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safety & security



## Security problems keeping you up at night? How to choose the right security guard service



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It used to be that it was only the wealthy that needed security. But today it is an issue that concerns everyone. Although every community has a police department, the police cannot be everywhere all the time and there are innumerable facts and figures that show utilizing a security guard agency is a proven and effective way to resolve security problems.

However, there are several things you should take into account before you choose a security guard service: what type of security service do you need, what level of protection will best provide that service, and which security agency is best qualified to fulfill that role.

Deciding on which security guard agency to use is not a decision that should be taken lightly. Before you allow a security guard agency unlimited access to your property or business, it is vital that you make sure that they are fully licensed and that the guards have met all of the certification, background checks and training requirements set by local and state law. Some other things you should investigate prior to hiring a security guard agency is, their reputation, their track record, their references, their training, their equipment, their cost, and what the contract will look like. You do not want to have any avoidable surprises down the road. Furthermore, it is imperative that the security guard agency has in place adequate insurance. Some states have a required minimum requirement for liability insurance. For example New York State has a minimum liability requirement of \$100,000 per occurrence. However, in the opinion of the author, the state required minimum may be grossly inadequate for the typical business or property. The author suggests a minimum of \$1 million per

occurrence. On the other hand, to err on the safe side and sleep soundly at night, I recommend \$10 million per occurrence.

Once you have narrowed it down and have decided on the security guard agency that meets the recommended criteria, go and examine their reputation before you put pen to contract. A dependable reputation is essential. You may want to investigate whether or not the security agency has a recent history of any complaints filed with the government agency that regulates their license. Also, requesting and contacting their client references is a good idea. Call these clients and inquire about the nature of the service that the security guard agency provided and whether or not the client was satisfied with the job they are doing. Ask them if there are any problems. These questions will give you a good idea of what you can expect.

Once contracted, it is important that the on-site security officers be highly trained and professional. The security agency should be able to regularly monitor

The on-site security personnel. The guard training should be specific to your location. The security agency should have training programs approved by your state (In NY-DCJS, In NJ-SORA). They also need to be able to respond to any problem or situation with knowledge, expertise and a sense of responsibility. A 24 hour local dispatch and command center is critical to assure response to all situations and emergencies. The security agency should be able to cover any type of service you require, whether it is on-site monitoring of surveillance cameras, foot patrols or vehicle patrols by guards or a combination of services that works best for you.

Finally, it is important to be sure that the security agency you have contracted can look after all your needs. The contracted security agency should always be working towards your best interests in a way that makes you comfortable and allows you to sleep soundly at night.

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