



## RESIDENTIAL SECURITY

### OVERVIEW

This document includes the guidelines for compiling security assessments implementing security plans & procedures for home and business locations.

Orlando Wilson. Risks Inc.

# Creating a Safe World

Risks Incorporated is a progressive, European - owned and managed specialist security and training company that has proven itself many times on international operations. We have compiled this document to help people identify potential problems they may encounter and to take preventive action to protect themselves, their families, and their assets.

Risks Incorporated's clients can be assured they are getting the best training and services available from experienced professionals! I personally have over 27 years experience working in the international security industry, what we teach is based on reality, not what someone with no real operational experience thinks would work in a hostile situation. I am a published author and have been interviewed by numerous international TV and media outlets ranging from the New York Times to Soldier of Fortune Magazine on topics ranging from kidnapping, organized crime to maritime piracy.

Contact us for more information on our training courses in US, Europe & The Middles or about our international security services.

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# Residential Security

Residential security (RS) is something that is usually taken very lightly, most believe putting in an alarm system and maybe a camera or two is all that's required. It is common knowledge that one of the favored places for criminals and terrorists to target a victim is when they are in, entering or leaving their residence; RS must be taken very seriously. In times of civil unrest looters will be looking to target any location that has valuables, weapons, or assets that they can use and that has minimal security, this means most residential properties.

If your threat is from criminals or terrorists and you're going to hire security personnel for your residence or office make sure they are in some way trustworthy, just because someone has a security or private investigators license it does not mean they are competent or not working with the criminals. What a lot of people forget when hiring security personnel is that you get what you pay for. I am approached all the time by people who require security personnel, many of whom are having problems with their current security contractor, but they do not want to pay a professional rate. Sure, you can always get a cheaper option but don't expect the budget security guard to be too concerned about your assets or wellbeing.

The basic procedures I have listed here can be applied on all residences or offices. What will differ is the type and size of the residence, the manpower and budget available. When taking over or moving into a residence, a threat assessment must be compiled and all vulnerable spots identified. A set of orders needs to be compiled and procedures drawn up for every eventuality. Before you occupy a residence, the residence and its grounds need to be searched for IEDs, electronic surveillance devices and contraband such as illegal drugs or weapons that could have been left there by the previous occupants.

If the budget allows, electronic security devices should be employed. There is a vast array of security devices available on the commercial market, ranging from CCTV to laser sensors. Always choose the best that you can afford and buy it from a reputable dealer; it is best to also get a service agreement and have all equipment regularly serviced by trusted people. Even if your residence is in an apartment block, CCTV should be considered for the corridors and public parts of the building. Covert and portable CCTV systems are available at affordable prices and have a variety of uses. These days there are also affordable CCTV systems that you can monitor over the internet. I had one client who told me while he was working in East Africa he watched Hurricane Katrina destroy his house in Louisiana over the internet. Remember if you use internet cameras they can be hacked into, if someone gets access to your computers, passwords or on a more professional level access to your server they can also see what you're up to.

Many people have alarm systems and panic buttons in their residences and it amuses me that a lot of people believe that installing an alarm is all they require to protect their families. We have all seen the adverts on TV where a woman is home alone, the alarm goes off, the bad guy runs away and the alarm company phones her to make sure she is OK; if only the world was that perfect. What if the bad guys aren't worried and expect an alarm to go off because they know they have at least 15 minutes before the police will respond. If you have an alarm system you need to know what the response time will be for those responding, be it an armed response company or the local police. In some places the response can take hours, even in the U.S. if the responding police believe there is a serious incident taking place with shots or fire they will usually back off, call for support, cordon the area and assemble a SWAT team to respond if you're lucky this may take an hour or two!

Another criminal tactic to counter alarm system on a residence is to keep setting them off until the target turns the system off. Think about it, if over a period of two weeks the alarm on your back door keeps going off between 1am to 4am what would you do? Initially for the first few alarm activations the police will respond, in a lot of places after 3 false alarm activations the police will no longer respond, if you have an armed response company they will be charging you for every alarm they respond to. So, I am sure you will call out the alarm company to fix the alarm but they will find nothing wrong with it. Would you keep putting up with the cost and aggravation of the apparently false alarm activations or just turn the alarm off? Take nothing at face value, if you have an alarm that starts going off for no apparent reason, look deeper!

Security for a residence needs to be planned in depth with multiple rings of defense, how many you have will depend on the type and size of the residence. When planning the security for a residence you need to think like the criminals. In 1994 I was working in South Africa and was tasked to provide security for numerous residences that had active threats on them. My working day usually started in the early evening and went through to after first light the next morning. When I arrived at a residence the first thing I would do would be to assess the area around the residence for likely criminal surveillance points and approach routes. I would then assess the fence or wall around the garden for the most likely point the criminals would use as an entry point. I would then take up a position in the garden where I could see the likely criminal entry point or points and as much of the residence as possible, then I waited.

So, the first cordon of security you should consider is the general area around the residence. You need to identify any potential surveillance positions, choke points and possible ambush locations. Consider using CCTV to cover the streets and exterior of the walls of your grounds. All routes leading up to the residence need to be regularly searched for IEDs, surveillance and signs of an ambush which may be in the process of being set up, to do this the routes and exterior would need to be walked by trusted and alert personnel.

If your residence is in an apartment block, the next level of security could take the form of covert CCTV in public areas or placing the building under general protective surveillance. In a large house, this cordon will be the walls or hedges that surround the grounds; these can be monitored by CCTV, with sensors or where legal topped with razor or electric wire.

In a large residence the next cordon would be the grounds or garden. This area could be covered by CCTV and be patrolled regularly by security personnel, day and night and in all weather. All external buildings such as garages and tool sheds need to be properly secured. A lot of people ask me about using guard dogs, something which I tend to dissuade people from doing. Dogs can be weapons and must be kept under control, in South Africa I had two German Sheppard's attack me; they did not die because the client was screaming at me not hurt them. The dogs had been let out of their cage, as they usually were in the evening, by a staff member who did not know I was working there. OK, it was only me, so no problems but what if it was a child or woman and dog's owner was not there to take control of them?

If you use dogs they must be properly trained, if I was in a high risk area would I consider having trained dogs in my garden, sure but they would need to be properly trained. Dogs can be targeted as same as security personnel, if they are not trained properly they are easy to poison. Guard dogs that bark a lot are easy to counter, same as an alarm system, we have used this in numerous times in parts of Latin America where every house seems to have a pack of dogs, you just need to get the dogs barking and keep them barking, the owner will soon get fed up with it or the dogs will get tired.

The next cordon would be the residence itself, all doors, windows and skylights need to be secured and controlled and if possible, alarmed. Consider defensive gardening to deter criminals gaining access to windows; below the window plant thorny bushes that would make it difficult and noisy for the criminals to get through. Ideally, all rooms should be fitted with motion detectors and in high risk areas locked when not in use.

Now you need to consider what you are going to do if criminals try to make entry to your residence; you need to make plans and preparations for this. On my courses I usually ask people what they would have done if someone tried to break in to their house the previous night, a lot of people say they don't know or just then start to think about it. You need to put together sensible procedures, and then if you have an issue you will know what to do and not panic.

There are two general considerations when planning your procedures; are going to stay in the residence or evacuate, what you do will depend on your situation. A secure room needs to be designated within the residence to be used as a safe room for you and your family in the event of an attack where immediate evacuation is not practical.

The room should be lockable from the inside and have several good communications links with the outside world; there should be a list of emergency numbers in the room, so help can be summoned in the event of an emergency. What equipment is in the room will depend on your situation and the length of time you will need to possibly stay in to room, this where you need to know the approximate response times of those coming to help you. The main thing a safe room needs is an escape route, if I was a criminal and wanted to target someone who I knew took their security serious I would not enter their residence. If someone knows how to defend a building SWAT and room clearing tactics won't work, you're going to have big problems. The easiest way to clear a building is to cordon it and set it on fire, then hit the inhabitants as they exit, if they don't exit then criminals have saved some bullets. Always have an escape route!

A set of procedures will need to be drawn up for dealing with visitors to the residence; this is the downfall of most residential security programs. A good example of this resulted in the kidnapping in Haiti of a family member of a business associate of mine. This person has a large residence and employed an armed guard to man his front gate. One evening the guard opened the gate to talk with someone who was asking after one of the staff members, as soon as he stepped outside the gate he had a gun to his put to his head by a criminal who was waiting next to the gate. The criminal with their crew gained access to the residence, as the doors were left open, robbed the place, and kidnapped four people.

Why should the criminals try to break into a residence when in a lot of cases they can get the occupants to easily open the doors and come to them? As you read this now what would you do if someone crashed into your car; go outside and see what had happened, now you can be kidnapped and the bad guys have access to your house. A lot of houses have their electric mains outside, same in places where generators are use, so if the criminals cut the power what will most people do; go out and investigate. Sever the connecting to most people satellite TV and what will they do, go outside, and check the dish. See the pattern, so do the criminals!

## Residential Security Checklist

Here is list of things you want to consider when planning the security for your residence. Not everything will apply to you but take what does and use it, a lot of the considerations here can be applied to most houses or apartments.

- Always plan security in depth, you want as many cordons of defense as possible.
- Have several means of communications; land-lines and cellular, check them regularly.
- Have planned escape routes.
- If the residence overlooked what sniper or surveillance positions are there?
- Check to see if the residence under surveillance.
- Has the residence been searched for IEDs, electronic surveillance devices or contraband?
- Is the residence ever left unoccupied, if yes it needs to be searched before re-occupation?
- Does the residence have a fence or wall around it and can it realistically keep out intruders?
- Are there gates to the residence, can they stop an intruder or a car, are the gates locked at all times and what are the procedures for greeting visitors.
- Is there anything to help criminals climb over the garden walls or gates, such as trees or poles around the exterior of the property?
- If the residence is in an apartment block, are there fire escapes or scaffolding that could give the criminals a way in?
- Where along the routes in and out of the residence could an ambush be concealed?
- Consider putting the residence under protective surveillance.
- Always use counter-surveillance drills before entering and upon exiting the residence.
- Regularly photograph or video the areas surrounding the residence and always watch for suspicious vehicles and people.
- What security lights are there, do they work, when are the lights turned on and where is their control switch? If the control switch is outside, move it inside.
- Lights should shine away from the residence not on to it.
- Consider attaching lights triggered by movement detectors outside of doors and vulnerable areas.
- Any defects to floodlighting or other security lights should be fixed ASAP.
- If you are in an apartment block, is the reception manned 24hrs a day and if yes, are the people manning it competent? Consider a penetration test.
- Do your doors have peepholes- peepholes are best positioned at the side of the door or in the wall so, you cannot be shot through the door. If using a peephole always distinguish any lights behind you.
- Consider using a video phone to greet visitors and cameras to cover the doors and surrounding areas.
- Consider an armored layer on the inside of main doors.
- If you have a residential security team (RST) do they know their orders?
- Are the RST from a quality trustworthy company and have they been vetted and well trained?
- Do an assessment on your security personnel and evaluate how much you can really trust them; will they fight, flee or just rollover if there is a problem.
- Make sure the RST patrols the grounds at all times in all weathers; bad weather is the best time for raids as guards are usually seeking shelter and un-alert.

- If you are using guard dogs, make sure that they are well trained and preferably under the control of their handler.
- Are all doors to the residence solid and are the doorframes solid, most times a doorframe will break before the lock on the door.
- Are the locks on the doors of a good quality and have you changed them since taking over the residence?
- If a key is lost or an employee fired who has access to keys change your locks.
- Consider using deadbolts at the top and bottom of a door and wedges in conjunction with the normal locks.
- Can the locks be unlocked from the outside, if a window is broken or can the door hinges be unscrewed?
- Do you have control of all the keys to the residence and have a list of everyone with keys?
- Have all unused entrances and exits secured.
- All windows need to be secured on all floors of the building. It is a fact that in 90% of burglaries, access is gained through windows. Check that windows are properly shut, secured and if possible alarmed.
- Consider putting thorny bushes under windows and around the perimeter of your garden to deter intruders. Thorny bushes can be put on the inside of perimeter walls also to tangle up and alert you to anyone jumping over.
- Use laminated glass and heavy curtains where there is a threat from IEDs as they will help prevent flying glass. Wood blinds also work for extra privacy and protection.
- Beware of casting shadows against windows which can be seen from the outside.
- Consider putting a gravel walkway around the outside of your house so you can hear anyone approaching or stalking around.
- All skylights and roof doors need to be secured and preferably alarmed. Roofs need to be secured and monitored.
- Is the attic of the residence adjoined to another roof or attic from which someone could gain access?
- What alarms are in the residence, are they working and when were they last tested?
- All doors and windows on outbuildings need to be secured, regularly checked and, if possible, alarmed.
- Are the roofs of the outbuildings secured; an IED or assailant on the roof of a garage stands a better chance of not being spotted than one in a driveway.
- Do all padlocks have spare keys and who has them?
- Are the padlocks of good quality and difficult to pick or shim?
- Are all weapons in the residence legal and are they secured when not in use?
- Do you and the RST know their rules of engagement and the laws for use of force?
- No vehicle should be given access to the grounds of the residence without a member of the security team at least physically checking the interior of the passenger compartment. You never know- your personal driver flashing his light and laying on his horn at the gate might have a gun in the back of his head or a bomb in the trunk of his car.
- What firefighting equipment is there in the residence and is it in a serviceable condition?
- Are there any fire alarms and do they work? Fire is the largest cause of loss and damage to private and commercial properties. Fire prevention is, therefore, one of the highest residential security concerns.

- Flooding is a major threat to property and equipment, common causes include taps that have been left running, leaks in plumbing systems or faulty air conditioning systems, heavy rain or snowfall.
- Are all valuables kept secure and do you have pictures of all valuable artwork, jewelry etc.?
- Are all valuables insured and have you recorded the serial numbers of all TVs, computer and stereo equipment?
- Do you, your family and staff have security, emergency procedures and does everyone know them?
- Do you, your family and staff know how to report any suspicious activity in the area?
- Do you, your family and staff know how to raise the alarm, in the case of an emergency?
- Make arrangements for power cuts, keep spare batteries and bulbs for torches, several means of communications and check them regularly.
- If you have a backup generator ensure it is serviceable and you have plenty of fuel in a secure location.
- Keep all sensitive and security documentation secure and confidential.
- Keep computers and hard drives secure and password protected.
- Have your staff and employees been profiled and had background checks?
- Do not discuss sensitive or security related subjects in front of staff, consider giving them disinformation on such things as travel and business plans.
- Don't let any of the security personnel get over familiar with any of the other staff.
- Consider monitoring all phone calls from and to the residence.
- All contractors must have appointments and must be searched before entering and leaving the residence. Searched when entering to check for contraband, IEDs or electronic surveillance devices and when leaving to make sure they are not stealing anything.
- Contractors should be accompanied at all times.
- If suspicious of visitors, turn them away or keep them outside and preferably illuminated, until their credentials are verified. Also consider that they could be testing your security or a distraction while others try to access your residence.
- Never illuminate yourself in a doorway or a window, darkness is your friend.
- All deliveries should go through the RST and be checked for anything suspicious, have a secure area to isolate any suspicious packages.
- Use a mailbox or virtual office address rather than your residential address.
- Be suspicious of unexpected power outages, faulty alarms etc.
- Always have escape routes and don't let security procedures obstruct them.
- Know the location and safest routes to safe houses, emergency rendezvous points, hospitals, etc.
- Think like a criminal and plan for every eventuality.

If you have any questions let me know. At Risks Incorporated we provide a full range of kidnap prevention, close protection/bodyguard training, tactical firearms, international bodyguard and security services.

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We hope the information in this document has been of use to you. Please remember this is basic information, if you have any questions then please feel free to contact us.

We supply corporate investigations, maritime security services, executive protection, tactical firearms training, kidnap and ransom services, tactical training, travel security, kidnapping prevention, community security group, SWAT, and bodyguard training. Our clients range from entrepreneurs to corporate law firms and from trainee bodyguards to specialist tactical police units and government agencies actively engaged in counter narco terrorism and counter insurgency operations. We have training location in US, Europe and The Middle East, our instructors are also available to travel to your locations.

Stay Safe,

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