



Lecture & Presentation Notes

BASIC SECURITY TRAINING

INTRODUCTION TO REPORT WRITING

COMPILED, WRITTEN & PRESENTED BY
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Reading Time: 45 minutes

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As a security guard, reporting what you see, do and are made aware of on the job is an important aspect of your responsibility on the job. As a matter of fact, it's not only a work related obligation but also a legal one.

REPORTS

A report is a permanent record of events or actions that occurred during a specific time period. A report written today; may not be referred to until hours, days, months or even years later and as a result this means the person who reads the report may not necessarily be the same person who witnessed the events recorded in it. This is important to remember whenever you write a report because you must make sure your report is able to give all the details of the event clearly in an understandable manner. Your report must stand and speak for itself by including the names of people involved, how they were involved, what happened, where, and the time and date the event happened, and how did the event happen.

3 ASPECTS OF SECURITY REPORTS

1) Reports are necessary and used in the investigation of allegations and incidents; and in civil and criminal legal proceedings.

In this capacity your report may be used to:

Verify you were in attendance at a specific place during a specific time and date.

Provide a detailed account of what you did, what you observed and what was reported to you.

Provide a detailed account or statement of an incident or event as reported to you by a witness, victim or other third party.

Provide documentary evidence in a civil or criminal court proceeding.

This information will be used to help determine legal liability, guilt or innocence of people and establish if any civil or criminal laws were violated. The consequences of which could be life altering for those involved.

2) Reports are necessary and used in the administration of legislated health & safety practices and operations.

In this capacity your report may be used to:

Identify potential health and, or safety hazards that require immediate attention.

Identify maintenance or preventative maintenance issues that while they may not immediately pose a risk to property or people could escalate over time to such a risk.

Identify the cause of a workplace related accident or near-miss safety incident so that it may not happen again because it can be eliminated or managed in the future.

Identify that the workplace was and is compliant with current health & safety regulations and best practices.

The information contained in your report in this instance will be used to prove that health & safety regulations were followed, assist in accident investigations and provide incident based data for use in updating workplace health & safety policies and procedures in the interest of accident prevention or reduction.

3) Reports are necessary and used in the verification and validation of security service delivery and in a quality assurance role of the services provided.

In this capacity your report may be used to:

Confirm that you were in attendance at a specific place during a specific time and date performing security services.

Establish exactly what services were performed and when they were performed.

Identify any remedial action taken that may have mitigated health, safety or security risk to property or people.

The information contained in your report in this instance is used to establish and maintain a business case for the security service you and your security service provides. This justifies your job and the budget dollars spent on having security. You see, at the end of the month when the client or department receives an invoice for thousands of dollars for security services, the only physical item or deliverable as it is referred to, that they can see is your security report. A good report will indicate money well spent on activities where security took proactive measures to prevent, reduce or manage risks and threats to the business. A poor report will make it clear that security did little to proactively provide service to the business and the same result could have been achieved without security and the added expense.

While the legal and health & safety aspects of security report writing are emphasized, the aspect of security service delivery in report writing is often overlooked or trivialized but it is a critical aspect in the private security industry. For many businesses, the concept of seeing security services as a direct profit centre or directly affecting the bottom line of the business is quite often not evident or not considered as a critical success factor. For example, a door found unlocked and then locked by a security guard on patrol may have potentially saved thousands to millions of dollars from theft or vandalism by a potential criminal seeking a crime of opportunity. But then again, no one may predict or witness, whether or not this or any other scenario would actually occur. In any case, a detailed report outlining the services performed establishes the value of the security service provided and validates its usefulness, and your job as a security guard at the business.

In summary, a security report is a permanent record that may be used in legal proceedings, investigations, health & safety activities, and to justify the need for having security services.

THE RULES

In writing a report, a statement or taking notes there are certain rules to be followed. These rules are;

- Always use a black ink ball point or roller ball pen. Never use any other colour ink, a pencil or felt tip type marker pen. Black ink is used because it scans/photocopies well, is noticeable if it is altered such as erased or traced over, and it is not as prone to fading or discolouring over time due to exposure to light.
- Should you make an error when writing a report, a statement or taking notes; do not erase or write or scribble over the error and do not use white correction tape or fluid as this may disqualify your report or statement as admissible evidence in a civil or criminal proceeding. Rather, draw a single solid line over top of the error and place your initials next to the line. Then continue on with your report with corrected word or text.
- All reports, statements and notes must be printed in block letters not cursive script. This ensures that they can be easily read by someone other than yourself.
- When writing any report or taking notes, it is important to only include detailed descriptions of what you observe, what happened, what was reported to you and by whom. You must avoid putting opinions, points of view or speculative conclusions. A report or note is not a story where an ending is expected or required. A report or note is a record of events and observations as they happened without commentary and oftentimes without conclusion.

- All information once recorded in either a report, note or statement is to be considered as “Restricted Information.” Restricted Information is only to be read or referred to by people who need to know, so it is restricted to only those individuals. Generally, this is considered as confidential information to most individuals outside of public safety and the military.

So, what exactly is the difference between a report, notes and a statement?

A REPORT & REPORT FORMATS

A report is a detailed and true account of what happened during a specific time period on a specific date. The report could document what you did and observed during your security shift or it could document an accident or incident that either you personally witnessed or one that was reported to you by a witness or even the victim.

Reports are done using two different formats: Chronological and Narrative.

A chronological report is a report where several actions or events are listed and described in order of date and time. The date is at the top of the report and times of each event are entered in the left margin with details of the event entered opposite the time to the right. The chronological report is most often used for reporting details of specific patrols, tasks and duties performed during a security shift. It may also be used in simple incident reporting when reporting the times and descriptions of the arrival and departure of emergency and maintenance services in response to an incident at the job site.

A narrative report is a report where the details of actions and events during a specific time period on a specific date are described in the third person, as if being told by someone to another in a direct but conversational manner. However, unlike having a routine conversation with someone, the report will not contain any opinions, points of view or speculation. Instead it will contain only the facts and observations as they happened in a neutral manner.



With both these report formats it is very important to ensure they include details about the following elements:

WHO – Who was involved, who witnessed the incident, who is writing the report? Descriptions of alleged suspects and victims. Be sure to include full names.

WHAT – What exactly happened, what happened before (if known) before this event or incident, what happened (if known) after this event or incident, what was the impact (if known) of this event or incident, what did you do once you knew about this, what did emergency or maintenance services do, what did others involved or who witnessed this do, what is the description of the property damaged, stolen or requiring maintenance or repair, what are the descriptions of suspects, victims, missing persons or witnesses, what are the make, model, colour and license plate numbers of vehicles involved?

WHEN (time and date) – When did this event or incident happen, when did emergency or maintenance services arrive and leave, when did things go back to normal or did they, when did you discover or have the incident reported to you, when did you take action?

WHERE (street address and location inside the property) – Where exactly did this event or incident happen, where were you when you first knew about it? Where did the ambulance take the casualties to (hospital, home, other medical facility), if applicable. Where were vehicles taken – towed to, if an accident.

WHY (if evident) – Why did this event or incident happen, why (if evident) did it take this long to be aware of this situation?

HOW – How were these people involved, how did you learn of this incident, how did this happen (if it's clear how it happened), how did this impact the job site, how could this been avoided or reduced?

When describing property it is important to include what the item is or does, make & model, serial number, colour, any identifying marks and the condition of the item, such as new, used, broken, etc. If you don't have a lot of these details or the property is a unique item, it may be necessary to provide the dimensions, size and weight of the item in order to help further identify it.

When describing people it is important to try to be as detailed as possible. The best method is to start with general characteristics first such as clothing colour and type, height, weight, build, hair length, style and colour, gender, complexion, footwear and colour, and any other obvious features. From there you can then consider more detailed characteristics such as eye colour, tattoos, piercings, teeth, speech patterns, vocabulary or accents, right or left handed, detectable handicaps such as a limp, and any accessory items the individual may have such as a bag, backpack or briefcase, cane and jewellery items.

Regardless, whenever you approach or are approached by an individual it is important to make a note of their clothing colour and type, height, weight, build, hair length, style and colour, gender, complexion, footwear and colour, and any other obvious features.

A quick way to approximate the height of a person after they have gone is to make a mental note of how tall they looked in comparison to a fixed object they were standing near or next to, such as a door, fence, painting or sign on a wall or other object that could be measured and used as a reference after they have left. In doing this, you will always have the basic information you need to describe the person in the event you must write a report or identify them at a later time. Practicing and making this a part of your routine will help you identify and remember individuals out of all those you may see each day while on duty.

Reports may be made on single pages of blank paper, on a report form or on digital paper or a digital form using a computer or tablet based device. All of these details must also be included and addressed when taking notes and considered when taking statements.

REPORT FORMS

As a Security Guard the majority of reports you will prepare and file will involve the completion of a standard report form where you will be required to fill in the blanks of requested and relevant information about the security service and duty you perform, and incidents you may encounter. Typically, the forms you will complete are generically known as “Daily Security Report” or “Security Shift Report.” Should an incident or accident occur during your shift, you use a “Special Incident Report”, “Occurrence Report” or “Accident Report.” In provinces such as Ontario, a “Use of Force Report” is legally required whenever a licensed security guard or private investigator uses handcuffs, baton, firearm or other legally authorized weapon; uses any kind of physical force on another person; or has the care and control of a dog that attacks an individual.

Report forms are designed to ensure important details are not overlooked. In addition to completing all the requirements we have discussed regarding the reports, these are quite often used in the private contract security industry as an attachment to the monthly service invoice to the client as proof security service was provided for specific periods of time.

Your ability to accurately and thoroughly complete a report form not only provides a permanent record of security services provided and observations on your shift but also reflects your own level of ability when it comes to being attentive to details and professionalism.

GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING SECURITY REPORT FORMS

1) Before completing any form, read it carefully first, top to bottom. Understand what is being asked. Then go back and begin to fill in the blanks. If a particular blank or question on the form does not apply to what you are reporting, always put “N/A” in the area for the response. “N/A” means Not Applicable, as in, the information asked does Not Apply in this instance. By doing this, you are indicating that you have carefully reviewed what was asked and responded accordingly. Furthermore, this ensures that no one can “fill in the blank” at a later date without your knowledge, which would equate to tampering with your report.

2) Always use a black ink ball point or roller ball pen. Never use any other colour ink, a pencil or felt tip type marker pen. Black ink is used because it scans/photocopies well, is noticeable if it is altered such as erased or traced over, and it is not as prone to fading or discolouring over time due to exposure to light.

3) Should you make an error when completing a report form; do not erase or write or scribble over the error and do not use white correction tape or fluid as this may disqualify the completed report form as admissible evidence in a civil or criminal proceeding. Rather, draw a single solid line over top of the error and place your initials next to the line. Then continue on with the report form.

4) All report forms must be completed using printed block letters not cursive script. This ensures that they can be easily read by someone other than yourself.

5) When completing report forms, it is important to only include detailed descriptions of what you observe, what happened, what was reported to you and by whom. You must avoid putting opinions, points of view or speculative conclusions.

6) Any blank space on the description, details or notes areas on a report form should have a line drawn diagonally across it with the report writer’s signature on it, to prevent any alteration by someone adding to it later. This will protect you from someone adding to a report form that is signed and attributed to you but whose additions are not yours and without your knowledge.

7) Once you have completed filling in the report, it is important to carefully review it by reading it from the standpoint of someone who is not familiar with what has occurred. The details in the report should not leave any questions as to what happened, what was done and who was involved. If there are questions, amend or correct the report details to answer these questions.



8) All information once recorded on a report form is considered as “Restricted Information” meaning it is only to be read or referred to by people who need to know, thus it is restricted to only those individuals. Generally, to most individuals outside of public safety and the military, they would refer to this as confidential information.

THE 3 C's

There are three distinct qualities that all reports should have. These qualities are often referred to as, The Three C's. The Three C's are; Clear, Concise and Complete.

Clear means the report should be visually easy to read and that intellectually it is written using language, grammar and structure that makes it easily understood by someone who wasn't there when the incident or incidents it refers to occurred. Reports should be printed or word processed for visible legibility. Ideas and information in the report should be presented in the logical order they occurred. The report should be written in everyday English, using words and sentences that are no more than at a Grade 5 or Year 5 comprehension level.

Concise means the report lists only facts and gets to the point quickly of what happened or what the incident reported on is about. The report must not contain opinions or rumours. It must be neutral on reporting the facts, not taking one side or point of view. If the facts identify guilt or a problem, let them speak for themselves but do not bias the facts. As a security guard your job is to observe and report the facts not to be a judge or commentator.

Complete means the report can tell the complete story of what happened to someone who didn't witness the incident or occurrence even years after the fact without having to ask any basic questions or require further information. A complete report requires that you detail the events in the logical order they occurred while identifying and answering the questions; Who, What, When, Where, Why and How? You must strive to provide a full and complete written account of the incident to the best of your ability.

NOTES & NOTE TAKING

A note is an outline, often in point form of the details of an event or incident with the date and time. The note must include all of the elements as to, who, what, when, where, why and how. From these notes, a full report will be written.

IMPORTANT NOTE TAKING TIPS

Be aware the purpose of your notes is to simply record facts, details of an incident and activity, and is not intended to provide conclusions or commentary. Use short and simple sentences or bullet points to record facts and details. Avoid complicated or legal terms, and avoid the use of abbreviations you may not know the meaning of months or years later. Be brief and to the point by keeping details directly related to what you are making note of. Be organized and clear by entering facts and information as they occurred, the order they happened in or in which they were discovered. Be precise by providing exact dates, times and the who, what, when, where, why and how details of the subject you noting.

Notes are typically made in a specially designed small pocket sized notebook intended exclusively for this purpose. This type of pocket sized notebook is quite often referred to as a pocket evidence notebook or simply a “memo” book. The purpose and function of this book is to be a portable notebook that is easy to carry in your pocket and to offer a place where important information such as names, descriptions, license plate numbers and other details may be recorded immediately.

At a later time this information may be used to write a full length report and, as well to provide a memory aid, often referred to as an aide-mémoire when testimony is given in a civil or criminal tribunal or court. In order to meet de facto legal standards pocket evidence notebooks must be lined or square ruled, with the pages set in perfect binding so they cannot be easily removed with each page sequentially numbered. Perfect binding is where all the pages of a book are thermal glued at the spine and may be stitched together for added durability. You may use your notebook to refresh your memory when giving evidence in court or at a tribunal only if prior permission has been granted by the presiding Judge. However, the notebook is subject to the scrutiny of the court and in order to support the credibility of the notebook and your notes, there are specific rules for the care of the notebook and completion of notes.

The pocket evidence notebook is typically issued to a Security Guard by their employer or agency. The pocket evidence notebook is, and remains the property of the employer or agency, and must be available for inspection at any time by the employer or agency. Whenever the Security Guard leaves their employment or completely fills up the notebook, it is returned to the employer or agency. However, in the case where the Security Guard is not provided a notebook by their employer it is recommended the Security Guard purchase a notebook on their own and use it exclusively while performing security services. Pocket evidence notebooks are inexpensive and are available at most law enforcement and military surplus stores as well as online. In Canada, the major manufacturers and distributors of pocket evidence notebooks are TriForm and ProNotes.

NOTEBOOK RULES

The general rules for using and setting up a pocket evidence notebook are:

- Only one pocket evidence notebook must be in use at any time.
- Information contained in the notebook and the notebook itself are considered to be restricted information. This means the notebook must never be left unattended or out in the open where an unauthorized person may have access to it, and the information it contains is restricted to those legally authorized to the details it contains and not intended for anyone who does not need to know.
- The notebook must be used only for notes that are relevant to the job; strictly business, and is not to be used for personal entries.
- All entries must be made in black ink ballpoint or roller ball pen.
- The day, date and year should be recorded and underlined at the beginning of entries for that day.
- All entries must be printed in block letters, not written in cursive.
- Diagrams and or illustrations must be clearly labelled using printed block letters, and if applicable the identification of North and South should be indicated on maps, floorplans and accident schematics.
- Each entry must include time and location.
- Details and descriptions of people and property involved must be recorded in detail, in the notebook.
- Should you make an error when making notes do not erase, or write, or scribble over the error, and do not use white correction tape or fluid as this may disqualify your notes as admissible evidence in a civil or criminal proceeding. Instead, draw a single solid line over top of the error and place your initials next to the line. Then continue on with your notes with the corrected word or text.

- Unless otherwise specified by your agency or employer, chronological entries regarding all events, occurrences and incidents during your shift are entered from the front of the notebook (first page) working towards the back. Important reference information that you will require for at least three months or more, such as special telephone numbers, access codes and other key information that may seldom change during your employment is recorded from the back of the notebook (last page) working towards the front.
- Never tear out, remove or obliterate pages from your notebook.
- Empty lines between entries must be no more than one, and any additional empty lines or intentional whole blank pages must have a diagonal line made across them in black ink with your initials or signature across the diagonal line. However, it is important to note that a whole blank page between your notebook entries should be avoided.

NO ELBOWS

In summary the rules for notebooks can be remembered by the phrase “***NO ELBOWS.***”

NO Erasures, ***L***eaves (pages) torn out, ***B***lank pages, ***O***verwriting, ***W***riting between the lines and multiple ***S***paces between entries.



STATEMENTS

A statement is a legal document that contains a word for word statement or account made by a witness, victim or alleged suspect of an incident. The statement may be told to a security guard, investigator, peace officer or officer of the court, who will transcribe it and offer a physical hard copy for the statement provider to review and sign. Or it may be a statement written by the statement provider in the presence of a security guard, investigator, peace officer or officer of the court, who will witness that the statement was written and signed by the statement provider. In taking and making the statement document, extra care must be exercised to ensure the statement clearly communicates what the statement giver (witness, victim, alleged suspect) has said with regard to the incident. As well, you (as the statement taker, preparer or witness) must ensure to the best of your ability that certain physical document safeguards are in place to protect the integrity of the final signed statement document.

Everything recorded in a statement must be true to the best of the knowledge of the person giving the statement. A statement must contain only facts. The information in the statement must be related (relevant) to the specific incident or case which is the reason why the statement is required in the first place. If a judge or officer of the court has reason to believe the statement contains false or misleading information, it will not be accepted as evidence or used in a legal proceeding. It is a serious matter to make a false or misleading statement. Only facts that the statement giver has first hand knowledge of should be in the statement. This means the statement giver can only provide what they saw, heard, did or said. If any of the sentences used in the statement start or could begin with "I believe that" or "I think that," they should not be included. Opinions and theoretical conclusions are only permitted if they are provided by an accredited and approved expert witness or professional such as a forensic expert, mental health professional or accountant. The only exception to this is quoting another person who was heard by the statement giver. However this quote must include the full name of this person, the date when it was said and where it was heard. Avoid opinions and conclusions in statements even if they seem obvious or are based on the facts.

SAFEGUARDS FOR STATEMENTS

Standard safeguards in place to reduce the possibility of document tampering or unauthorized alteration at a later time are:

- A written statement is made on a new, clean sheet of lined legal or letter sized paper and is printed in block letters not cursive script, followed by a signature and the printed name of the individual below their signature. This ensures the statement is clearly legible (readable).
- A black ink ball point or roller ball pen is used in written statements and for the signature on statements. Black ink is used because it is noticeable if it is altered such as erased or traced over, and it is not as prone to fading or discolouring over time due to exposure to light.
- A statement prepared on a computer or digitally, must be prepared using a standard font with the font size set at 12 point. The statement must be printed out on white paper and to be valid must be signed in black ink by the statement provider and by the witness or statement taker. This signed statement then may be rescanned back into a secure un-editable digital format such as a secure .pdf format. However, the original printed and signed hardcopy statement must be stored in a safe place as it may be required as evidence in legal proceedings.
- Should an error be made by the statement writer when writing, or be noticed moments after having written the statement, the statement writer must be instructed, prior to writing the statement, not to erase or write or scribble over the error as this may disqualify the statement as admissible evidence in a civil or criminal proceeding. Rather, they should draw a single solid line over top of the error and place their initials next to the line. Then continue on with correcting the word or text.
- Each page of text of the statement must have a page number, and be dated and signed by the statement giver. It is important to note that a single sheet of paper if written on both sides is actually a two page document and therefore requires a page number, date and initials on both sides. The same goes for any additional sheets of paper. The standard for page numbering for example for a single sheet of paper where both sides are written on would be to print “Page number 1 of 2 Pages” on the first page and “Page number 2 of 2 Pages” on the second page. Additional pages would be numbered sequentially followed by the total number of pages in the document. The purpose of this is to ensure pages are not tampered with or removed from the original statement after it has been filed.



All statements must be carefully and thoroughly reviewed for errors or omissions by their writer and only then may the writer sign the statement once they are satisfied that the information stated is an exact account of the facts and details as they know them. After the statement writer-giver has signed the statement, the witness will ensure they have observed the statement writer create the statement on their own behalf without any external influence or pressure, that the writer is content with what they have written as being true and that it has been signed by them in the presence of the witness. Once these conditions have been satisfied, the witness may then sign the statement.

- All information recorded in the statement is to be considered as “Restricted Information” meaning it is only to be read or referred to by people who need to know, thus it is restricted to only those individuals. Generally, to most individuals outside of public safety and the military, they would refer to this as confidential information.

STATEMENT GUIDELINES

A Statement MUST include the following elements:

- An opening paragraph that provides the full name of the witness/victim/alleged suspect making the statement, and their address, contact information.
- Date of birth, identification and employment information of the statement giver.
- The address/location where the statement is being taken.
- Date of the statement interview.
- Time the statement interview started and finished.
- Name of the person and company who conducted the statement interview and who took/recorded the statement.
- An introductory or opening paragraph providing the events and observations of the incident.
- A word-for-word (verbatim) transcription of the witness’/victims’/alleged suspects’ recollection of the events.
- A closing paragraph that indicates the person making the statement has reviewed what was written for its accuracy; was given the opportunity to omit, edit, delete or amend the statement; and verifies that the statement comes from their own personal knowledge of the events as they happened.
- Each page of the statement must be numbered, dated and initialed by the person that gave it.
- The statement must be carefully proof read by the person who gave it, and if they agree it is a true account of their words and to the best of their knowledge what happened; will sign it and date the last page in black ink.

- Any blank space on the last page of the statement should have a line drawn diagonally across it to prevent any alteration by someone adding to it later.
- If a change or correction is requested by the person who gave the statement after reading it, a single line should be drawn through the item being removed or corrected, with initials of both the statement provider and statement taker (witness) at the beginning of the correction and the end.

OPENING PARAGRAPH OF A STATEMENT

- An opening paragraph is required in a statement.
- A standard exemplar of an opening paragraph for a statement is:
"I, (person making the statement) of (address of the person making the statement) am a (witness, victim) in the details of this statement. The facts in this statement come from my own personal knowledge."

CLOSING PARAGRAPH OF A STATEMENT

- A closing paragraph is required in a statement.
- A standard exemplar of a closing paragraph for a statement is:
*"I, (person making the statement), have read the above (x number of page) statement and find it to be accurate to the best of my recollection.
 I have been advised that I could omit, delete, change or amend any part of this statement prior to signing it."*

INCIDENT LOG OR OCCURRENCE BOOK

In addition to reports and report forms, depending upon the type of security service performed, a fixed security post may have an incident log or occurrence book. This log book is a hardcover bound book with the pages set in perfect binding so they cannot be easily removed and each page is lined and sequentially numbered. Perfect binding is where all the pages of a book are thermal glued at the spine and may be stitched together for added durability. The book will measure approximately 8" by 10". Entries are made in this book by beginning with the date and time on the first line, then a chronological report of an occurrence or incident follows with the name of the security guard making the entry at the end. Information is recorded by printing in black ball point ink. This book is kept at the security post and must be reviewed each shift by the security guard on duty so they are fully aware of any occurrences or incidents that may have happened in the previous shift.

INCIDENT LOG & OCCURRENCE BOOK RULES

- Only one Incident Log or Occurrence Book must be in use at any time.
- Information contained in the Incident Log or Occurrence Book is considered to be restricted information. This means the Incident Log or Occurrence Book must never be left unattended or out in the open where an unauthorized person may have access to it, and the information it contains is not intended for anyone who does not need to know.
- The Incident Log or Occurrence Book must be used only for notes that are relevant to the job; strictly business, and is not to be used for personal entries.
- All entries must be made in black ink ballpoint or roller ball pen.
- The day, date and year should be recorded and underlined at the beginning of entries for that day.
- All entries should be printed in block letters, not written in cursive.
- Each entry must include time and location.
- Details and descriptions of people and property involved must be recorded in detail.
- Should you make an error when making an entry, do not erase, or write, or scribble over the error and do not use white correction tape or fluid as this may disqualify the Incident Log or Occurrence Book as admissible evidence in a civil or criminal proceeding. Instead, draw a single solid line over top of the error and place your initials next to the line. Then continue on with the corrected word or text.
- Unless otherwise specified by your agency or employer, chronological entries regarding all events, occurrences and incidents during your shift are entered from the front of the notebook (first page) working towards the back. Important reference information such as special telephone numbers, access codes and other key information that may seldom change may be recorded from the back of the Incident Log or Occurrence Book working towards the front.
- Never tear out, remove or obliterate pages from the Incident Log or Occurrence Book.
- Empty lines between entries must be no more than one, and any additional empty lines or intentional whole blank pages must have a diagonal line made across them in black ink with your initials or signature across the diagonal line. However, it is important to note that a whole blank page between your Incident Log or Occurrence Book entries must be avoided.

REPORT, NOTES & STATEMENT RETENTION

Generally, under federal government guidelines the retention period for reports, notes and statements is 7 years. However, the industry standard outside of the federal guidelines is accepted as 5 years. As a security guard you should consult your employer or agency with regard to the authorized retention period as it applies to the service you will provide. If in doubt, it is best to accept the federal retention period of 7 years for all reports, notes and statements.

In any case, reports, notes and statements must be stored in a secure manner that will ensure they will not be accessed by unauthorized individuals, lost, stolen or damaged during storage.

REPORT & STATEMENT DISTRIBUTION

Once a report or statement has been completed, you must ensure it is securely and properly distributed or filed in compliance with the established security procedures as outlined by your employer or agency. Some security posts may require documents be filed in a designated binder or file folder for review at a later time. While others may require the documents to be either physically placed in an envelope addressed to a specific department or individual, while others may require the documents to be e-mailed. Regardless of the method of delivery, it is important to ensure reasonable care has been taken to ensure that only those who are authorized have access to the documents.

This means binders or folders containing these documents are kept in a safe, secure place with limited access. Physical documents that are to be mailed, should be placed in an opaque, sealed envelope and care must be used to be sure the address information on the envelope is clear, complete and correct. E-mailed documents should be attached to the email as either a .pdf or “read only” document, and the destination e-mail must be verified to ensure it is complete and correct. Documents must never be copied, cut and pasted into the body of an e-mail unless this has been authorized as the method e-delivery of such documents.



E-MAIL ACCOUNTS

Ideally, an e-mail account used to send such documents should have a confidentiality notice in the message signature field by default in order to comply with industry best practices for the security and privacy of e-mail communications.

A standard exemplar of an e-mail confidentiality notice is:

“Statement of Confidentiality.

This message (including attachments) may contain confidential or privileged information intended for a specific individual or organisation. If you have received this communication in error, please notify the sender immediately. If you are not the intended recipient, you are not authorised to use, disclose, distribute, copy, or print this email, and should promptly delete this email from your entire computer system. “





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Robert Ing is a forensic intelligence specialist and has appeared on North American news networks on the issues of technology crime, computer security, privacy and identity theft. With over 25 years experience in the public and private safety and security sectors, he has worked in the biomedical, technical, privacy and risk management aspects of safety and security.

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