Roles and Functions of Private Security

*Principles of Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security*
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Careers in Private Security

• U.S. Department of Labor predicts employment in private security to grow 18% in the next 10 years due to
  – Heightened security concerns
  – Increased litigation
  – The growing need to protect confidential information and property
  – The proliferation of internet crime, such as identity theft, spamming, and email harassment
Careers in Private Security (continued)

• Diverse opportunities exist within private security:
  – Investigators
  – Security technicians
  – Protective specialists
  – Gaming surveillance officers
  – Manager/administrators
  – Patrol officers
  – Loss prevention and risk management specialists
Qualifications for Employment

• No formal requirements for most private detective and investigator jobs
• Minimum age of 18; minimum age for armed positions is 21
• Pass a background investigation
• High school degree or equivalent is usually required; college degree preferred
• Helpful courses: criminal justice, police studies, and security administration
History of Private Security in the U.S.

• Since the beginning of recorded history, people have used private security measures to protect themselves
  – Personal weapons
  – Barriers such as walls, gates, and moats around homes or villages
  – Guards and watchmen
History of Private Security in the U.S. (continued)

• Since the American Revolution, private security firms have played an integral role in the defense of the nation

• No formal security agencies existed in the U.S. until New York established the first policing agency in 1783
History of Private Security in the U.S. (continued)

• Private security agencies have moved beyond simply protecting property to
  – Maintaining order
  – Investigating crime
  – Making arrests in public spaces
  – Providing Assistance with Homeland Security
History of Private Security in the U.S. (continued)

• The line between what is public and private property, and who is responsible for policing public and private space, is becoming blurred.

• Policing – or making societies safe – is no longer carried out exclusively by governments.
Relationship Between Private Security and Public Safety Agencies

• Studies show that private security companies employ about 2 million officers in the U.S. as compared to the less than 700,000 sworn law enforcement officers (Roberson & Birzer)

• Private and public policing forces share a common goal of protecting the public; however, the two industries have not cooperated to a great extent
Relationship Between Private Security and Public Safety Agencies (continued)

• To protect the U.S. effectively, law enforcement and private security must work collaboratively because neither possesses the necessary resources to do the job alone.
Without the services of private security, the police would be overwhelmed with the many tasks routinely performed by private security professionals in

- Malls
- Supermarkets
- Hospitals
- Construction sites
- Manufacturing plants
- Home alarm maintenance
Relationship Between Private Security and Public Safety Agencies (continued)

• The private security industry plays an invaluable role in the prevention and detection of crime

• While the actual amount of crime prevented by private security is not known, it is believed to be immense
Relationship Between Private Security and Public Safety Agencies (continued)

• Although not common enough, public and private cooperation does occur, taking many forms ranging from national- to local-level operational partnerships.

• Police turned airport security checkpoints over to private security when the staffing burden grew too great.
Private security is a key element in protecting our homeland from terrorist acts because the private sector owns 85 percent of the nation’s infrastructure.

Private Security Regulation and Public Safety Agencies

The nation’s defense industry and private security cooperation initiated the American Society for Industrial Security (ASIS International) in 1955, and the National Association of Security Companies (NACSO).
Obstacles to Public-Private Partnerships

• Information sharing is difficult because of trust issues
  – Corporations don’t feel they receive timely information from police
  – They fear information they give to the police may end up in the news
  – Police fear the corporate sector may not treat law enforcement information discreetly
Obstacles to Public-Private Partnerships (continued)

• Lack of respect for private security among law enforcement officers

• Training differentials

• Competition
Resources

• www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/HSAC_InfoSharing_FinalReport.pdf