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Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Guard Tour Systems... But Were Afraid to Ask

by Nathan T. Hoskins

Patrol Information Technologies

What is a Guard Tour Verification System?

Guard Tour Verification products have been around for a while in the contract security business. Today's systems are better enabled for the busy, efficient, cost cutting environments that we work in. These Guard Tour Systems are intended to track the patrol rounds of a Security Officer. Basically the collection device records the time and date of checkpoint visits throughout a facility or property. The checkpoints are placed in deliberate locations along the route of an Officers patrol round. When the Officer reaches a checkpoint location he touches the collection device to the checkpoint and the device stores the exact time, date and checkpoint name of that touch (systems vary on how close you actually have to get to the checkpoint. Some say you have to touch it, some say you just get within 2 feet, etc.) The collection device can be downloaded into a computer where the user can generate an abundance of reports.

Why should my Security Company use a Guard Tour Verification System?

The bottom line on a Guard Tour Verification System is accountability. With the reports produced from this system you can verify that your Officer did the job. Or not. Either way, it will help you to identify areas for improvement. I've seen more contracts lost because the client believed the Security Officers were sleeping and nothing was being done about it. Furthermore,

a Guard Tour Verification System sets you apart from the competition because not everyone uses one. Your clients and their insurance companies will love you for using one. Truthfully, most people would rather be getting some "shut-eye" at 2 o'clock in the morning rather than walking a mile long guard tour round. But with a verification system, your Officer is more apt to forgo the snooze and walk the round. Your Officers will do their job, your client will be happier because they feel they are getting a value for their money, and when your client is happy,... you're happy! A guard tour verification system is a mark of a professional company.

What's the difference between a stand-alone system vs. a web-based system?

Some of your more established professional Security Companies desire the use of a web-based guard tour system. With a stand-alone system the collection devices are downloaded into a computer, and there the reports are generated. With a web-based system the collection devices are uploaded to a server. The number of reports you get can be colossal. Some web-based systems can automatically generate the reports and send them to you. A favored option is a system that offers various levels of access to the web-based reports (you may have access to all your sites while a client would only have access to theirs). More advanced systems will automatically notify you when certain checkpoints have been missed (the system can call you on particular checkpoints you deem essential). My best advice here is: "Try it, before you buy it". You want a Guard Tour verification company that is sensitive to your needs.

What should I look for when buying a Guard Tour System?



Watch for the response time on your initial contact to a Guard Tour Verification company. When you're calling a Guard Tour company and they don't respond for a week, just think of the response time you will get when your system is down or your collection device is broken. Look for one that will promptly respond to you. The chief complaint in this business is the repair time when your collection device is broken. A good indicator of that: the response time in the "pre-buy" stage.

"Questions and Answers" is a Regular Feature of *Observed & Reported*, where a member or vendor partner offers advice on the operation of private security firms. This issue's "Q&A" is brought to us by:

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If you have more questions about this issue, contact the author directly. If you have a topic for "Questions and Answers, contact CALSAGA about how to submit your idea. We welcome your thoughts.