



Improving Security and Safety Through Training

by Tim Bollig

The role of Indian gaming security is fundamentally quite simple – ensure the safety of guests and team members while protecting the assets of the casino. Accomplishing these tasks will not only minimize casino liabilities, but will also maximize the casino experience for guests. To ensure that this role is met it is crucial to have security personnel properly selected and adequately trained. A comprehensively designed training program will educate and enable staff for the application of both policies and procedures, allowing staff to react to any number of tasks at any given time.

The first step in the training cycle is **Orientation Training**. This provides new officers with a baseline of what is expected of them in their new position. An overview of both casino operations and security department operations provide the foundation that all other instruction will build upon. Essential task training, such as mandated first aid, cardio pulmonary resuscitation, automated electronic defibrillation, blood borne pathogens, guest safety, hazardous communications and enhanced defensive tactics, are just a few areas that security staff should be provided prior to ever being placed on the casino floor. This is an ideal time to also introduce the new officers to report writing, lost and found, and radio procedures. Be careful not to overwhelm the new staff. Introduce these topics slowly and methodically, and always allow time for questions, interactive discussion and review.

The most interactive stage in training is the **Floor (or Field) Training Officer (FTO) program**. The FTO program allows the security trainee to be teamed with an experienced training officer. During a progressively designed phase program, routine tasks and specific knowledge points are explained, demonstrated and performed. This will ensure the trainee's comprehension of all of their duties. The assigned training officer will document the explained tasks and how accurately the trainee performs these tasks. This is the most critical stage in the training process, as it stabilizes the foundation of the trainee's career and begins the documentation of the trainee's performance.

The training program never stops. The **Continued In-Service Training** tier ensures ongoing maintenance, re-certifications and specialized individual training. Bi-weekly or monthly briefing presentations are incorporated into in-service training to address specific occurrences and training on new or updated procedural tasks. Included in this is external training designed for all departments within the casino. These tasks include, but are not limited to, fire, bomb and natural disaster procedures, departmental training, 'train the trainer' training, ongoing drills, and coordinating these tasks with the casino safety manager to ensure safety compliance. Overall, the in-service training should be documented in an annual training cycle. This training cycle will serve as the map for the training program for that year.

Training Facilities and Equipment is an indicator of the level of commitment in the professionalism of the training for the security department. An established training room can be used to serve many functions; obviously as the location for all of the specialized training, such as classroom and scenario training, first aid and defensive tactics, but also as a briefing room, and as an emergency operation center. Training equipment should be provided to staff as needed. Current equipment and curriculums will ensure that you have the materials needed to provide the best training for your staff. Think about the basics, such as training mats, striking and CPR manikins. Don't think in the box with training items; be creative to meet your staff's needs with such items as exercise equipment, judgment simulators and training scenario props.

Training Documentation is a necessary evil. Starting from the beginning, there should be an outline of the entire training program. Each element of the training program must be documented in the form of a training outline. Each phase of training, orientation, floor, and continued in-service training must be documented. Documentation needs to include when these elements were presented and who attended. There are a number of basic training management programs available that can assist with documenting who has received as well as who requires mandated training. It is always a good idea to back-up these types of files and to have printed hardcopy training files. This will provide documentation as to what information was provided to your staff. During the original training phases of orientation and floor training, documentation is critical. The training officer should be required to document each instructional day, followed by a training phase summary. Documentation of when a new officer is not meeting standards can be used as a guide to assist them in weak areas. When the new officer does not meet standards and is failing to improve, documentation may serve as a template for separation.

The entire training program should be designed to encourage positive adult learning, as well as to promoting positive communications and actions throughout the department and in its operation. Creative thinking and developing a customized training program is the key to meeting your casino's specific training needs. Remember that properly prepared and presented training, that is documented, will create a smoother running department and minimize casino liabilities while providing the maximum customer service for your guests. ♣

Tim Bollig is Training Adjutant at Snoqualmie Casino. He can be reached by calling (425) 888-8537 or email tbollig@snocasino.com.