



He said, "Write more, spend less" - Comprehensive incident-report writing

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In the season of umbrellas and puddles, probably every building services group checks their mats and lobby areas daily to help prevent slips and falls. But when these accidents do occur, to quote a property manager I met some time ago, as you document the incident: "write more, spend less." He suggested adopting a comprehensive incident report form rather than a generic single-sheet "covers everything." He also insisted that lobby security officers get some specialized training in filling out all the details with an eye towards documenting what will be required in investigations that follow.

The property manager noted how his organization was able to minimize an award in a suit that dragged on for years. It dealt with a supposed fall on a weekend, in an area of his building that was under renovation. The space was cordoned off, locked, and properly signed. The victim, a tenant's employee literally "broke in" to the unsafe area, hoping to be able to smoke a cigarette without detection.

Desk officers on duty at the building were also FDNY-licensed fireguards as building management required. The security contractor included a copy of fireguard regulations (current at the time), along with a comprehensive incident report and photos of the area. The security guard contractor was eventually excluded from the suit.

Although it may seem a no-brainer to revisit evaluating the forms we use and retraining personnel on producing detailed, accurate incident reports, it doesn't hurt.

Another suggestion that has had significant value came from a retired NYPD executive. He was always impressed by the added insights that crime tracking through NYPD'S COMPSTAT system delivered. He was among the first individuals I knew to apply this type of analysis to reviewing incident reports in a contract security environment.

We've found that analyzing incident reports each month and providing summaries has been a benefit to our clients. One fall might occur. But if in a particular area there are a number of incidents or reports of unsafe conditions, we're on the alert. Even a slight change in the finishes on floor surfaces in a hallway can change the risk profile and help building managers make decisions about when surfaces have to be reconfigured.

Of course, finding the same person showing up in incidents over a period of time can be a clue to other issues. Having the full details, well documented, makes a difference. Even when using computer programs that offer pre-done categories and have fill-in-the-blank format, the complete, original, written-out report has the most credibility.

At Doyle Security Services, we've compiled some review information on comprehensive incident-report writing that might be useful to your officers. Drop me an email at: mdoyle@dss-securitysolutions.com and a copy will be on its way to you.

For more tips and additional information about simple ways to implement better security for your

organization.

We stand ready to be of service!

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