



California BSIS Guard Card

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Practice Questions

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1. Under California Penal Code Section 837, a private person may arrest another for a public offense committed or attempted in their presence. Which of the following BEST describes this legal authority?

- A. Full police power that allows search and seizure at any time
- B. Authority to detain anyone suspected of a crime based on a tip
- C. Citizen's arrest power limited to offenses witnessed directly by the arresting person
- D. Unlimited power to arrest anyone on private property

2. California law requires that any force used by a security officer must be:

- A. Maximum force to ensure the suspect does not escape
- B. Reasonable and proportional to the threat presented
- C. Approved in writing by the client before each incident
- D. Sufficient to guarantee the officer wins any physical confrontation

3. The most fundamental duty of a security officer operating under an 'Observe and Report' post order is to:

- A. Document and report suspicious activity and conditions to the appropriate party without physical intervention
- B. Physically stop all suspicious persons on the property
- C. Make citizen's arrests for all suspected crimes
- D. Patrol aggressively to deter all criminal activity

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4. Civil liability for a security officer means:

- A. Being charged with a crime by the state
- B. Being disciplined by BSIS for a licensing violation
- C. Being sued in civil court by a person claiming they were harmed by the officer's actions
- D. Being terminated by their employer for misconduct



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5. When a security officer greets a visitor at the entrance, the PRIMARY goal should be:

- A. To assert authority and make clear who is in charge
- B. To create a welcoming environment while observing for any security concerns
- C. To screen every visitor as a potential criminal
- D. To minimize interaction to reduce liability

6. In the event of a fire alarm activation, a security officer's PRIMARY duty is to:

- A. Determine whether the alarm is real before taking any action
- B. Continue normal patrol to prevent looting during the confusion
- C. Initiate the site evacuation plan, assist occupants, and contact the fire department
- D. Investigate the source of the alarm before evacuating anyone

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7. Which of the following is MOST consistent with behavior that might indicate pre-incident surveillance of a potential terrorism target?

- A. A tourist taking photographs of a famous building
- B. A visitor asking for directions to a restaurant
- C. A delivery driver making a scheduled stop
- D. A person repeatedly visiting at different times, photographing security measures, timing guard rotations, and asking about building systems

8. A well-written security incident report should be:

- A. Written using complex vocabulary to appear professional
- B. Factual, accurate, clear, concise, and written in the first person
- C. Written in third person to remain objective
- D. As brief as possible, containing only the basic outcome

9. Under California Penal Code 837, a private person may make a citizen's arrest when:

- A. They feel personally threatened by someone nearby
- B. A public offense has been committed in their presence, or the person has committed a felony
- C. They receive verbal authorization from a police officer on the scene
- D. They believe a crime is about to be committed in the near future

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10. A security officer observes a person shoplifting inside a store. Under California law, what is the MOST appropriate initial action?

- A. Immediately tackle the person to prevent escape
- B. Detain the person at the point of exit if the full act was witnessed
- C. Call the police and take no other action regardless of circumstances
- D. Follow the person outside and arrest them on the street

11. Which of the following is the FIRST option a security officer should consider when facing a non-compliant subject?

- A. Verbal commands and de-escalation techniques
- B. Drawing and displaying a firearm
- C. Applying a control hold immediately
- D. Calling for backup and then leaving the scene

12. During a patrol, a security officer notices a broken window that was intact on the last patrol. What should the officer do FIRST?

- A. Repair the window to prevent further damage
- B. Enter the building to look for suspects
- C. Post on social media to warn the community
- D. Secure the area, document the time and condition, and notify the supervisor and appropriate authorities

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13. The legal doctrine of 'respondeat superior' means that:

- A. A security officer must always follow the supervisor's orders
- B. An employer may be held liable for the wrongful acts of their employees committed within the scope of employment
- C. A superior officer can be held personally liable for all actions taken by subordinates
- D. The security company is not responsible for individual officer actions

14. A member of the public becomes upset and raises their voice at a security officer. The officer's BEST response is to:

- A. Remain calm, lower their own voice, listen actively, and address the concern professionally
- B. Match the person's volume to show authority
- C. Immediately threaten to call police to silence the person
- D. Walk away and report the interaction to a supervisor without engaging



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15. The acronym PASS for fire extinguisher use stands for:

- A. Pull, Aim, Squeeze, Suppress
- B. Pull, Aim, Squeeze, Sweep
- C. Push, Activate, Spray, Step back
- D. Point, Attach, Suppress, Sweep

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16. The DHS slogan 'If You See Something, Say Something' encourages security officers and the public to:

- A. Report all unfamiliar faces to police
- B. Make citizen's arrests for suspicious behavior
- C. Report suspicious activity to law enforcement or security personnel so it can be investigated
- D. Photograph all suspicious persons and post the images online

17. An incident report should be completed:

- A. As soon as possible after the incident while memory is fresh
- B. At the end of the officer's monthly reporting cycle
- C. Only if the client specifically requests it
- D. Within 48 hours, after consulting with a supervisor to confirm facts

18. A security guard in California has the same arrest powers as a sworn peace officer.

- A. True
- B. False

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19. Which of the following felonies would authorize a private person to make an arrest even if the offense was NOT committed in their presence?

- A. A felony that has in fact been committed and the arresting person has reasonable cause to believe the suspect committed it
- B. Any misdemeanor that the officer strongly suspects occurred
- C. A traffic infraction that resulted in property damage
- D. A civil dispute between neighbors over a fence



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20. A subject verbally insults the security officer and refuses to show ID but is not physically threatening. What level of force is appropriate?

- A. A firm grab to compel cooperation
- B. Displaying a baton to show authority
- C. A pain compliance technique to gain cooperation
- D. No physical force; continue to use verbal communication

21. Which of the following BEST describes 'reasonable suspicion' that might prompt a security officer to make a report?

- A. A certainty that a crime has been committed
- B. A feeling that someone looks out of place based on their appearance
- C. Specific, articulable facts that a reasonable person would find indicative of criminal activity
- D. An anonymous tip with no corroborating evidence

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22. An officer who intentionally detains someone without legal authority may be guilty of:

- A. False imprisonment under California Penal Code 236
- B. Unauthorized use of force only if the subject is injured
- C. Nothing, as long as the employer approved the detention
- D. Disorderly conduct at most

23. A security officer's professional appearance and conduct directly affect:

- A. Only their own career prospects
- B. The employer's profit margins only
- C. Nothing beyond the officer's personal pride
- D. The public's trust in the security program and the client organization's reputation

24. A security officer discovers a small contained fire in a waste bin. Before attempting to use a fire extinguisher, the officer should FIRST:

- A. Ensure their own escape route is clear and activate the fire alarm
- B. Obtain supervisor approval to use the extinguisher
- C. Attempt to smother it with a jacket
- D. Locate the nearest water source



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25. The acronym WMD stands for:

- A. Weapons, Measures, and Defense
- B. Weapons of Mass Destruction
- C. Warning, Mobilize, and Defend
- D. Wide-area Monitoring Device

26. Which of the following would make an incident report LESS credible?

- A. Using exact times from a watch or computer clock
- B. Quoting witnesses verbatim in quotation marks
- C. Describing the officer's actions step by step
- D. Stating 'the subject appeared to be guilty' without any supporting facts

27. After making a citizen's arrest, what should a security officer do first?

- A. Detain the suspect indefinitely until their employer arrives
- B. Conduct a full personal search of the suspect
- C. Notify law enforcement immediately and transfer custody as soon as possible
- D. Release the suspect with a written warning

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28. A security officer makes a citizen's arrest. After restraining the subject, what is the officer's PRIMARY legal obligation?

- A. Hold the person indefinitely until management decides what to do
- B. Conduct a full search of the person's belongings
- C. Question the subject about other crimes
- D. Deliver the arrested person to a police officer or magistrate without unnecessary delay

29. When may a security officer use deadly force?

- A. Whenever a fleeing suspect refuses to stop
- B. To protect property worth more than \$10,000
- C. Only when they or another person face an imminent threat of death or great bodily injury
- D. Whenever the employer's policy authorizes it



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30. A security officer sees two people arguing loudly near the entrance. There is no physical violence. The BEST course of action is to:

- A. Immediately call 911 and report a fight in progress
- B. Monitor the situation, attempt to de-escalate with calm verbal communication, and report to a supervisor
- C. Ignore it until physical violence occurs
- D. Demand both parties show identification



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Answer Key & Explanations

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1. C — Citizen's arrest power limited to offenses witnessed directly by the arresting person

PC 837 grants citizens (including security officers) arrest power only for public offenses committed or attempted in their presence.

2. B — Reasonable and proportional to the threat presented

The legal standard is reasonable force—proportional to the level of threat; excessive force exposes the officer to criminal and civil liability.

3. A — Document and report suspicious activity and conditions to the appropriate party without physical intervention

Observe and Report posts require the officer to be the 'eyes and ears' for law enforcement and management, not to take physical action.

4. C — Being sued in civil court by a person claiming they were harmed by the officer's actions

Civil liability arises when a person seeks monetary damages in court for injuries or harm caused by the officer's actions; it is separate from criminal charges.

5. B — To create a welcoming environment while observing for any security concerns

Effective security balances hospitality and vigilance; a friendly greeting while maintaining situational awareness serves both security and public relations.

6. C — Initiate the site evacuation plan, assist occupants, and contact the fire department

All fire alarms must be treated as real; immediate evacuation and notification of fire services is the priority.

7. D — A person repeatedly visiting at different times, photographing security measures, timing guard rotations, and asking about building systems

Repeated visits combined with interest in security procedures, camera positions, and access points are classic surveillance indicators.

8. B — Factual, accurate, clear, concise, and written in the first person

Reports must be factual, first-person accounts that are clear enough for a reader unfamiliar with the incident to understand exactly what happened.

9. B — A public offense has been committed in their presence, or the person has committed a felony

10. B — Detain the person at the point of exit if the full act was witnessed

The merchant's privilege (PC 490.5) allows detention at the exit after witnessing the complete act of theft, not before.

11. A — Verbal commands and de-escalation techniques

De-escalation and verbal direction are always the first tools; force is a last resort after less restrictive options have failed or are clearly inadequate.



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12. D — Secure the area, document the time and condition, and notify the supervisor and appropriate authorities

Scene preservation and notification are the priorities; entering could disturb evidence or place the officer in danger.

13. B — An employer may be held liable for the wrongful acts of their employees committed within the scope of employment

Respondeat superior holds employers vicariously liable for employees' wrongful acts done within the course of their employment.

14. A — Remain calm, lower their own voice, listen actively, and address the concern professionally

Remaining calm and speaking at a measured pace can diffuse tension; mirroring anger escalates it.

15. B — Pull, Aim, Squeeze, Sweep

PASS: Pull the pin, Aim at the base of the fire, Squeeze the handle, Sweep side to side.

16. C — Report suspicious activity to law enforcement or security personnel so it can be investigated

The campaign encourages reporting suspicious behavior to authorities who can investigate; not vigilante action.

17. A — As soon as possible after the incident while memory is fresh

Contemporaneous reports are more accurate and credible; delays allow memory to fade and may affect legal proceedings.

18. B — False

19. A — A felony that has in fact been committed and the arresting person has reasonable cause to believe the suspect committed it

PC 837(3) allows a citizen to arrest for a felony not committed in their presence if: (1) a felony has actually been committed and (2) there is reasonable cause to believe that person committed it.

20. D — No physical force; continue to use verbal communication

Verbal non-compliance alone does not justify physical force. Officers must continue attempting verbal resolution.

21. C — Specific, articulable facts that a reasonable person would find indicative of criminal activity

Reasonable suspicion must be based on specific, observable facts—not appearance or hunches alone.

22. A — False imprisonment under California Penal Code 236

PC 236 defines false imprisonment as the unlawful violation of the personal liberty of another; a security officer can face criminal charges for this.

23. D — The public's trust in the security program and the client organization's reputation

Security officers are often the first impression a visitor has; their conduct reflects on both the security company and the client.

24. A — Ensure their own escape route is clear and activate the fire alarm

Personal safety first: ensure you can escape if the attempt fails, and alert others by activating the alarm before fighting the fire.



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25. B — Weapons of Mass Destruction

WMD refers to weapons capable of causing mass casualties: biological, chemical, nuclear, and radiological (CBRN) agents.

26. D — Stating 'the subject appeared to be guilty' without any supporting facts

Opinions, conclusions, and characterizations unsupported by observable facts undermine a report's credibility and may be inadmissible in court.

27. C — Notify law enforcement immediately and transfer custody as soon as possible

28. D — Deliver the arrested person to a police officer or magistrate without unnecessary delay

Once a citizen's arrest is made, the arresting person must promptly deliver the subject to law enforcement; unreasonable delay can expose the officer to legal liability.

29. C — Only when they or another person face an imminent threat of death or great bodily injury

Deadly force is only legally justified to prevent imminent death or great bodily injury to oneself or another person; it cannot be used merely to stop a fleeing suspect or protect property.

30. B — Monitor the situation, attempt to de-escalate with calm verbal communication, and report to a supervisor

A verbal dispute warrants attention and possible de-escalation; it doesn't yet justify a 911 call or demanding ID.



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