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Dealing with citizens with CCW permits

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As the 'right to carry' spreads across the United States, many law enforcement agencies and private businesses express their unease — and for some, outright alarm — at the idea of citizens carrying concealed weapons.

As a former law enforcement officer, I have had to address concealed carry issues as part of my regular duties. In Oklahoma, where I live, guns are as natural a part of life as eating and sleeping. It is not uncommon to see a rifle or shotgun in the rack of the back of any pickup truck.

Here are some thoughts to share with your personnel when they have to contact citizens who may be carrying concealed.

- People who have gone through the process of getting a concealed carry permit are, in general, law abiding citizens, not felons.
- Do not expect them to know the letter of the law or the interpretations of the law in various districts – they will have a general idea what the law states.

As private business or public safety, here are some more thoughts to consider.

Manner of Dress

Concealed carry folks and cops seem to go to the same tailor. Many are professional people who will be more neatly dressed. The "tactical look" is in. Felons don't generally go for this look but CCW carriers and many cops do.

Colder weather finds CCW carriers wearing jackets and windbreakers – unzipped jackets can be an indicator of concealed carry in cold weather. In hot weather, some will have a shirt hanging over the belt line to conceal an in-the-pants holster.

Concealed carriers generally wear holsters, or fanny packs. These two things alone can be a big tip-off that you are not dealing with a felon. Look at the belt and the buckle. Thick leather or nylon belts with strong buckles are indicators of concealed carry.

Look for bulges on one side of the body which you can see under clothing. Some wear a T-shirt over their gun and it will bulge conspicuously. Look for bulges when they bend over and the butt of the gun may stick out slightly.

Look at the hem line of long pants, one side may droop more if the gun is pulling that side down. If carrying an ankle holster, it will bulge the inner part of the pant around the ankle.

Off duty cops will also wear the above many times. Look at the shoes. In my area, if they are black, nine times out of ten they are either a cop or a security officer.

Demeanor

Lawful concealed gun carriers also feel as if they are the "good guys."

Be aware that there are "concealed carry" badges for sale out there that look similar to cop badges. Really check to see what you are looking at and check other forms of ID as well.

I would expect there will be forgeries out there as well. Know what the concealed carry license looks like from your area and see if you can get photos of concealed carry ID cards from other areas of the country. Other forms of ID to compare with the concealed carry ID would be helpful such as driver's license, employee ID card, etc.

Stances or Postures

A bladed "boxer" stance upon contact – combined with manner of dress and demeanor – would be indicative of concealed carry. Many will do this without realizing they are doing it. It may be more of a cautious state-of-mind and not aggressive behavior.

Obviously, hostile behavior should be treated just like any other felon contact.





Behaviors

This is normal behavior and/ or indicators from most of the gun carriers I see; cops, CCW carriers and other gun carrying personnel carrying discreetly.

- Shifting of the clothing – such as hitching up the pants, moving a jacket in place, pulling a pant leg over something, etc. – especially when getting in or out of a vehicle or getting up from sitting.
- Touching the area of clothing over the gun with any part of the forearm, elbow or hand.
- Checking out their surroundings constantly – the head on a swivel.
- Stopping with back to a wall.

Education and Public Awareness

Rather than seeing CCW as a necessary evil, I would look upon it as an opportunity to work with your citizens. In talking with CCW carriers in my courses I have had numerous opportunities to get their point of view on this subject. By and large, they are very pro-law enforcement and will go out of their way to help you should the need arise.

In some parts of the country, it is legal to carry a handgun within the confines of your vehicle while traveling. If you ask them to get out of the car however, they are now “carrying concealed” and it’s you who has put them in this position. They may be flustered or nervous and not know what to do.

Remember, though they carry firearms, CCW permit holders don’t expect to be treated like a felon by private business or public safety. A little care and consideration goes a long way in avoiding unnecessary conflict.



Safety Incentive Programs

By John Robishaw
Health and Safety Coordinator

The trend toward implementing incentive programs based on safety activities rather than injury results pays off for continuous improvement diversified companies.

Even as recently as 5 years ago, the vast majority of companies that offered safety incentive programs provided cash, prizes, awards or other forms of recognition to employees for performance related to "lagging indicators." If the number of accidents, incidents, and near misses fell below a certain level, employees would be rewarded. If they were above the designated levels, they would not be rewarded. Some companies tied the rewards to individual performance. Others tied them to team, department, or even company performance.

While the philosophy behind such programs seemed sound, there were a number of criticisms leveled at such programs by some safety consultants, some union leaders and even OSHA. First and foremost on the list of concerns was the idea that such programs could create pressure on employees not to report accidents, injuries, near misses or other incidents so as to keep the "record" intact. While one might expect that coworkers would lead this pressure (and frequently did), there were even some documented cases of supervisors and managers pressuring employees not to report accidents.

Another concern was that failure to report incidents, even minor incidents and near misses, was defeating the whole purpose of a proactive safety program, which is to generate as much information as possible on trends so that steps can be taken to curb future problems. That is, if employees are pressured not to report incidents, management will have virtually no information on which to base future safety initiatives. A third concern was that, in a lot of cases, accidents could occur through no fault of an employee, so why penalize the employee or work team for such an incident?

As more companies began to realize the shortcomings of lagging indicator programs, and as OSHA began to formally frown on such programs, many companies began to consider the implementation of "leading indicator" safety incentive programs. These are programs designed to reward employees for safety-related behaviors, rather than for results – reporting safety violations, making suggestions, taking steps to fix unsafe situations and participating in safety committees.

These days, there still are companies with lagging indicator safety programs, but it seems that more are moving toward leading indicator programs, or, at least, combination programs where the leading indicator component is much more influential than the lagging indicator component.

In January, 2011 - 1st Quarter Newsletter, I will be covering How to Build a Proactive Safety Culture. Stay Tuned!

TRAINING NEWS

Prusik Training Center (PTC) has joined with the Indian Capital Technology Center (ICTC), in Muskogee, OK to bring private industry, security and law enforcement agencies current and dynamic education and training. The courses published in the PTC 2011 Catalog of Training Courses will be available for students to attend beginning in the 2010 Fall Semester at ICTC – Muskogee campus.



For more information on Training courses and solutions, call 1-877-PRUSIKUSA, or E-mail: traininginfo@prusikusa.com.