

Guarding

Security Guards, who are sometimes called security officers, patrol and inspect property to protect against fire, theft, vandalism, terrorism, and illegal activity. Guarding is a proven physical security measure that may form part of an overall security programme including mechanical and electronic security systems. Security guards may be directly employed or provided via an outsourced security service company.

Although all security guards perform many of the same duties, their specific duties vary. Guards assigned to static security positions usually serve the client at one location for a specified length of time. Guards assigned to mobile patrol duty drive or walk from location to location and conduct security checks within an assigned geographical zone.

The usual definition of manned guarding is:

- a. guarding premises against unauthorised access or occupation, against outbreaks of disorder or against damage;
- b. guarding property against destruction or damage, against being stolen or against being otherwise dishonestly taken or obtained;
- c. Guarding one or more individuals against assault or against injuries that might be suffered in consequence of the unlawful conduct of others.

All of the above includes providing a physical presence, or carrying out any form of patrol or surveillance, as to deter or otherwise discourage it from happening or to provide information, if it happens, about what has happened.

Despite the growth of electronic security measures many organisations value the human element provided by a security guard or officer. As a permanent presence on site they can provide a valuable service as first aiders and may even reduce insurance premiums as they can speed up fire detection.

The visual impact of a security officer in a police-style uniform can work as an effective deterrent against crime in high risk areas. However it can also be intimidating in more sensitive areas where some clients prefer a more discrete security presence favouring blazers or suits rather than the more threatening military look.

Patrolling is usually a large part of a security officer's duties. Often these patrols are logged by use of a patrol logging system. Traditionally these were mechanical clock systems that required a key for manual punching of a number to a strip of paper inside with the time pre-printed on it. However, electronic systems have risen in popularity due to their light weight, ease of use, and downloadable logging capabilities. Random patrols are easily programmed into these systems, allowing greater freedom of movement and unpredictability.

Facilities Management from A to Z

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The British Security Industry Association BSIA is the trade association for the professional security industry in the UK. Most major guarding companies are members of the BSIA. See www.bsia.co.uk