



## Unit 6

## General Patrol Tactics & Techniques

### Learning Outcomes

**By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:**

- ✓ *Understand the most important principles of effective traffic control*
- ✓ *Provide traffic control services in a safe and confident manner*
- ✓ *Deal with a variety of everyday issues and unexpected scenarios in the field of traffic control*



## Unit 6

### General Patrol Tactics & Techniques

One of the biggest mistakes you can make as a security operative of any kind is to underestimate the importance or complexity of patrols. Even with all the sophisticated technology money can buy, an organization is never safer than when it is patrol by skilled, experienced and knowledgeable security personnel.

Organizations of all shapes and sizes hire security personnel to protect their property, their people and their information. A robust security presence can also contribute to the image and wider integrity of a business in general. Though in all instances, this is only possible when those conducting the patrols know exactly what they're doing.

Again, to underestimate what's involved in conducting an effective patrol is to create a severe and ongoing security vulnerability in its own right.

#### The Purpose of Patrols

The immediate purpose of any given patrol is, of course, relatively obvious. The idea being that with human security personnel walking (or driving) around your premises, you're able to keep an eye out for anything suspicious or dangerous. Rather than relying on technology to detect potential issues, you use the intuition of a skilled and experienced human security officer.

But the purpose of patrols goes far beyond the detection of potential criminal acts and suspicious behavior in general. Security patrols provide the perfect opportunity for those involved to examine and assess the security infrastructure of the premises, along with its component installations and devices. Damaged fences, compromised cameras and any other potential vulnerabilities.

It's also typically the responsibility of patrolling security personnel to keep an eye out for fire hazards, obstructions that may block emergency exits, 'blind spots' in security coverage and so on. Perhaps most importantly of all, a manned security presence is the single biggest deterrent there is for would-be criminals.

If your site is comprehensively covered by a human security presence, it's highly unlikely it will be targeted by opportunistic intruders.

#### Preparation for a Patrol

Every effective security patrol begins with a detailed, structured and consistent preparation process. Primarily, this involves ensuring those conducting the patrols understand their responsibilities and the objectives of their activities.

Are they patrolling exclusively to monitor for suspicious behavior, or will they be expected to check electrical installations and potential fire hazards along the way? Will it be necessary to conduct a full inspection of the perimeter fence, or maybe check the CCTV cameras in a certain location to assess their state of repair?

Technically speaking, security patrols can be used to accomplish an endless list of important tasks. Some of which may be allocated for specific days only, while others are to be tended to on a daily basis. Though in all instances, security personnel should have the kind of common sense and intuition needed to go *beyond* the confines of their briefing, when and where it proves necessary.

For example, a security guard tasked with patrolling the perimeter fence should not ignore what's clearly a broken camera, damaged lighting fixture or electrical fault somewhere else on the premises. Nor should any security officer ever simply assume 'someone else will take care of it' when encountering something that isn't their direct responsibility.

Communication holds the key to successful patrols, which means ensuring everybody knows what they should be doing, how they should be doing it and who they should be reporting back to.

The easiest way of ensuring all tasks are taken care of - consistently and with complete accountability - is to create a checklist. This should clearly indicate what needs to be done by each patrolling officer during their shift, with tasks subsequently being 'signed off' as they are completed.

Patrolling personnel should also have the most detailed knowledge possible of the geography of the site, though should be sure to vary their route to avoid any potential patterns being exploited by intruders.

### Equipment Preparation and Testing

Another important aspect of the preparation process is to ensure that all of the required equipment is both available and in good working order. This is why all devices and technology (such as radios, cellular phones, torches etc.) should be tested before and after every shift. Security personnel should also be aware of who takes responsibility for reporting damaged equipment and organizing repairs/replacements when necessary.

Again, this should all be incorporated in a detailed checklist, requiring the signatures of those who take responsibility for testing and verifying the working order of the equipment.

### Foot Patrol

The most common and indeed effective form of security patrol is the standard foot patrol. This is where one or more security officers are deployed to patrol the premises on foot, without the use of vehicles.

Foot patrols are considered advantageous in the way that they provide the security personnel in question with more time to carefully examine their surroundings and note anything out of the ordinary.

Whereas a damaged fence link or frayed wire may be overlooked by security personnel passing in a vehicle, it's far more likely to be identified and subsequently addressed by a security guard on foot.

In addition, foot patrols enable security personnel to access areas of the premises that would be inaccessible by way of any conventional vehicle. Reliance on vehicles can also prove problematic if and when mechanical or electrical issues affect the vehicle's operation.

From a purely objective perspective, foot patrols can be advantageous and disadvantages in a variety of ways. All pros and cons should therefore be taken into account, in order to ensure the business and its assets are adequately safeguarded.

Here's a brief overview of the advantages and disadvantages of a typical foot patrol:

### **Advantages...**

- Security personnel conducting foot patrols are effective visible deterrents
- Foot patrols allow for personal interactions with individuals on site
- Visitors and employees alike can consult patrolling personnel for information
- Patrolling on foot allows for more precise inspections of your surroundings
- The patrolling officer can use all of their senses and their intuition
- Foot patrol enables access to areas that would be inaccessible for vehicles
- No vehicle purchase, maintenance or repair costs to worry about

### **Disadvantages...**

- Suitable only for relatively small premises due to reduced area of coverage
- Effectiveness can be diminished in poor weather conditions
- Much more time needed to patrol the same area
- Potential difficulties pursuing intruders who are using vehicles
- Limited capacity to carry additional equipment
- Security personnel at added risk of physical attack

## **Vehicular Patrol**

Some organizations simply prefer to organize vehicular patrols, while others do so due to the extensive

size of the area to be patrolled. In both instances, there's a long list of vehicles and transportations devices that can be used to conduct these kinds of patrols.

Just a few examples of which include cars, vans, golf buggies, bicycles, Segway scooters and so on. Vehicular patrols can be kept discreet and practically silent if preferred, or made as visible and noisy as possible to serve as a deterrent.

Once again, there are advantages and disadvantages to vehicular patrols to consider, which include the following:

### **Advantages...**

- Vehicular patrols can serve as a powerful visible deterrent
- Extensive areas can be covered by just a single security officer
- The time needed to patrol the area is significantly reduced
- Response times are also reduced, and pursuit is made easier
- Security personnel are protected from poor weather conditions
- More equipment and accessories can be carried with ease
- Less direct risk of physical harm

### **Disadvantages...**

- Vehicles are confined to specific surfaces and areas
- Visibility may be restricted throughout the patrol
- Sensory perceptions are reduced for security personnel (smell, hearing etc.)
- Extreme weather may make vehicular patrols impossible
- Potential for vehicle breakdowns and mechanical issues
- Lower likelihood of interactions with people on site

The simple fact of the matter being that while a vehicle can be an invaluable security tool, it can also be a hindrance in some instances. Hence, the pros and cons of the all options should be carefully considered - perhaps resulting in the decision to combine *both* types of patrols.

## **Remote Surveillance**

Increasingly, organizations are choosing not to conduct physical/mobile security patrols at all, instead



replacing these patrols with remote surveillance. This is where total CCTV coverage of the entire installation enables security personnel to watch over the facility from a centralized control room, without actually conducting patrols.

Security personnel will subsequently attend any incidents or suspicious activities detected, though will otherwise monitor the situation remotely.

Like the two primary types of patrols outlined above, this is an approach that has its own unique advantages and disadvantages:

### **Advantages...**

- Security personnel are kept safe from physical harm
- The ability to monitor sizeable premises practically at a glance
- Fewer security personnel needed to protect the site
- Visible CCTV installations represent an effective deterrent
- Some automation of intruder detection (i.e. movement sensors) can be helpful
- A less physically demanding job for the security officers

### **Disadvantages...**

- Potential for electrical faults and system outages
- Blind spots in coverage may be exploited by criminals
- It's extremely difficult to monitor all areas at the same time
- Visibility may be compromised in poor weather
- Issues may go undetected without close-up examination
- Security personnel must rely on vision alone
- No interaction whatsoever with onsite personnel

## **Best Practice Guidelines for Personnel on Patrol**

The objectives and security requirements of all businesses will always be unique. As previously touched upon, it is important to produce and use a detailed security patrol checklist, as something of a framework for every patrol.

Other than this, there are several good practice guidelines that apply across the board with all types of

patrols. Irrespective of individual objectives of the business in question, the following should be considered and adhered to at all times:

### **1. Use a Notebook**

Getting into the habit of taking notes is absolutely essential for patrolling security personnel. What appears relatively insignificant one day could prove to be of immense importance at a later date. An example of which being a relatively nondescript vehicle near the premises at an unusual hour, which a month or two down the line is used to conduct a robbery.

The more detailed the notes you take, the more likely they are to come in handy if called for at a later date. If there's anything even slightly out of the ordinary, it should be noted.

### **2. Patrols During the Day**

When patrolling premises during hours of daylight, it is a good idea to make yourself as visible and prominent as possible. For one thing, this shows would-be criminals who may be inspecting your premises at the time that you have a competent and consistent manned security presence. In addition, visible daytime patrols can also be extremely reassuring for employees, customers, visitors and so on.

That said, security personnel conducting daytime patrols must ensure their behavior is appropriate at all times. Cold, uncaring and indifferent security officers have no place patrolling premises during normal hours of business. Daytime security personnel should expect to be approached on a regular basis and asked questions, which they should be both willing and able to answer in a polite and confident manner.

### **3. Monitor for the Unusual**

Successful patrolling isn't strictly about catching criminals red-handed. Actually catching a criminal blatantly in the act is comparatively rare - precisely why it's essential to monitor at all times for unusual activity. People looking inexplicably agitated or nervous, unusual physical movements, individuals paying curiously close attention to the movements of security personnel and so on.

The longer a security guard works on any given site, the easier it becomes for them to distinguish between normal and unusual behavior. It's not a case of constantly scrutinizing each and every person you come into contact with, but instead picking up on the signs that something isn't quite right.

### **4. Be Fire Aware**

Patrolling security personnel play one of the most important of all health and safety roles for the businesses they work for. Rather than simply monitoring for dangerous or potentially hazardous incidents, it's the responsibility of the patrolling officer to *reduce* their likelihood of occurring in the first place.

For example, a typical security patrol checklist may include ensuring there are appropriately positioned fire extinguishers around the premises, that the fire extinguishers have been recently tested, that emergency exits are operable and free of obstructions, that stairwells are sufficiently lit and that all fire and smoke alarms are in good working order.

Security personnel will also be expected to play a direct role in evacuating the premises in the event of a fire or emergency situation. Hence, they must have the knowledge and confidence needed to conduct themselves appropriately in such a scenario.

### **5. Evening Patrols**

Patrols conducted out of hours - particularly during hours of darkness - inevitably bring additional challenges into the mix. As it may be difficult or impossible to see a great deal unassisted, security personnel must be provided with the appropriate equipment to perform their duties.

Upon detecting suspicious activity or something out of the ordinary, it may be within the security guard's best interests to make their presence known, or to remain both hidden and silent. For example, if a group of criminals poses a direct threat to the health and safety of a lone security guard after forcing entry to the building, it may not be advisable for them to make their presence known.

Evening patrols also call for much broader uses of the sense to detect potential issues. Unusual smells, strange sounds and so on. Where visibility is poor, security personnel must learn to rely more heavily on their other senses.

### **6. Checking Doors and Buildings**

On multiple occasions during the same shift, patrolling guards will be expected to check all important doors and entrances around the premises. This will typically include security doors and fire doors alike, which must be checked on a regular basis - not just at the beginning of the shift.

Most of these important doors around the premises will be fitted with alarms, which if nothing else will issue an audible and/or visual alert if opened. However, as it's perfectly possible for even the most sophisticated automated security systems to be compromised, manual inspections must be carried out.

Some businesses now use wireless devices in conjunction with a series of 'tokens' fixed to the walls near security doors, which provide evidence of checks being carried out as the patrolling security guard scans them while doing their rounds.

### **7. Know Who to Call and When**

At all times, it's important to remember that your job is to deter and prevent criminal activities where possible - not to put your own health and safety on the line. This is where security personnel must know where to draw the line, in terms of when and where to consider physical intervention.

Pursuing and physically stopping a young and relatively harmless shoplifter from leaving the building

isn't likely to put you in harm's way. By contrast, a group of four or five knife-wielding criminals who've gained illegal access to your building should be avoided at all costs.

Security personnel must therefore know who to call and when to call them - particularly when backup is required. It's also the responsibility of the patrolling officer to understand the meaning of 'reasonable use of force' - something that varies in accordance with both the situation taking place and the jurisdiction.

## Additional Precautions for Nighttime Patrols

Evening and overnight patrols are, understandably, considered more hazardous than daylight patrols.

For those who provide their services primarily or exclusively during hours of darkness, the following guidelines should be followed at all times:

- 1. Use your flashlight carefully** – Unless your intention is to draw attention to yourself, be extremely mindful of when and where you are using your flashlight. In addition, it's worth remembering that a long, heavy and durable flashlight can double-up as a surprisingly effective self-defense tool, should it be called for.
- 2. Be wary of windows and glass doors** – Passing directly in front of windows and glass doors provides would-be intruders with a good indication of both your position and your movements. Where possible, try to avoid passing directly in front of glass windows and doors, or do so quickly if you have to.
- 3. Enter dark rooms and spaces carefully** – Additional precautions should be taken anywhere with poor visibility. While it's statistically unlikely to be the case, you need to be mindful of the fact that someone could technically be hiding in *any* area that's too dark or distant for you to see clearly. Always enter dark rooms and spaces carefully with a good flashlight at your disposal.
- 4. Take everything unusual seriously** – Under no circumstances should what appears to be a minor abnormality be overlooked or ignored during your patrol. An open door your thought was closed, an unlocked gate that should have been locked, a light or camera that suddenly shuts down - treat everything potentially suspicious as exactly that.
- 5. Go with your gut** - As a patrolling security guard, you will often be required to rely on nothing more than your instincts to protect both yourself and the organization you work for. If something seems out of the ordinary and piques your suspicion for any reason whatsoever, go with it. Likewise, if you have any concerns whatsoever regarding your physical safety and wellbeing, take the necessary action to protect yourself.

Trust your instincts, as they're often the most powerful tool you have at your disposal.



### **Where a Crime is Committed or Suspected**

It's only in comparatively rare instances that mainstream security personnel will be expected to physically apprehend criminals caught in the act. This is only advisable in instances where there is no direct threat to your own physical safety and wellbeing. For example, if there's an entire team of experienced security personnel behind you.

In all other instances, your job is to call the police - or request appropriate backup from another source. If a crime has been committed, you are duty-bound to ensure that it is reported, and that prosecution is sought via the appropriate channels. If the security framework of your premises has done its job, identifying the perpetrator should be relatively simple.

As should working out how they gained entry, what they did while on site, how they escaped and (most importantly) how to put provisions in place to ensure the same doesn't happen again.

### **A Note on First Aid**

Increasingly, employers are only willing to consider hiring security personnel that have been through at least a basic level of first-aid training. Due to the nature of the job, it is entirely likely that a patrolling guard will find themselves dealing with a sick or injured individual at any time.

At which point, they need to know exactly how to conduct themselves, along with how to provide appropriate support until suitably trained medical personnel arrive.

## **Codes of Conduct for Patrolling Security Personnel**

Every business will implement its own unique rules, regulations and policies for patrolling security personnel.

In all instances, however, the following will usually represent grounds for immediate dismissal on the basis of negligent conduct:

- Sleeping or failing to concentrate on the job
- Falsifying notebook entries or checklist completions
- Failing to patrol the site as required by the organization
- Working under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Allowing unauthorized persons on site
- Leaving their post or exiting the site during their shift
- Failing to report unusual or suspicious activity
- Negligence that leads to on-site accidents or injuries

**Further Reading:**