

# History of private security

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History of Private Security Cortez Jefferies Introduction to Security:

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University College 23 October 2011 Private security industry in the United States can be traced as far back as the mid nineteenth century, where they were primarily used to help fill the gaps created by public police forces in major cities that were just forming.

Over the years the role of private security has changed, from its simplest form of protecting people, property, and information to a more complex form, of individuals and businesses that provide, for a fee, services to clientele to protect their persons, their private property, or their interests from various hazards. Early in its existence training for private security was non-existent or inadequate at best, over the years training has evolved and with that evolution came strict standards and guidelines.

Unlike in Europe, where public law enforcement emerged out of private security, in the United States private security emerged out of public law enforcement. Europeans brought many of the methods they used to protect people and property with them when they immigrated to the United States in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The positions of constable, watchman, and sheriff were borrowed from the English and were used to establish the first system of public law enforcement in the United States.

As rapid growth occurred in the West throughout the early 1800s, it became clear that constables and watchmen weren't going to be able to provide the expansive services necessary to protect people and their property (Stone,

2002). It wasn't until the late 1700s that municipal police agencies were implemented in major American cities. Established in 1844, the New York City police department provided twenty-four-hour police protection to its citizens. Thirty years later, most large cities had a similar system of public law enforcement; yet this system was not enough to keep pace with the rapidly growing American society (Stone, 2002).

One of the first private security agencies to come into existence was Pinkerton's North West Police Agency in 1855. The agency offered private watchmen services for rail yards and industrial complexes. In 1859, Perry Brink started Brink's Inc. as a freight and package delivery service. A few decades later, Brinks Inc. evolved into the country's first armored car and courier service. By the early 1900s, numerous former federal agents and detectives had opened up their own private security companies to include the first burglar alarm service (Maine, 2011).

Between 1929 and 1939, private security employment declined as a result of the Great Depression but rebounded between 1940 and 1945, due to the need to protect the United States infrastructure and military and industrial facilities during World War II, the use of private security increased. After World War II, private security once again began to grow, due to many returning veterans, with military police experience selecting police work and private security as occupations (Ortmeier, 2009). In 1955, a group of security professionals formed the American

Society for Industrial Security (ASIS). Today, ASIS International's membership exceeds 37,000, making it the preeminent organization for security

professionals (American Society for Industrial Security [ASIS], 2011). Private security is a fast-growing industry. The Department of Labor predicts a healthy double-digit growth rate through 2016. Statistics on the number of individuals involved in this market are difficult to ascertain because of an extremely high turnover rate and because the term “ security worker” admits of different interpretations.

However, there are some credible approximations (Maine, 2011). The U. S. Department of Labor estimated the number of private security workers in 2007 at slightly over one million-about twice the number of police officers in the United States. Private security agencies themselves are often quite large. The largest security firm operating in the United states is Securitas, whose employees number more than 125, 000 worldwide and whose revenues exceeded \$7 billion in 2002. Human-Rights First estimate that there are almost 180, 000 security workers in Iraq alone (Maine, 2011).

The median wage for security workers in the United states is \$10. 85 per hour (\$22, 570 per year), this might account in part for the high turnover rate. Salary seems to be proportional to risk. Blackwater security employees are alleged to have earned close to \$1000 per day to guard U. S ambassador to Iraq Paul Bremer (Maine, 2011). Although training for the private security sector has come a long way over the years. Many of the personnel working as private security agents and guards are inadequately screened, trained, and supervised to ensure effective police work.

Due to these reasons, there has been a big push for improvements in the quality of private security training. Private security organizations are being

encouraged to pursue accreditations for the company as well as its employees. Private security organizations are being required to carry general liability insurance or that security personnel be bonded following a minimum level of training and certification, with the amount of training and size of bonding dependent on the degree of risk associated with the nature of the job (Forst, 2002) .

Virginia Security officers are required to be licensed by DCJS (Department of Criminal Justice Services). To be licensed as an unarmed security officer one must go through 18 hours of classroom training from a licensed instructor in order to obtain this card and it must be done by the end of their 90 days after hire with a Security company. Every two years the card must be renewed, by completing an in-service with a licensed instructor. To be licensed as an armed security officer one must complete an additional 16 hours of firearms training, 6 hours of training in conducting a lawful arrest, and qualification with the type and caliber of weapon they intend to carry. Firearms endorsements must be renewed annually by completing an in-service and passing a firearms qualification. Licensed armed security officers are authorized under state code to arrest for any offense committed in their presence while they are on duty at the location they are hired to protect. They may also be granted the authority by the chief law enforcement officer in their jurisdiction to issue summons to appear in court for felonies and misdemeanors.

As the security field diversified in the 1980s and became more responsive to the needs of business, a management model quickly began to dominate how security was perceived and what its functions would be. Security

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practitioners and innovative business managers began to view the functions of security as an essential component of business. As a result, security departments were incorporated into the organizational culture of many companies, and security managers were hired to oversee the security department and work collaboratively with other department managers.

Security managers began to be perceived as professionals in their field, and this helped to enhance the image of security personnel, giving them greater credibility with their colleagues and the public (Stone, 2002). Given this long and varied history, it is not surprising that private security continues to undergo significant changes in its form and function. Still, agreement among academicians and practitioners about what its form and function should be remains elusive. References Stone, Michelle Taylor. (2002). Private Security. Encyclopedia of Crime and Punishment.

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