

The Security Officer of the 21st Century

Mike Fagel, Larry Fennelly, Marianna Perry, Greg Benson

Traditionally, the security profession has been dominated by former male, law enforcement and military personnel, as well as seasoned male security practitioners. This statement is supported by data collected in September of 2016 by ASIS International and prepared by McKinley Advisors who found that 25% of security professionals have a law enforcement background and 24% have military experience. It is also not surprising to note that 87% of the security professionals responding to the survey were men. Even though men still outnumber women in the security field, the demand for qualified security professionals continues to grow and there are high-profile positions available for both men and women.¹ Regardless of gender, all security professionals must be knowledgeable about current trends and issues and strive to develop themselves professionally, such as by earning certifications offered by ASIS International or the International Federation of Protection Officers (IFPO). Education in the security industry is a critical component of success and may consist of formal educational degree programs, certifications, and professional development through industry organizations. Industry specific knowledge will give security professionals more flexibility in achieving career goals.

Our professional security officers of today **MUST** be allowed the appropriate opportunities for training **AND** education. Investment in the training **AND** education of professional security officers is **ESSENTIAL** for them to function efficiently in an increasingly complex world.

Training and education are distinctly different and complementary. Training provides the basis of specific actions a person is to take within a given situation. Security officers need

¹ Davies, S. J. (2017). *Women in the Security Profession: A Practical Guide for Career Development*. Cambridge, MA: Butterworth: Heinemann.

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training to understand the application of skills and actions expected of their positions. Training focuses on requirements today.

Education considers the future challenges. Educating security officers will support their actions in a world of evolving threats. Educating security officers will establish a base of critical thinking, judgement and reasoning skills. Commitment to an educational focus will support moving the position from a job to a career field.

Security officer development is intentional and should consider both training and educational elements. Professional security officers will be better equipped to act in known environments on a day-to-day basis as well as recognize and respond to new threats. Today, we see newly hired security officers thrust into a facility with little to no time to train, let alone understand and comprehend the post orders. Many are given an electronic tour wand, a radio, and told, "good luck."

What is a security officer?

Basically, a security officer is the one called upon to assist in a time of crisis, medical emergency, or he/she may be checking individuals coming into a building or area. Daily reports are required. Incident reports, medical reports, accident reports, etc. are to be forwarded to Human Resources and all are to be conducted in a professional manner.

Visibility of the Professional Security Officer

An employee once told us that the Director of Security in her Fortune 500 Company was in the lobby every morning greeting the employees arriving for work. There are also companies where the front desk security officer learns the names of every employee – simply from observing them swipe their access cards every day. The security officer then can greet each of them by name. This is becoming the norm. We see it in Walmart and Best Buy with

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greeters, in banks with armed security officers at the front door and even in hospitals and schools. The job has changed and will change even more going forward.

The professional security officer needs to be the eyes and the ears for the communities they protect. Their scope of responsibilities has changed and with this change in responsibilities come more serious issues. They are the first receivers of information about damage, threats or vulnerability to the facilities they protect and, most importantly, to the people that rely on them. With effective, appropriate training and education, the officer remains one of the first and foremost lines of protection for the people they serve.

Many individuals who begin careers in public safety, begin in large, commercial or industrial operations – possibly as a part-time job with flexible hours while attending college. Many are given no more than 3 or 4 hours of training, a ring of keys, a map drawn on the back of an envelope and told to make rounds. The supervisor may say, “Good luck, I hope you find all your keys and make it back within the hour to begin your next tour.” For many security officers, this was all of the direction they were given. Many times, these commercial or industrial operations had machinery, chemicals, production, noise, heat and cold to contend with – none of which the security officer was prepared (or trained) to deal with. Needless to say, many security officers have a scary start to their “career” in security.

Why is this important today, in 2018?

Has security officer training improved in the last 30 years or so? In many cases yes, only because of professional training and certifications. There are many facilities where we as security professionals conduct surveys where training is not that much different today than it was decades ago. Our professional security officers of today **MUST** be allowed the appropriate opportunities for training and education.

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What can we do to help train, equip and prepare our professional security officers for the complexities of today? Before you answer that question, ask yourself the following questions:

“Can your facility afford to wait for first responders to arrive?”

“Are you equipped with lifesaving equipment such as fire extinguishers, first aid (or bleeding control) kits and AEDs (defibrillators), and more importantly, are your security officers (or staff) trained to use them?”

“Do you have the equipment necessary to evacuate individuals?”

“Do you have a mass notification system to provide critical information to your employees and visitors?”

What if your complex loses power and you have individuals in wheelchairs stuck on the third floor? What if a natural disaster hits your facility and you must evacuate the injured? Safely evacuating the disabled or injured, in any emergency situation, should be the first thing you think of when developing your company’s emergency plan. Don’t let a devastating disaster happen without being prepared and equipped with the proper emergency evacuation equipment! Some evacuation equipment can be expensive to purchase or difficult to use. You need to provide safe, lightweight and efficient evacuation devices that anyone can use with minimal training. Be proactive and don’t wait for emergency to happen to find out that you are unprepared. The secret is . . . to practice and practice again. Practice and ongoing training will support development of the critical skills and competencies your staff will require when an event occurs.

The Image of Officers in a Training Classroom

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We must educate and train not the same thing over and over again, but prepare security officers for the new threats of today. We must adapt and prepare them for any situation and at the same time meet customer expectations and stay within the budget. Training, educating, planning, and preparing are all key to success.

Training²

Training standards, where they exist at all, are inconsistent at best. There is no standard curriculum from state to state, nor is there a standard number of training hours, for individual topics or the training course as a whole. Some states mandate security guard certification while others do not. New York, for instance, passed The Security Guard Act in 1992, which requires the training and registration of security guards, as well as state approval of all security training programs. In Alabama, security officers are not registered or licensed at all. In some states where training is mandated, the employer is allowed to defer training for a set period of time. Deferred training coupled with the high turnover rate in the private security services industry makes it possible for security officers to drift from one employer to another without ever being trained. Security officers employed by the military in war zones are an exception. To qualify for the work, they must undergo meaningful training, much of which is paramilitary in nature.

Topics suitable for entry-level security officer training include the following:

- The role of a private security officer
- Legal aspects of private security
- Use of force

² Fay, John J and Patterson, David. *Contemporary Security Management, Fourth Edition*, Boston: Elsevier Publishers, 2018.

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- Note taking and report writing.
- Court testimony.
- Conduct and appearance
- Interpersonal communication skills
- Ethics
- Access control procedures
- Emergency-response procedures
- Life-safety procedures.
- Patrol operations
- Intrusion detection and response
- Workplace violence response procedures
- First aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and AED
- Bleeding Control-Combat Tourniquets

It is positive that ASIS International has developed a set of best practice training topics that are recommended to its members. In addition to entry-level training, the client of a contract private security services company may require training appropriate for the client's business. For example, orientation to:

- The physical layout of the protected premises
- The names, faces, and positions of senior management
- The client's policies in respect to harassment, discrimination, diversity, etc.
- Substance abuse.
- Telephone protocol.
- Demeanor and behavior.

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- The key rules of a labor-management agreement, if any.

Training can be administered in three ways:

- Classroom
- On-the-job
- On-line

Classroom training methods include lecture, demonstration, use of audiovisuals, and practical exercises. Professional trainers agree that retention of knowledge and acquisition of skills is greatly increased when practical exercises are used. Examples of practical exercises are how to administer first aid, CPR, AED, control of bleeding, directing traffic, self-defense techniques, use of force, applying handcuffs, searching persons and property, inspecting parcels and packages, protecting a crime scene, using communication equipment, and for armed guards; safety and nomenclature of the weapon issued and extensive practice at a firing range. The list is long, the responsibilities a professional security officer has are great.

On-the-job training (OJT) is an excellent method for teaching all of the above. The downside is that an experienced officer or supervisor has to be removed from their normal duties to conduct the OJT and monitor the officer's job performance.

On-line training, a method of instruction relatively new to training security officers, is an excellent method for imparting knowledge. The advantages are as follows:

- Training occurs wherever a PC or laptop is available
- Learning proceeds at the student's pace
- Can be done at any time and anyplace (even at the officer's home, if allowed)

The method does not permit the trainee to move forward in study until all material has been covered, and the content of the training is uniform for everyone. The method is enhanced

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when the instruction is augmented with audiovisuals and progress questions are presented throughout the course so that the student can assess his or her learning. Accessibility to an instructor or course administrator by television, phone, e-mail, or in-person is also recommended. The contract security company is also able to free itself from maintaining a record of training because the software of the online learning system does it automatically. Learning systems should be evaluated to ensure the record keeping functions meet the organization's needs.

The downside of on-line training is the impossibility of conducting hands-on training methods. However, the cost of on-line training is significantly less than other instructional methods and the trainee can be placed on the job without a long delay. OJT would then pick up the slack for tasks that are hands-on oriented.

A private contract security company will find it difficult to rely exclusively on classroom training because of the issues of scheduling the classes and the students. Sporadic hiring is the nature of the contract security industry and to teach in a classroom where there are few people to be taught at one time can be costly and not helpful in quickly filling vacant positions. To overcome the problem, some companies (despite rules against it) will simply brief the individual on the job's tasks, show a film, and test the individual on paper. If the individual fails the test, it is administered until passed. States that regulate the industry usually require the security services company to submit a statement to the regulatory agency affirming that the training has been completed. Little or nothing is done about the quality of the instruction. Finally, the regulatory agency rarely conducts inspections to verify that the security services company is meeting the mandated requirements.

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The goal of training, regardless of the medium, is to provide knowledge and skills to complete job in a safe and effective manner. A combination of online, classroom and practical will provide for information to be presented, tested and skill competency demonstrated. This approach avoids the “checkbox” training models that had been used in the past. These models provided training completion documents without a demonstration of what knowledge and skills the security officer has attained. If we agree the role of the security officer is evolving due to new emerging threats, then training should follow a similar evolutionary path to develop a professional officer.

Writing Reports

The report writing function might require submission of a formal report immediately after an investigation is opened; a progress report prepared according to a schedule or to important developments; a final report that includes facts, describes evidence and its relevance, identifies persons involved, makes conclusions, and recommends corrective actions; and a supplemental report that reports post-case facts such as the firing of the offending employee, receipt of restitution, and court adjudication. Reports of investigation are distributed on a need-to-know basis. The recipients are generally the persons responsible for taking action such as the manager of a department employing the offender (or affected by the violation), in-house legal counsel to advise on the sufficiency of evidence, and a public prosecutor to determine if court action is to proceed.

Security professionals today must be in constant “learning mode” to stay current on new trends or challenges in the security industry.³ Technology is changing at an incredible pace, so security professionals need to as well. Security systems – both electronic and physical are

³ Ibid.

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becoming more advanced and will continue to have a great influence on the security industry. It is important to understand that technology is not the answer to effective security, but instead is a component within the overall security process. Moving forward, all security professionals will need to be adaptable and have the ability to anticipate change and determine the needs of the future by gathering information, analyzing data, and studying crime trends.⁴

Sometimes when we as security professionals discuss the future of the security industry and attempt to identify emerging trends, it's a bit difficult because there are so many different areas to our discipline. For example, when the book, *Security in the Year 2000*, was published by ASIS International, computers were not mentioned. The book, *Security in 2025* is now available and much of that book is devoted to technology in the security industry.

Going forward into the 21st Century

Robots built in the Silicon Valley by Knightscope, are available to Allied Universal Security clients nationwide, states a news release dated June 16, 2017. These robots will perform real-time patrols utilizing the K5 (outdoor) and K3 (indoor) models. Highlights of some of their features, include:

- **360-degree video** that provides complete awareness and feeds to a security operations center
- **Thermal imaging** for identifying fires and gauging proper environmental temperature settings
- **License plate recognition**, which is an example of a computational task that may include data collection in a large parking facility

⁴ Ibid.

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- **Intercom and broadcast capability** that can be programmed to relay messages or alert security personnel to immediately dispatch law enforcement

Robots performing duties that were previously the work of security officers are examples of the new technology available in the security industry. The security professional of the 21st Century has already grown accustomed to advanced technology, but the following is our list of the **Fifty Emerging Trends in Security** from the past five years:

1. IT Infrastructure Protection Planning
2. IT Infrastructure as a Single Strategic Plan
3. Infrastructure and CPTED Team Up
4. Mitigation Strategies
5. IP Video and Digital Video
6. IP Security Provisions
7. Security IP Edge Devices
8. HD Cameras and Monitors
9. Video Analytics
10. Visible Light Cameras
11. Thermal Imaging and Cameras
12. Thermal Imaging Sensors
13. Perimeter Protection
14. Layers of Protection Analysis (LOPA)
15. Visitor Management Systems
16. Mass Notification
17. Active Shooter/Active Assailants

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18. Cloud Storage and Computing for Security
19. Advancement of CPTED
20. Contractor Prequalification
21. Emergency Management & Planning for Disasters
22. Software for Physical Security Maintenances
23. Laser Communication
24. Drones: A Safety and a Privacy Issue
25. Encryption
26. Critical Thinking
27. Soft Targets v. Target Hardening
28. Establishment of Countermeasures & Deterrents
29. Embracing the Beast
30. Social Media Monitoring Software
31. ASIS & NFPA Active Shooter Initiative (ASIS)
32. Formulation of Partnerships to Reduce Crime
33. Encompassing Effective CPTED Solutions in 2018 and Beyond: Concepts and Strategies
34. Community Policing: There is a Need for More Community Policing
35. Crime Prevention Through Integrated Problem Solving – A New Approach to the Broken Windows Theory
36. Cyber Security, Cyber-attacks and Ransomware
37. The Popularity and Need for Access Control
38. Fraud Issues: Large and Small

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39. Social Media: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly
40. The Concept of Best Practices and Master Planning for all Properties and Organizations
41. Going Green – LEED
42. Digital Signage
43. Domestic Violence in the Workplace
44. Mass Shootings – Mass Casualties
45. Active Shooter/Active Assailant
46. Learning Strategies to Protect Soft Targets
47. CPTED Re-Invented (2017)
48. Cell Phone Technology Controlling Integration Issues for Smart Homes
49. Climate Change and Depletion of Natural Resources, such as Water
50. ASIS International and the International Foundation for Protection Officers (IFPO) Making Numerous Changes to Increase Professionalism in the Security Industry

Given the continued rapid advances in technology it is safe to assume that this list will expand. Security officer's roles will need to expand as well. Investing in well-developed and implemented training and education programs will support the position of professional security officers as an ongoing safety force. Technology will augment, but never replace the experience and knowledge of a competent professional security officer.

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