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Download Article A guide to writing an incident report and following workplace protocols Download Article If you're a security guard or police officer deployed to the scene of an incident, writing up a detailed and accurate report is an important part of doing your job correctly. A good incident report gives a thorough account of what happened without glossing over unsavory information or leaving out important facts. It's crucial to follow the appropriate protocol, describe the incident clearly, and submit a polished report. Note the time, date, and location of the incident on the form. Include your full name and ID number, as well. Write a first person narrative explaining what happened at the scene, be honest, clear, and concise as you go. Then, proofread your incident report and revise any mistakes before submitting it. 1 Obtain the proper forms from your institution. Each institution has a different protocol in place for dealing with an incident and filing a report.[1] Follow any instructions that accompany the forms. Each organization uses a different format, so pay attention to the guidelines. In some cases you're responsible for filling out a form issued by your institution. In other cases you'll be asked to type or write up the report on your own. Tip: If possible, do your writing up using word processing software. It will look neater and you'll be able to use spell check to polish it when you're finished. If you write your report by hand, print clearly instead of using cursive. Don't leave people guessing whether your 7s are actually 1s. 2 Provide the basic facts. Your form may have blanks for you to fill out with information about the incident. If not, start the report with a sentence clearly stating the following basic information:[2] The time, date and location of the incident (be specific; write the exact street address, etc.). Your name and ID number. Names of other members of your organization who were present Advertisement 3 Include a line about the general nature of the incident. Describe what brought you to at the scene of the incident. If you received a call, describe the call and note what time you received it. Write an objective, factual sentence describing what occurred.[3] For example, you could write that you were called to a certain address after a person was reported for being drunk and disorderly. Note that you should not write what you think might have happened. Stick to the facts, and be objective. 4 Start the report as soon as possible. Write it the same day as the incident if possible. If you wait a day or two your memory will start to get a little fuzzy. You should write down the basic facts you need to remember as soon as the incident occurs. Do your report write-up within the first 24 hours afterward.[4] Advertisement 1 Write a first person narrative telling what happened. 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The officer separated both parties involved and conducted field interviews. The officer was told by Mr. John Doe that he had come home from work and discovered that dinner was not made for him. He then stated that he became upset at his wife Mrs. Jane Doe for not having the dinner ready for him." If possible, make sure to include direct quotes from witnesses and other people involved in the incident. For example, in the above scenario, the officer could write "Jane said to me 'Johnny was mad because I didn't have dinner ready right on time.'" Include an accurate description of your own role in the course of what occurred. If you had to use physical force to detain someone, don't gloss over it. Report how you handled the situation and its aftermath. 2 Be thorough. Write as much as you can remember - the more details, the better. Don't leave room for people reading the report to interpret something the wrong way. Don't worry about your report being too long or wordy. 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Check to make sure the basic information (spellings of names, the dates, times, and addresses, the license plate numbers, etc.) match those you listed in your report.[8] Do not try to make sure that statements in your report match those of your colleagues. Individually filed reports guarantee that more than one account of an incident survives. Incident reports can appear later in a court of law. If you alter the facts of your report to match those of another, you can be penalized. 2 Edit and proofread your report. Read through it to make sure it's coherent and easy to understand. Make sure you didn't leave out any information that should have been included. Look for obvious gaps in the narrative that you might need to fill in.[9] Check it one more time for spelling and grammar errors. Remove any words that could be seen as subjective or judgmental, like words describing feelings and emotions. 3 Submit your incident report. Find out the name of the person or department to whom your report must be sent. When possible, submit an incident report in person and make yourself available to answer further questions or provide clarification. In situations where an incident report must be mailed or e-mailed, follow up with a phone call within a 10 day period to ensure that your report was received. Advertisement Ask a Question Advertisement This article was co-authored by Clinton M. Sandvick, JD, PhD. Clinton M. Sandvick worked as a civil litigator in California for over 7 years. He received his JD from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1998 and his PhD in American History from the University of Oregon in 2013. This article has been viewed 1,284,733 times. Co-authors: 20 Updated: April 19, 2024 Views: 1,284,733 Categories: Law Enforcement Print Send fan mail to authors Thanks to all authors for creating a page that has been read 1,284,733 times. 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