Chapter 8: Record-keeping relevant to the role of the security operative

Accurate record-keeping

It is important that accurate records are documented and kept for any incident or accident that happens when you are on duty as a security operative. By keeping accurate records, you will be:

- complying with the law
- providing a clear audit trail of the incident or accident
- preventing yourself from having to rely on your memory

Reporting and recording procedures

During the course of your normal duties as a security operative, you may have to deal with a variety of events. You may also have to become involved in serious incidents or be called to the scene of a crime. The site or venue's policies will give details of what to do and who to inform when serious incidents occur or when crimes are committed, and these must be followed.

Serious incidents like injuries, fires or bomb threats will all require the assistance of the emergency services. You must know how to inform them and be able to provide them with as much information about the incident as possible, so that the appropriate help can be sent to deal with it. Crimes, arrests, serious disorder and incidents taking place outside of the premises will normally mean that the police have to be called.

Using notebooks

While full incident reports can be completed in the relative comfort of an office or staffroom, there are occasions when you may need to make accurate, timely notes while working at the scene of an incident. To ensure that sufficient details about a routine or unusual event are taken at the time, you will often need to use notebooks. A fuller report can be made of the incident later, using the information in the notebook taken at the time.

Security notebooks are still official documents, however, should be used properly at all times. They should only be used to record work-related matters. For these reasons, notebooks should be kept securely as they may contain confidential information about the venue, the client, the security company or operational procedures.

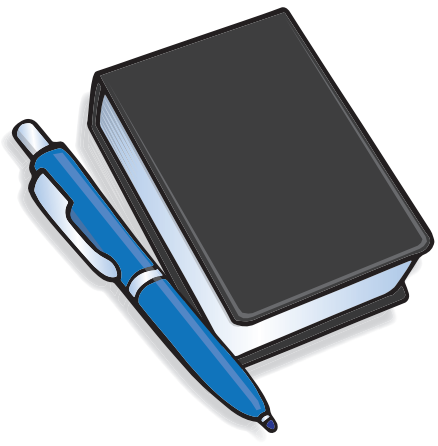
Remember, your notebook may need to be produced and used as evidence in court.



Notebooks need to be completed in black ink and notebook rules should apply. The mnemonic **'NO ELBOWS'** is a useful way of understanding and remembering the general rules for when using notebooks.

NO	**E**rasers
NO	**L**eaves (pages) **t**orn **o**ut
NO	**B**lank spaces
NO	**O**verwriting
NO	**W**riting between the lines
AND	**S**tatements in direct speech

Notebooks should be used to record both routine and unusual events. As well as recording day-to-day information like duty or shift times, they should also be used at incidents or during emergencies to record descriptions, names and addresses of witnesses, vehicle registration numbers and timings.



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Types of records to be completed

Notebooks should only ever be used to record workplace information, and never to record personal information or reminders. Other documents used to records details might include:

- incident records
- accident records
- searches and checks
- logbooks
- pocket notebooks
- search/visitor/key registers
- duty sheets
- accident reports
- lost/found property registers
- message books
- handover reports
- other site-specific reports

As a security operative, you need to ensure that you know what records you are required to use at the venue, where they are kept and how to complete them.

These various reports provide a permanent written record of incidents that have happened and can be used to refresh your memory prior to giving evidence in court. They can also be used to assist the site/venue to comply with the law, assist outside agencies, protect you from malicious allegations and can help to justify any actions you have taken.



Incident reports will need to show:

- **the day, date and time of the incident**
- **what happened**
- **how it happened**
- **where it happened**
- **how you were alerted to it**
- **what you saw**
- **what you were told**
- **what action you took**
- **what the result was**
- **details of any witnesses**
- **any descriptions of people or property**

Records need to be completed as soon as possible following the incident.

Remember to include who the report is for and who wrote it.

They should be purely factual, without personal opinion, and each separate report should be signed, dated and timed.

HOW

WHAT

WHERE

WHEN

WHY

WHO

REMEMBER

A **ACCURATE**

B **BRIEF**

C **CLEAR**



Reports should be **accurate**, **brief** and **clear**.

Recording information

Security operatives must record as much information about the incident or crime as they can at the time it occurs, so that a proper report can be made once the matter has been dealt with. A notebook is the ideal place to record such details at the scene. This information can be put into a formal incident log later if required.

Typical incidents that would require recording properly include:

- entry refusals
- incidents of trespass
- the use of force
- arrests
- serious crime
- accidents
- searches
- seizures of drugs, weapons or other items
- disputes and complaints
- suspicious behaviour
- visits by police or other authorities/agencies
- all other emergencies

Statements

A statement is a written account of what evidence a witness can give about an incident. The rules about statement writing and giving evidence can be found in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984. Formal police statements are often referred to as 'Section 9 statements'.

NI

The Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989.

Should you witness an offence, arrest someone for committing one, or in any other way become involved in an incident to which the police are called, you may be required to make a statement giving details of your involvement.

Statements handwritten on official police statement forms give a chronological description of a sequence of evets as seen by a witness. They describe and identify persons, scenes and events, give details of actual words spoken by various parties, and either prove or disprove matters in issue. Statements are taken for the following reasons:

1. To allow police officers to collate and evaluate evidence during investigations
2. To record witnesses' evidence as soon as is practicable after an incident
3. To submit as evidence (when not contested) in court to save the attendance of a witness
4. To refresh a witness's memory prior to actually giving evidence in court

If you are required to make a statement, the police will help you. They will ask you questions about the incident before writing your account down in a manner which is acceptable to the courts. You are entitled to write your own statement if you wish to, but this is not recommended. There is a declaration at the top of the statement from which reads:

'This statement (consisting of… pages each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true'.

It is a serious offence under common law to commit an act which shows a tendency and is intended to pervert the administration of justice, and this includes the fabrication of false evidence, even it if never used.

Having written the statement, you will be asked to sign the declaration at the beginning, sign the bottom of each page and after the very last word. The statement can then be tendered as the evidence you are able to give about the incident at any subsequent court proceedings.

Use of force in statements

If you are required to make a formal written statement to police about any force you have had to use against a person, or have to explain any force you have used while effecting a lawful arrest, then the following details need to be included:

- time, date and place of incident
- how you were called to the incident
- what type of incident it was
- whether you were alone or with other supervisors
- how you approached the incident
- what you saw and heard
- how many people were involved
- the person's attitude and state of mind
- the person's size compared to yours, details of any weapons
- how you felt about the situation, e.g. frightened, in fear of being assaulted etc.
- the actions you took
- what you said to the person
- what the person said in return and how he reacted
- why you decided to use force
- how much force you used
- what the person's level of resistance was
- how you restrained or ejected the person

- how the person was held until the arrival of police
- details of any injuries you or the other person sustained
- details of the officer who took the person from you
- details of any witnesses to the incident
- details of first aid and/or medical support provided
- details of admission to hospital
- details of the support involved and any follow-up action required

Identification in statements

Should you be required to describe a person you have seen in a statement, as well as giving as complete and accurate a description as you can, you should also cover the following points:

- how long you observed the person for
- how far the person was away from you
- what the lighting conditions were at the time
- whether your view of the person was impeded in any way
- whether you have ever seen the person before and if so, how many times
- whether you had any special reason for remembering the person
- if you subsequently identified the person to police, how much time passed between originally seeing him and the identification
- any differences between your descriptions of the person and how they looked when you identified them to the police

Covering these points in your statement provides good evidence for the prosecution where the case depends on the identification of the accused and shows a professional understanding of both the rules of evidence and the importance of proper descriptions and identification.

Attending court

Before attending court, you should take the opportunity to refresh your memory by reading your incident report/notebook.

Attending court can be a stressful experience and the courts have a witness support system that can assist with the process of preparing yourself before giving evidence in court. The following sets out what can be expected:

- arrive at court in good time, let CPS know you are a witness and follow any advice given
- read your statement (if not already read through)
- when called into court, stand in the witness box. If you have a faith you will be asked to take an oath; if Christian, you will have to hold a bible and read the oath:
  - 'I swear by almighty God that the evidence I give, shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth'
- there are different books for each religion, for example, the Koran for Islam, but if the witness does not wish to take an oath (they may be agnostic), they can take an affirmation as follows:
  - 'I do solemnly, sincerely and truly declare and affirm that the evidence I shall give shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth'
- you will be asked questions by the solicitors (barristers in the Crown Court) but you should address your answers to the magistrate or jury, as they will be considering your evidence
- try and keep your answers straightforward and avoid trying to embellish your statement; if you do not know the answer to a question, don't be afraid to say so
- avoid giving opinion (unless asked) or making assumptions; your job is to report the facts of what you saw and did
- you must follow your organisation's policies and procedure when attending court

