

Safeguarding Vulnerable People

A Security Officer's Handbook

Guidelines for Recognizing and Protecting At-Risk Individuals

1. Understanding Vulnerability

Vulnerable people may include: Children and elderly individuals.

People affected by drugs or alcohol | Victims of exploitation, abuse, or trafficking

Individuals with mental health conditions or disabilities

Tips: Vulnerability is not always obvious—stay observant and assess situations carefully.

2. Recognizing Signs of Vulnerability

Look for red flags such as:

- Confusion, disorientation, or distress
- Signs of neglect, abuse, or injury
- Fearful behavior or avoiding eye contact
- Being controlled or coerced by others
- Struggling to communicate or appearing lost

Example: A young person being closely watched and prevented from speaking by an older individual may indicate exploitation.

3. Responding to At-Risk Individuals

- Approach calmly and introduce yourself.
- Ask simple, non-threatening questions. ("Are you okay?")
- Avoid assumptions—gather facts before acting.
- Ensure privacy while maintaining safety.
- Know when to escalate to supervisors or authorities.

Tips: If someone seems distressed but refuses help, stay nearby and monitor the situation.



4. Dealing with People Affected by Drugs or Alcohol

- Stay calm and maintain a safe distance.
- Use a non-confrontational tone.
- Do not argue—de-escalate the situation.
- Call for medical help if needed.
- Ensure they are not a danger to themselves or others.

Example: If someone is intoxicated and unable to stand, they may need medical attention—call emergency services if necessary.

5. Identifying and Preventing Exploitation

- Watch for signs of forced labor, human trafficking, or coercion.
- Pay attention to people who appear controlled, scared, or isolated.
- If you suspect exploitation, discreetly report it to authorities.

Tips: A person who avoids talking, lacks identification, or appears fearful of their companion may be a victim of exploitation.

6. Safeguarding and Security Procedures

- Know company policies on safeguarding.
- Always document concerns and incidents accurately.
- Follow legal and ethical guidelines—never take unnecessary risks.
- Work with law enforcement when necessary.

Example: : If a lost child is found in a shopping center, escort them to a safe area and contact their guardian or authorities.

7. Best Practices for Security Officers

- Stay vigilant—early intervention can prevent harm.
- Communicate effectively—use clear, calm language.
- Act professionally—handle sensitive situations with care.
- Know emergency contacts—be ready to escalate concerns.

Note: Logging search findings in a security report system.

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