FIRST-YEAR MISTAKES CHECKLIST

Most new security companies learn these the expensive way: a bid that did not cover costs, a contract that did not protect them, a license that took longer than it should have, or a first year spent only on standing posts. Use this checklist before you quote, hire, or post an officer.

THE PLAYBOOK BEHIND A $3M COMPANY

We grew Treestone Security Services, a licensed security company in Tucson, Arizona, to a $3 million company in 18 months using this process: the licensing roadmap, the contracts, the post orders and reports, the pricing, and the marketing. SecureStart Pro packages that process so you can follow it in your state.

Treestone's results; your results will vary depending on your market, effort and execution. Not a guarantee of earnings.

HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

Work through each item before your first client, or as a review if you are already operating. Check the box only when the work is actually done — not when you plan to do it. The right-hand note is the fix. Official licensing rules always control; confirm them with your state agency and have a licensed attorney in your state review contracts before use.

THE EIGHT MISTAKES

Details and the fix for each one are on the next pages.

01 Underpricing your first bids

02 Signing clients on a weak contract

03 Losing months to licensing

04 Officers with no written post orders

05 No reports to show the client

06 Letting a guard license lapse

07 Waiting for clients to find you

08 Only selling standing posts

CHECK THESE BEFORE THEY COST YOU

☐ MISTAKE 01

Underpricing your first bids

The mistake. A rate that looks competitive but does not cover payroll taxes, insurance, overtime, and supervision turns a signed contract into a loss.

Do this instead. Price every bid from real costs. Know your minimum rate and monthly contract value before you quote.

☐ MISTAKE 02

Signing clients on a weak contract

The mistake. A handshake or a one-page quote leaves scope, payment terms, and liability limits unclear — usually until something goes wrong.

Do this instead. Use a full client agreement, have a licensed attorney in your state review it, and put your name and logo on it before the first shift.

☐ MISTAKE 03

Losing months to licensing

The mistake. Applying for the wrong license, missing a training rule, or not knowing which agency to call keeps you from legally taking a post.

Do this instead. Identify your state's regulator, company license, qualifier rules, and training hours first. Confirm every item with the agency before you apply.

☐ MISTAKE 04

Officers with no written post orders

The mistake. Guards guess what the client wants. The client finds out the hard way after an incident.

Do this instead. Write post orders with site addenda for every account, plus procedures for patrol and trespass work.

☐ MISTAKE 05

No reports to show the client

The mistake. If nothing is in writing, the client cannot see the value of the shift, and an incident becomes your word against theirs.

Do this instead. Have officers complete a daily activity report every shift and an incident report after anything notable, and send them to the client.

☐ MISTAKE 06

Letting a guard license lapse

The mistake. Losing track of who is licensed, certified, and due to renew can put an unlicensed officer on a post.

Do this instead. Track every officer's license and certifications, and use the same new-hire packet every time.

☐ MISTAKE 07

Waiting for clients to find you

The mistake. No target list, no outreach, and no follow-up means a slow first year even if the paperwork is ready.

Do this instead. Pick your target metros, decide where you will bid, and follow up until you get a yes or a no.

☐ MISTAKE 08

Only selling standing posts

The mistake. Building the whole company on one-officer-one-site posts leaves the more profitable work on the table.

Do this instead. Offer mobile patrol as well: one officer and one vehicle can check several client sites in the same shift.

THE MOBILE PATROL ADVANTAGE

ABOUT 60% MORE PROFITABLE THAN STANDING POSTS

In our experience at Treestone, mobile patrol runs about 60% more profitable than standing posts. A standing post puts one officer at one site for the whole shift. A patrol officer in a vehicle can check several client sites in the same shift — apartment complexes, HOAs, construction sites, vacant buildings, business parks. More clients share the cost of one officer and one vehicle, and that is where the margin comes from. Price patrol routes from real costs, and go after those buyers on purpose.

Treestone's results; your results will vary depending on your market, effort and execution. Not a guarantee of earnings.

READY FOR THE FULL PLAYBOOK?

The SecureStart Pro state edition is 22 editable files — your state's licensing supplement, an action workbook, contracts, post orders, patrol and trespass SOPs, reports, a pay report, and a bid calculator — $299 one-time. A kit + Marketing Pack bundle is planned at $399. Start at securestartpro.com and pick your state.

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