



SAFETY BULLETIN 18/19

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Choosing the Right Security Setting – Armed or Unarmed Guards for Facilities

Introduction and Scope:

The demand for private security services is set to increase driven by rapid expansion of industries and the rising threats of terrorism. In Asia, many companies have benefitted by outsourcing their security needs to professional security companies. While more companies are opting for technology instead of relying on manpower, some companies still rely on manpower due to the geographical location in which they operate. It is common for security companies to offer both armed and unarmed guards services to cater to their customers' requirements. Companies should decide between these two options.

This bulletin highlights some pointers, as listed below, for companies to determine the suitable option:

Location:

- Companies need to assess the location of their sites with regards to their immediate surroundings and neighbours.
- Determine if high value products or controlled chemicals/ gases are stored at the location.
- Local government may designate a site as a protected installation and may mandate armed security guards, or the security coverage will be supported by the military or police.
- What type of surveillance in terms of cameras exists at the site?
- What type of fence exists around the site?

Terrorist Acts:

- The location or country where companies operate are known to have terrorists' activities or are at risk of being a target.
- Are the law enforcement agencies well prepared and have the resources for counter terrorism in the country?

Access to local enforcement and information:

- Quick access and response of the law enforcement agencies
- Sharing of security information by the enforcement agency

Resources/ Budget/ Liability:

- Armed guard services cost more. In addition, companies may be liable for any actions taken by the armed guards.
- Understand the armed guards selection and training criteria of the Security Companies being evaluated.

Conclusions:

Companies should consider all the pros and cons of hiring armed guards. The benefits of hiring unarmed guards may outweigh the latter. While some assessments may warrant the use of armed guards services, most of the time unarmed guard will provide enough security.

References:

1. AIGA 003, *Site Security Guidelines*, www.asiaiga.org

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