, workplaces like schools offices, hospitals and retail locations have their own particular hazards.

Many aspects of life can cause health and safety hazards. Equipment, processes, chemical, biological or physical agents, work procedures and design of the workplace are all potentially hazardous.