

# Personal & Business Experts

with need-to-know information for you

## Security training helps cover liabilities

### Star Protection trains companies to avoid lawsuits

Security has become a critical concern since our nation was attacked on 9/11. Even though the probability of a terrorist attack or major disaster happening at your property is slight, the greater risk lurks in the liability issues associated with property security.

Liability hazards can lie in the amount or quality of security a building provides, as well as the supervision and oversight of this security. Properties have been subjected to security-related lawsuits for failure to provide minimum adequate security, failure to provide adequate or proper training or failure to supervise security functions.

As you review the security measures your own buildings provide, ask yourself the following questions:

#### Is the security I provide for my building adequate?

Many factors go into assessing the level of adequate security. For instance, is the property in a high-crime area? How large is the property? How many tenants/customers/visitors are on the property? What types of dangers are there to material and personal safety?

If there are valid, credible perils



Companies that brush aside proper training for their security officers can open themselves up to potential lawsuits alleging negligence on the part of the property.

on your property, you can be held liable if you are not providing minimum adequate security. For example, if there has been a string of car break-ins at an office building and the management does not take corrective action, the building could be held liable if someone were to be injured in another car break-in.

#### Are background checks being performed on your security staff?

A criminal background check, a reference check and a job history check are all important steps to take in hiring a security officer. A person employed with a felony conviction or other criminal history can lead to liability if that

employee is later found to have committed a crime on the job.

#### Is the training for security officers adequate and up to date?

This can be a key area of liability concern for many buildings. Courts have consistently ruled in favor of plaintiffs who can show injury caused by negligence result-

ing from the absence of training of security officers, or the administration of faulty training.

Training needs to be valid and verifiable. Training content needs to be correct and in line with industry standards. Instructional methods need to be appropriate and effective. And the training should be relevant to the workplace.

#### Who is training your security officers, and is there a record of the training?

A qualified instructor for security officers will possess not only knowledge, but also the ability to teach. If either area is deficient, the instructor's performance is suspect and negligence on the part of the property may exist.

#### Is your security staff documenting daily activities and incidents properly?

Documentation is one of the best ways to protect your property from a potential liability claim. If a property can show detailed logs of the security staff's activities, they are in a much better position to show they have met their responsibility to provide minimum adequate security.

#### Are your security officers being supervised?

Security personnel must be regularly overseen to make sure operating procedures are being followed, reports are correctly written and the officer is performing

all required functions, including effectively patrolling the property.

An exceptionally successful tool is currently available to aid in supervising security officers. It is called a "guard tour system." These systems provide a device that records the officer's patrol at specific data entry points on a property. The points are pre-selected and have a button, bar code or magnetic strip attached to the wall in specific locations. When properly used, these systems provide a documented record of the specific times and places of a security officer's patrol.

Today's public is ever more litigious, and there has been an emerging trend of civil actions nationwide targeting persons in authority positions. Security officers and the people who hire and manage them are increasingly vulnerable to these litigations.

Attorneys aggressively look for possible negligence on the part of property owners and managers to succeed in liability lawsuits. Due to the high cost in time and money a lawsuit can inflict, it is crucial that building managers reduce risks associated with inadequate and poorly operated security programs.

Call Star Protection Agency for assistance with security training for your staff. Star also provides customized training in a wide variety of other topics and can document, schedule and host your regular training sessions. [www.starprotectionagency.com](http://www.starprotectionagency.com).