



Guide to Contracting Security Guard Services

Weiser Security Services offers these suggestions for comparing companies and contracting security guards. A typical bid format is included.

There are over 7,200 firms providing security officer services. The level of service varies depending on the approach to:

- SELECTING APPLICANTS
- TRAINING
- SUPERVISION

There are many areas to consider when selecting a security provider:

1. Capabilities of the security firm

a. View of selection, training and supervision of the officer

b. Limitations:

CAPITAL

EXPERIENCE

DESIRE

2. Lack of industry standardization

a. Some State requirements

b. Not specific

c. Few standards or regulation for selection, training or supervision

3. Competition

a. Social, economic, or industrial pressure cause

b. Unrealistic rates resulting in

c. Poor service due to a lack of profit and too simplistic approach.

d. It is hard to treat all companies providing security service the same.

e. It is important to get below the generalities.

f. Focus on specifics of level of service the provider can be expected to deliver.



Clear communication between user and provider will help eliminate missed expectations.

Security Services are difficult to measure.

- How do you measure...
 - the number of fires prevented?
 - the number of break-ins deterred?
 - the increased productivity of secure feeling employees?
- Define your needs for security.
 - Compare specific approaches of several security companies.

Differences in Security Services

Factors affecting the level of security services:

- SCREENING
- TRAINING
- SUPERVISION
- COMPENSATION
- TURNOVER

SCREENING

- how thorough?
- how many years checked in work history? In reference history?
- determine where applicant has been every work day of last five years.
- verify character through reference checks.
- honorable discharge?
- educational requirements?
- assurance of required physical abilities?
- psychological testing to determine suitability to be a security officer?
- psychological testing to determine suitability for specific post needs?
- psychological testing to determine turnover risk?



TRAINING

- how is the new employee trained?
- how much time spent in pre-post training?
- what subjects covered?
- are subjects adequate for needs?
- how is training verified?
- access to verification?
- training on the job with specific duties of the post?
- training by another guard or by a management representative?
- specific post orders? how often updated?
- on-going training, how conducted? what subjects? how documented?
- will training assure preparation for emergency situations?
- any input into training for specific needs?

SUPERVISION

- who would be the supervisors?
- what is their experience?
- what training have they received?
- is supervisor another guard in a roving patrol car or well trained, well educated and of management caliber?
- how are guards inspected?
- what takes place on inspection?
- what verification inspections have been conducted?
- how often is each guard inspected?
- how does the manager handle routine problems?
- how will they report?
- do you have to call for a report or is there a system set up to keep you informed?
- how often does management meet with the client?



COMPENSATION

- what is the range for the specific post?
- what determines pay, how often reviewed?
- is pay adequate for caliber of personnel you desire on facility?
- are personnel screened such that a \$7 guard is received for a \$7 pay rate?

TURNOVER

- what % of employees have worked for company more than 1 year?
- how does it compare?
- how do they staff open posts?
- what steps have been taken to reduce turnover?
- any incentive or recognition programs?
- potential for promotions?



You can maximize expectations of a security guard company by:

- Clearly stating requirements of the job
- Detailing the specifications
- Defining the quality of service expected
- Stating Wages and Benefits

Why Standards and Wages should be stated.

The security company does not have intimate knowledge of what is expected or how service might interact with your company's policies.

Unless incorporated in specifications, wages will gravitate lower and with poor benefit levels due to competitive pressure. This may appear to be a savings, but usually means a demonstratively lower service level.

This industry has little regulation or standards. It is not possible to compare 7,200 companies with general specifications.

Performance standards tell the company what the user wants. Wages and benefits give the security company what the user wants.

It is difficult to make a comparison unless bids are based on the same parameters. For example, one company bids using the requirements of a five year history check, psychological testing, and drug screening, yet another intends to simply conduct an interview and make a determination. While one service might cost a few cents more, the benefit derived could be substantially more than the few cents.

Setting standards and wages has a positive effect on the integrity of the bid system. By comparing "apples to apples" you have a feel for what one company's "apple" costs compared to another's.



COMPARING SECURITY COMPANIES

- Meet with local management, the people who manage your account.
- Can your people work with them?
- What is the depth of their knowledge of your needs?
- How long have they been in security management, what can they offer?
- Do they have a long-term interest in your contract?
 - Secure references with similar facilities.
- Check references
- Ask specific questions about responsiveness, thoroughness, professionalism, quality of personnel and turnover.
 - Compare specifics.

For example, in comparing training programs, look at specific topics and time spent. Or in medical insurance, is it noncontributory or paid out of base salary? How high is the deductible? How limited is the coverage?

- Seek out the tangible features.
- Sit in on training
- Review training material for a given subject
- Visit offices
- See examples of post orders for specific account types
 - Investigate the company.
- How old is the company?
- Where is it based?
- Where is the closest operational office?
- Is the company growing?
- Does it keep pace with the industry growth or lead the industry?
 - What is the RETENTION level of service?
- How many accounts have been lost in past year?
- What is the average length of service?
- Does it keep clients year to year?



➤ Determine importance of price factor in company's ability to win contracts.

- Is it a low bid company?
- Do they win contracts based on pricing?
- Or do they have more to offer?

EXAMPLE OF BID SPECIFICATIONS

Vendor Selection Process

Duties

Hours of Coverage

Rates

Wages & Benefits

Employee Selection

Employee Training

Supervision

Vendor History

Management

Equipment

Uniforms

Insurance Coverage

Union Status

Audit & Review

General Terms of Contract



1. Vendor Selection Process

- Explain in general terms how the successful bidder will be determined.
- Outline the time of bid receipt, bid review, successful bidder notification, and the start date of the contract.
- Include a requirement for a pre-award conference at which time all terms of the contract can be confirmed and specific problem areas covered.

2. Duties

- A brief statement on the duties at each post.
- Reference should be made to the availability and/or preparation of post orders that specifically define duties.
- Positions requiring equipment should be identified.
- Areas of unusual risk should be outlined.

3. Hours of Coverage

The hours of coverage should be completely shown to include a breakdown by location of the hours worked by each rank at each post. Holiday coverage should be included.

Special scheduling requirements of the customer must be explained such as, "The same officer should be assigned to work the 8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. shift Monday through Friday".

Supervisor hours should be clearly defined.

Examples of other areas are:

Contractor personnel shall not work in excess of hours per day nor with a turnaround of less than hours, or work in excess of hours per week.

Officers will not be assigned to perform services at other companies without approval.



4. Rates

Specify the manner in which rates are to be quoted. (It is best to have a rate for each experience level of each rank, with a special rate for holidays. This makes vendor comparisons more accurate, since no estimate of turnover is required by the vendors.)

Explain how rates for equipment purchases such as radios are to be quoted. (It is best if these areas are separated from the hourly service rate. If hours ever increase, you pay for equipment needlessly.)

5. Wages & Benefits

➤ Wages

- Specify the base wages by post and rank. (It is desirable to offer higher wages for experienced personnel.)

- Overtime pay procedures should be outlined.

➤ Benefits

- Vacations - Define Vacation Policy

- Holidays - List the holidays and state the policy for employee to be paid for work missed due to holidays and worked performed on holidays.

- Health Insurance - Specify any allocation for health insurance.

- Uniforms - Specify that uniforms are to be provided at no cost to the employee.

- Miscellaneous - clearly state any other benefits such as life insurance, profit sharing, Christmas bonus.



6. Employee Selection

State standards expected to include:

- Education level or related skill requirements
- Health
- Experience
- Security clearances

Outline special methods of screening or review. Examples include:

- Psychological and placement testing
- Medical examination by a physician
- Interview by client management
- User's prerogative to reject any employee or request immediate replacement.

7. Employee Training

Provide a specific breakdown of both hours and areas of training.

List areas where outside training may be required. Examples:

- First Aid
- Boiler operation

8. Supervision

- Define the frequency of unannounced inspections.
- Specify responsibilities for on-site supervision, if any.

9. Vendor History

Require vendors to provide sufficient information to evaluate:

- Proper licensing in your state
- Financial stability
- General agency history

Request references where services similar to yours are being provided.



10. Management

Require vendors to submit biographical information on agency management.

Specify management's requirement to view vendor location and meet with user management prior to bid submission.

11. Equipment

List the basic types of equipment to be used. This helps to define the training and selection process for employees.

Equipment to be supplied by the agency such as radios, watchmen clocks, weapons, vehicles, etc., should be listed and clearly defined.

12. Uniforms

- Specify the type of uniform desired (blazer, para-military, etc)
- Request pictures or samples of the uniforms
- List special requirements

13. Insurance Coverage

- State your basic coverage requirements.
- Include copies of contracts that cover insurance provisions.
- Ask for the company's Experience Modification Factor (The National Council of Compensation Insurance compares workers comp losses for all firms in the security industry and assigns a factor. The average firm is 1.00. All firms above 1.00 are worse than average, those below are better.)

14. Union Status

- Request that vendors explain any union affiliations.
- If they are part of a union, any union requirements that would conflict with these specifications should be listed.



15. Audit & Review

- Clearly state the right to audit and review specific records of wages, benefits, personnel selection, training, etc.

16. General Terms of Contract

Include a sample contract or request vendor's standard contract.

Insure that the following areas are covered:

- Length of contract
- Starting date
- Terms of payment

The security officer services industry is minimally regulated; there are no standards inherent in the 7,200 companies. Therefore, you have to specify what you want and expect. By taking these extra steps and spending the time prior to the awarding of a security officer contract, you will be more assured of getting what you expect and will have paid a reasonable price for that service.