

# Module 10: Sensitivity Training

## Consideration of Others

As security professionals, guards will encounter individuals from diverse backgrounds. It is crucial for guards to recognize that each person may have unique needs influenced by their culture, country of origin, religion, or personal opinions on sensitive issues. Guards must enforce rules and regulations impartially to avoid appearing biased. Bias can compromise the integrity of a situation, escalate conflicts, or create a negative impression of the client they represent. Given their position of authority, guards must avoid prejudicial views or inappropriate behavior, as these can lead to significant issues for others.

## Human Rights and Diversity

Canada is renowned for its diverse and multicultural society, with a substantial portion of its population comprising individuals from various countries who have come to Canada seeking a better life. This diversity brings a unique set of challenges for security guards, particularly in the realm of communication. One of the most significant obstacles that security guards will face in Canada's diverse population is the language barrier. While written words can be easily translated when required, spoken words present a greater challenge for on-site translation.

During the course of their duties, security guards will encounter a broad spectrum of individuals, each possessing varying levels of fluency in one or both of Canada's official languages, English and French. It is not uncommon for some Canadians to speak little or no English or French at all. Security guards must be acutely aware that these individuals are attempting to communicate in the best way they can, and it is imperative for guards to exhibit extra patience and consideration in these situations.

To effectively perform their duties and provide assistance to individuals who may be facing language barriers, security guards should employ several strategies. These strategies include seeking the assistance of people in the vicinity who may be able to help with translation, utilizing translation aid from the companions of the individual needing assistance, and leveraging visual aids such as diagrams to facilitate communication, particularly when giving directions.

By taking these steps, security guards can ensure that they are providing the highest level of service and support to all individuals, regardless of their language proficiency. This not only helps in overcoming communication barriers but also upholds the principles of human rights and respect for diversity, which are cornerstones of Canadian society. In doing so, security guards contribute to a more inclusive and understanding environment, reflecting the values of tolerance and multiculturalism that Canada holds dear.

## Providing Assistance to Young People

Security personnel often interact with young individuals, ranging from infants to young adults. Despite the age range, it is crucial to recognize that everyone deserves the same level of respect and consideration, requiring patience and understanding in some cases.

### *Interacting with Very Young Children*

Young children may often be confused about the role of a Security Guard, sometimes mistaking them for police officers. Depending on their upbringing, a child's reaction can range from respect to fear. It's important for Security Guards to reassure children and alleviate their fears. Appearing open and friendly can help reduce any apprehension the child may have. Avoid "towering" over children, as significant height differences can be intimidating. Instead, crouch down or kneel to speak with very young children at their eye level.

### *Dealing with Older Youths (12-18 Years)*

Older youths usually have a better understanding of the differences between Security Guards and police officers. However, they may test a Security Guard's authority. Guards must always be aware of the extent of their authority and should not be provoked into overstepping their boundaries. It's also essential to remember that youths in this age group are entitled to all the protections under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Not every older youth is looking to cause trouble, and they should not be treated as if they were. When dealing with older youth or young people, Security Guards must be firm but fair. Youths may try to bargain with the Guard to avoid repercussions, but the Guard must adhere to their duties and the law. The young person should understand that the Guard's responsibility is to perform their duty responsibly, properly, and thoroughly.

### *Addressing Confrontational Behavior*

Young people can be confrontational and defensive towards authority, including Security Guards. This should be considered when dealing with them. Being in a position of authority does not give the Guard the right to treat young people differently from adults. Young people deserve the same respect as adults, which should be reflected in the Guard's interactions with them.

If young people belittle the Guard with derogatory names, this does not grant the Guard the authority to arrest or detain them. The Guard should approach the individuals and request that they stop the behavior. If the behavior persists, the next step is to ask them to leave the property, informing them that they are on private property and refusal to leave constitutes trespassing. The Guard has the legal right to arrest them for trespassing and call the police. The Guard should also warn them that if the police are called, they will be forcefully removed and

possibly charged with trespassing. If possible, the Guard should fill out a Trespass Notice, although cooperation from the individuals may be unlikely.

### *Treating All Young People with Respect*

Every young person that a Security Guard encounters must be treated with respect. They have the same right to be on the premises as anyone else. If the Guard suspects that young people might be up to something suspicious, they should be observed and followed out of the site in the same manner as any other suspicious person.

### *Understanding Authority and Consent*

It's important for a Security Guard to recognize that they are considered a “person in authority” by the courts, especially when dealing with young people. Even if a young person consents to something, the court will consider whether they felt forced or obligated to consent due to the Guard's authority.

### *Maintaining Professional Boundaries*

Occasionally, the Security Guard and the youth may be close in age, leading to potential romantic attraction. In such cases, the Security Guard must be aware that their actions may be perceived as inappropriate due to their position of authority. Pursuing a relationship can be seen as using authority for personal gain, which can damage the Guard's and the company's reputation, regardless of the Guard's true intentions.

By adhering to these guidelines, Security Guards can effectively assist and interact with young people while maintaining professionalism and respect for their rights and needs.

## Communicating with the Public – Statements to the Media

Your employer and the client will establish specific guidelines regarding when and how you are to communicate with the public. As a Security Guard, you are representing the property owner and, therefore, have no obligation or right to release any information to the press or public unless it pertains to the immediate safety of the people on site.

Upon arriving at your post, review the post orders for any specific guidelines on the policies for releasing information. These guidelines will provide clear instructions on how to handle media inquiries. In situations where the application of your employer's instructions is unclear, it is crucial to contact your supervisor for guidance.

### Key Points to Remember:

1. **Follow Established Guidelines:** Adhere strictly to the guidelines set by your employer and client. Do not deviate from these protocols under any circumstances.

2. **Read Post Orders:** Always read the post orders when you arrive on site to familiarize yourself with any specific instructions regarding the release of information.
3. **When in Doubt, Say Nothing:** If you are uncertain about what information can be shared, it is safer to refrain from commenting rather than risk providing incorrect or unauthorized information.
4. **Refer Inquiries to Management:** If pressed for information, politely decline to comment and refer the inquirer to management or, preferably, the designated public relations or media contact. You might say, "I'm not authorized to comment. Please contact our public relations representative for more information."
5. **Safety Information:** Only release information that is necessary for the safety of individuals on site.

### Example Response:

In a scenario where you are approached by the media or public for a statement, you might respond with: "I'm sorry, I am not authorized to provide any information. Please contact our management or the public relations department for assistance."

By following these protocols, you ensure that all communications with the public and media are handled professionally and in accordance with the policies of your employer and client. This approach helps maintain the integrity of the information released and protects both you and the organization from potential issues arising from unauthorized disclosures.

## Harassment and Discrimination

Harassment is a grave issue and can lead to criminal charges. Security Guards must avoid making comments or jokes that could be perceived as sexual harassment or discrimination. Both women and men are equally capable of performing their job duties and should be treated with the same level of respect. When dealing with colleagues or suspects of the opposite gender, always respect their humanity above all else. Making assumptions based on gender is not only incorrect but also discriminatory.

### *Gender-Based Assumptions and Violence*

It's important to acknowledge that women can resort to violence, and men are not always the aggressors. However, statistics show a higher incidence of male violence towards women. In situations involving violence between individuals of any gender combination, assess the situation carefully before forming conclusions. Treat both the victim and the aggressor with equal respect and avoid biased judgments.

### *Workplace Conduct*

Making sexual comments to coworkers is unacceptable, regardless of their gender. Additionally, fraternizing between Security Guards is prohibited. The Canadian Charter of Rights and

Freedoms guarantees every Canadian the right to be treated with equal respect. Comments targeting a person's race, gender, sexual orientation, or religious identity are entirely inappropriate in the workplace. Such remarks should only be noted as identifying characteristics if necessary for reporting, e.g., "The suspect is female and appears to be of Asian descent." Avoid prejudiced statements, such as commenting on someone's driving ability based on their race or gender.

### *Cultural and Religious Sensitivity*

Canada's strength lies in its multiethnic and multiracial identity. Security Guards must respect cultural and religious differences. Misunderstandings often arise from these differences. For instance, in some Asian and African cultures, making eye contact with authority figures is considered impolite, and some cultures prohibit open discussions between males and females. Certain religions may require specific dress codes or behaviors on particular days.

It's unrealistic to know every cultural, religious, and linguistic nuance in Canadian society. Therefore, Security Guards must offer respect to everyone they encounter, regardless of how unfamiliar their language or behavior might seem. Most Canadians will attempt to communicate in either French or English. If you encounter individuals who cannot speak these languages, seek assistance. They might have a friend or family member nearby who can translate, or there could be someone at the site who understands their language. By making a respectful effort, you are unlikely to go wrong.

### Key Points to Remember

1. **Avoid Harassment:** Do not make comments or jokes that could be interpreted as sexual harassment or discrimination.
2. **Treat Everyone Equally:** Respect the capabilities and dignity of both men and women.
3. **Assess Situations Objectively:** In cases of violence, carefully consider all factors before drawing conclusions, treating all parties with respect.
4. **Professional Conduct:** Refrain from making sexual comments to coworkers and avoid fraternization.
5. **Respect for Rights:** Abide by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, treating everyone with equal respect.
6. **Cultural Sensitivity:** Understand and respect cultural and religious differences, seeking help with language barriers when necessary.

By adhering to these principles, Security Guards can perform their duties responsibly while fostering an inclusive and respectful environment.

### Avoid Hot Topics

Security Guards should never engage in discussions about religious or political views while on duty. These topics are highly controversial, and many individuals hold strong opinions about

them. When interacting with the public, it is crucial to remain neutral and objective. The effectiveness of a Security Guard's work is enhanced when situations are approached and documented without bias. Challenging deeply held beliefs can dramatically alter a person's perception and escalate conflicts.

## Discriminatory Language

Using discriminatory language while interacting with people is unacceptable and dangerous. Derogatory and discriminatory comments only lead to frustration and anger, fostering animosity and conflict, and almost certainly escalating the situation. Such language essentially provokes conflict. In cases where the situation turns violent, a Security Guard who has used discriminatory language cannot claim self-defense as a justification for their actions.

Additionally, the widespread availability of cameras, video recorders, smartphones, and other recording devices means that any public display of inappropriate behavior can easily be documented and shared with the media. This can result in significant negative publicity for the Guard, their company, and their clients.

## Non-Discriminatory Surveillance

Security Guards should never single out individuals based on appearance. As Guards, the primary concern is with actions and issues that pose a risk to the integrity of the site. Criminal perpetrators may alter their appearance to avoid suspicion. By focusing on factors such as skin color, dress, religion, or sexual orientation, Guards limit their ability to effectively protect the site and may allow others to act improperly.

## Consequences of Misconduct

Security Guards must be aware that their actions have consequences. They are entrusted with the authority to enforce laws and rules on their assigned sites and must be motivated solely by the administration of the law. Consequences of misconduct include:

1. **Criminal Charges:** Guards who inappropriately direct legal actions against someone or commit offenses motivated by racial or cultural factors are culpable under the Criminal Code of Canada.
2. **Provincial Offences Notices:** Fines of up to \$25,000 can be issued under the Private Security and Investigative Services Act's Code of Conduct.
3. **Internal Disciplinary Actions:** These can range from removal from the site to termination of employment.

By adhering to these guidelines, Security Guards can maintain professionalism, ensure the safety of their sites, and uphold the integrity of their roles.