



Choosing the right security provider for your needs

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Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, the role of "private security" in a building shifted from reactive to proactive. Property owners and building managers now recognize that the security providers they retain need to be key business partners – allies in the fight against risk who can be counted on to offer strategic advice, guidance and direction.

Today, private security is one of the key defenses in the protection and safety of thousands of people who work in commercial buildings. While the primary mission for private security will always be limiting building access to only those with a legitimate purpose, access control is just one component of a comprehensive security system. Leading security providers seek to increase their value by offering property managers and owners a full complement of proven services.

What's Being Offered

Of course, not all security companies are created equal. How can you be certain the company protecting your property is offering the latest security measures and safeguarding your human and physical assets? While there is no single answer, it helps to be familiar with the services being offered by the region's foremost security providers. These include the ability to:

- * Conduct investigations and physical security risk assessment reviews.
- * Advise and provide counsel on proper security procedures.
- * Ensure compliance with building regulations, procedures and industry standards.
- * Coordinate emergency response and implement contingency plans.
- * Establish an expanding group of data bases to detect suspicious activity.
- * Provide support to employees in need of assistance.
- * Offer certified fire safety directors and fire guards.
- * Also serve as lobby concierge, visitor desk and security receptionists.
- * Provide VIP escorts and be ready to handle any temporary or special events.
- * Perform background checks on employees.
- * Coordinate undercover investigations.
- * Offer mailroom X-ray services.

Outreach to Law Enforcement

Another critical area to look for in a security provider is its ability to serve as liaison between building management and law enforcement. That's because private security officers are the eyes and ears of law enforcement, and the importance of their role cannot be understated.

According to the American Society for Industrial Security (ASIS), there may be as many as 2 million security officers employed in the United States. That number contrasts with approximately 500,000 sworn law enforcement officers. The private security industry actively partners with police agencies and other law enforcement to better coordinate and educate on terrorism protection and to stay advised on the latest threat information.

A top-quality security company will typically belong to the New York City Police Department Area Police/Private Security Liaison (APPL) and the NYPD SHIELD, which bring together private security and the NYPD. Through membership, private security enjoys open lines of communication and access to the latest intelligence. Armed with this data, private security can keep their clients informed of new developments, issues or laws that may impact their buildings.

Advantages to Outsourcing

The use of all the resources found at a quality security company can help you control risks and feel safe and secure knowing that your building and your business are protected. If you do not currently outsource your security guard service, you owe it to yourself to consider the many benefits of outsourcing.

With outsourced security guards, managers are relieved of management and supervisory responsibilities. There are also fewer liability exposures and no increase in insurance costs. Other benefits include:

- * Added flexibility in scheduling manpower to meet changing security needs.
- * No additional workers compensation costs or other employee benefit costs.
- * Reduced expense in purchasing patrol vehicles, auto insurance, licenses and maintenance.
- * No scheduling headaches.
- * The ability of security guards to handle other duties, such as concierge and visitor desk services.
- * All uniforms are provided to specifications and are always clean and neat.
- * Databases and information for criminal background checks, including FBI checks and fingerprinting services, are available to certified security guard companies that are not available to the general public.

Thanks to the New York area's many excellent private security providers, property owners and building managers can be confident in their ability to provide a safe and secure environment for tenants, employees, visitors and vendors.

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