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The perpetual fight against sleep for security guards by [Charles Willis](#)

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In most cases the security guard's job is monotonous and consists of the same redundant activities. Regardless, if the security officer is scheduled at night or during the day if he is scheduled at a busy or remote location there will always be the temptation to sleep at the job. Sleeping on the job can have devastating effects for the security guard, for the security company and the client.

Most security companies have a zero tolerance policy against sleeping on the job, which means the security guard may lose his job if he falls asleep. The security company is responsible for any loss incurred by the client if the security guard acts carelessly or negligently. The client might lose important information, materials, equipment or other valuables when the security guard falls asleep.

Therefore sleep management should be part of the training and accountability system of any security company employing security guards. I have incorporated a sleep management class into my companies New Hire Program and it is mandatory to be taken every two years by all security guards and supervisors. First of all security guards should be explained the consequences of their conduct in detail. The effects of their conduct on their employment status and the security company's reputation should be addressed in a class discussion with the security guards arriving at their own conclusions.

The second step should be educating security officers on effective methods to stay awake and vigilant. It is mostly common sense, but experience has shown that it has to be spelled out for some guards. Coming to work well rested and well slept will decrease the probability of falling asleep and enable the guard to be vigilant throughout his shift. The security guard should stay active and keep his blood flowing through frequent patrols, writing reports and other activities.

Energy drinks and high sugar and caffeine drink should be treated with care, because they are addictive and might prove counterproductive in many cases. A high sugar or high caffeine drink will keep a guard awake for a while, but will cause a crash later, which will make it harder to stay awake. Additionally, the body becomes immune to the effects of sugar, energy drinks and caffeine drinks, which means the guard will have increase his dosage over time.

The security company should create accountability through electronic monitoring and frequent supervisory visits. The Guard Scan system will create the responsibility of frequently patrolling and walking the site while supervisory visits will create extra checks for the guards. In most cases if security guards are well trained and well supervised they will resist the temptation of sleeping on the job.

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Charles Willis is a security consultant for a [security company in Los Angeles](#) frequently training and coaching a [Los Angeles Security Guards](#) and a [Orange County Security Guards](#). He has provided security consultations to numerous Fortune 500 companies and smaller businesses. He is

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