INTRODUCTION

In the previous topic you learnt about the role of security in the organisation, special services, etc. These roles cannot be performed effectively unless there is a supervisor to supervise and control the functions, roles, duties and responsibilities of the team of security personnel. The role of the supervisor is not just limited to the above. He is also the decision maker for the team-routine as well as non-routine decisions, wielding of authority, relationship with the other employees in the organisation, etc. You will cover these aspects and more in this topic.
Before we take up this topic in right earnest, it is important for you to understand the meaning of the term ‘Security supervisor’ and ‘inspector’. The dictionary meaning ranges from examiner, superintendent, assessor to checker.

Security supervisor is a responsible supervisory work related to the provision of building security at an organisation’s work premises. Duties and responsibilities include supervising security officers, preparing and maintaining shift work schedules, reviewing and conducting thorough incident investigations, training security staff, and assisting in operational policy development. Work is performed under general supervision.

A popular definition of supervisor is an individual/person in an organisation who gets tasks done by his/her subordinates, the way the superior(s) want(s) it done. There is an old adage that says, “Employees do not do what you expect, they do what you inspect.” More often than not that is true, not because they do not want to or do not care to perform their tasks but simply because of human frailty. That same element of human failure is not just limited to line employees; it can be traced at every level of every organisational hierarchical structure right to the top. From the top down, therefore, each “supervisor” must inspect the work of his or her subordinates. In an organisational structure to ensure the effectiveness of work there must be proper line of supervision besides other things implemented to achieve the organisational goals.

Inspection is often perceived to have a negative connotation attached to it. It is treated as a fault finding exercise and covert signals are transmitted to the subordinates not to cooperate or at least try to hinder effective inspection. This kind of behaviour and reaction often creates ill will, reduces friendliness and promotes stress.

To promote creativity, it is important to recognise the tasks well done, motivate the personnel involved, and even if there is some problem in doing the task effectively, point it out with a positive approach so that it does not appear to be a fault finding exercise. It should rather be perceived as a positive linkage of trying to do a task effectively together. The supervisor should be understanding and experienced enough to realise that there is no deliberate intent behind inefficient performance. It is simply the outcome of human beings at work who are either not motivated, not trained properly or simply a case of human frailty.

This process to be effective and the outcome to be positive should be customised to the level of the individual employee. The most effective managerial style in the inspection process is to find those tasks that are done properly, acknowledge and...
give credit for good performance in such areas, and then point out deficiencies in an objective manner. Most employees want to do a good job. Most failures, as already indicated, are the result of human frailties and not of malicious design. Accordingly, when performance deficiencies are carved out objectively, they are generally received with some embarrassment on one hand and an expression of genuine desire to improve on the other.

To be effective, this critical process of performance inspection must be consistent, continuous, constructive, and designed to the individual employee.

### 3.1.1 Qualities of a Security Supervisor

A security supervisor should possess the following qualities:

(a) **Good communication skills**

The security supervisor, first, last and always a communicator. The ability to communicate clearly and concisely is the single most important skill that a security supervisor can possess. Without communication, there is no co-ordination; without co-ordination, there is no organisation.

Co-ordinating and organising are two functions that form the essence of supervision. Communication is the glue that holds the whole process together. This course describes various factors that may affect communication and provides methods to overcome barriers, become a better listener and improve your communication skills at all levels.

(b) **Flexibility**

When a security supervisor provides security to and organisation, he is providing the organisation with a service. As such, he want that service to be perceived as ideal, tailored to the organisation, and designed to fit its needs. Ideal service does not simply occur; a security supervisor must have a strategy in place that will allow him the flexibility to blend what he does as a security provider into excellent service for his organisation.

(c) **Ability to Handle Multiple priorities**

Increasingly in today’s workforce, one person is responsible for a variety of tasks. With all this information, how much can a person expect to absorb? How does a security supervisor decide what should be done first, and avoid becoming frustrated with the overload? The security supervisor should know the methods and procedures that will help bring order to his average, hectic day by dissecting the three basic supervisory skill sets required—time management, delegation, and confronting procrastination.
(d) **Reduce business risk**
Many security professionals have seen young and slightly idealistic security officers view their role as black and white. These officers, while perhaps well intentioned, believe their primary job is to “get the bad guys” and put them in jail or to facilitate termination of employees who violate company policy. What these officers seem to miss or ignore is that their role in not to get “the bad guys” but to reduce business risk.

(e) **Emergency preparedness**
Emergency preparedness can be referred as: Emergency Management, Disaster Recovery, or Business Continuity Planning. Regardless of the terms used, security plays a KEY role in preparing any organisation for an emergency. Supervisors and management should understand the role of security by seeing the basic concepts of emergency preparedness because emergency preparedness is a key to business survival. So a security supervisor should know the strategic steps for emergency preparedness and the security responsibilities for the most common emergencies he may encounter on the job.

(f) **Customer Relations Management (CRM) in Entertainment/Leisure/Service Industry, etc**
The security supervisor shall practice/play an important role when there is a complaint from the guest. The Security Supervisor must play the role and render good service to the guest in accordance with policy “Customer First” should be adopted.

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**SELF-CHECK 3.1**

Explain in your own words the role of a supervisor as an inspector.

**ACTIVITY 3.1**

Insert the important supervisory aspects required to promote creativity in your opinion.
3.2 SUPERVISOR AND THE INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEE

Just as five fingers of the hand are not equal so is the case with the temperament, behaviour, skill sets, attitude and learning of each employee—irrespective of his position and/or designation in the organisation. Because every employee is different, the supervisor must deal on an individual basis with each of his subordinates. Every human being is different. The differences are manifested not only in observable physical features, fingerprints, behaviour and nature but also in how each individual responds to external stimuli; how the individual perceives things; and his or her beliefs, fears, aspirations, and needs. Such human differences mean that different people require different handling. Some may require more supervision than others. Some respond to persuasion and some to command. Some want to set goals for themselves and some want goals set for them. Some are uncomfortable around authority figures and some are at ease. Sensitivity to employee differences is one characteristic of a good supervisor.

3.2.1 Assessment Techniques for Job Performance

Evaluating the performance of individual employees is one of the most important tasks a business can undertake. Within the large and complex structure of a corporation, high achievers can be overlooked and poor employees can slip through unless the management implements consistent and frequent assessments of all employees.

(a) **Straight Ranking**

Straight ranking is one of the simplest ways to conduct a performance appraisal. The supervisor ranks the employees in order in terms of their overall performance. Although comparing the performance of individual employees can be useful, this method can fall victim to the bias of the supervisor.

(b) **Paired Comparison**

Paired comparison is a more complex and meaning variation of straight ranking. Rather than compare all the employees simultaneously, each employee is compared to every other one in terms of their individual strengths and weaknesses. Based on all these comparisons, all the employees are given their rankings. This provides a better defense against snap judgments based on supervisor bias. On the other hand, it can result in a tremendous number of individual evaluations. For example, a supervisor with 10 employees would have to conduct many separate comparisons.
(c) **Essay Appraisal Method**

In an essay appraisal, the supervisor writes an essay about each individual employee. This essay details the employee’s accomplishments, strengths, weaknesses and suggested goals. It paints a detailed picture of each individual employee, but can fall victim to bias.

(d) **Field Review**

The field review is designed to combat supervisor bias. A human resources’ staff member interviews the supervisors about the individual employees rather than relying on the supervisor’s judgment. The HR member then uses these interviews to create evaluations. Although it can help eliminate personal bias, this method can be quite involved and time consuming.

(e) **360-Degree Feedback**

The 360-degree feedback method uses a variety of different resources to create a complex view of the individual employees. The method attempts to perceive the employee from all sides. Each employee writes a self appraisal, detailing their own perceived strengths and weaknesses, and also sets goals. He or she then receives appraisals from superiors and subordinates, as well as from peers. This provides the most complete picture possible of how an individual employee performs within the complex institution of a business. Because of its complexity, however, it can be time consuming and difficult to organise and use the information provided.

### 3.3 SUPERVISORY AUTHORITY

A supervisor must have equivalent authority to carry out his or her duties and responsibilities. If a supervisor is told he or she has the responsibility of 40 security officers to protect the facility between 4:00 P.M. and to midnight and at the same time is told that any disciplinary action against any one of those 40 will be handled by the next level of supervision, then he or she has been denied the necessary tools or stripped of the necessary authority to carry out this responsibility. Such situations, which do indeed exist, make a mockery of the organisational integrity and turn what should be legitimate supervisors into “straw bosses” or lackeys. In an organisational setup the supervisor represents management and must be given the necessary authority to make that representation meaningful. If, for any reason, appropriate authority cannot be vested in a supervisor, it will still be necessary to have some form of “lead person” in charge.

The supervisor – with his or her officers, agents, investigators, etc., – should have not only the necessary authority to discipline but should also have some input in the selection of assignment to his or her unit. The supervisor should be heard...
when his or her people are considered for promotion. They must have the authority to require additional training, to communicate to his or her people, including sending instructions, memos, and must have the freedom to measure his or her people’s performance without any sort of interference. The issue of a supervisor’s need to measure his or her people’s performance without interference is even larger than the one of disciplinary rights.

### 3.3.1 The Security Supervisor as the “In-Between Man”

The security supervisor is the vital link between the employee and security management. He/She represents management’s needs and views in regard to the organisational security to those below him and at the same time has the responsibility of representing the needs and views of his or her people up to management. Failure to perform this function objectively and faithfully, in a timely manner, can have fatal results. The security supervisor who, being closest to the scene, is well aware of sentiments, grievances, or problems but who does not inform the management fails two-fold. Firstly, such a security supervisor fails his or her subordinates by not carrying the message to the management. The condition, whatever it may be, is allowed to continue, fester, and/or grow, to the injustice of his or her subordinates in terms of morale, accidents, or turnover, depending on the problem. Secondly, this supervisor disappoints the management by withholding information that could provide them with answers, explanations, or decisions to resolve the issue.

This intermediary status in general is well understood by line personnel. It makes sense. Nevertheless, that status can well serve as a crutch for the weak supervisor, providing an excuse to shrink from responsibility so that all duties or assignments or decisions that may be unpopular are passed off even if they are his or her own.

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**SELF-CHECK 3.2**

1. Which assessment technique or the group of techniques is best suitable for assessing job performance?

2. What does the term ‘in-between man’ connotes in security supervision? Explain.
Span of control, means the number of employees a supervisor can manage and control, depends on a number of factors. One significant factor is the individual supervisor-his or her skill level in handling people and ability to delegate responsibility. Another factor is the job description of his or her subordinates. Field investigators with relatively sophisticated assignments require more attention from the supervisor than a uniformed staff assigned to one location on one shift. In the former case, the proper span of control might be 6 and in the latter, 12. Long-standing and widely accepted span of control standards for security supervisor span of control suggest the following ratios of supervisor to employees:

- Ideal: 1:3
- Good: 1:6
- Acceptable: 1:12

These numbers represent spans of control under normal operating conditions on an ongoing basis. Nevertheless, under certain situations (for a relatively short period of time and with a homogenous group) one security supervisor could handle up to two dozen line employees.

3.4.1 Factors influencing Span of Control

(a) Managerial abilities
   In the concerns where managers are capable, qualified and experienced, wide span of control is always helpful.

(b) Competence of subordinates
   Where the subordinates are capable and competent and their understanding levels are proper, the subordinates tend to very frequently visit the superiors for solving their problems. In such cases, the manager can handle large number of employees. Hence a wide span is suitable.
(c) **Nature of work**
If the work is of repetitive nature, wide span of supervision is more helpful. On the other hand, if work requires mental skill or craftsmanship, tight control and supervision is required in which narrow span is more helpful.

(d) **Delegation of authority**
When the work is delegated to lower levels in an efficient and proper way, confusions are less and congeniality of the environment can be maintained. In such cases, wide span of control is suitable and the supervisors can manage and control large number of subordinates at one time.

(e) **Degree of decentralisation**
Decentralisation is done in order to achieve specialisation in which authority is shared by many people and managers at different levels. In such cases, a tall structure is helpful. There are certain concerns where decentralisation is done in very effective way which results in direct and personal communication between superiors and subordinates and there the superiors can manage large number of subordinates very easily. In such cases, wide span again helps.

### 3.4.2 Automatic Shifting in the Line of Command

There are necessary and legitimate exceptions to the principle of unity of command. Two situations that require another supervisor are:

(a) In situations of emergencies.

(b) When the failure of a ranking employee to take command would jeopardise the department’s objectives or reputation.

As an example, imagine that a uniformed security officer, immediately following a natural disaster such as an earthquake, is approached by a security investigator (who is in an entirely different departmental pyramid or line of command but has rank over the guard). The investigator instructs the security officer to run to the side of the building and cut off the gas supply. The officer cannot refuse this shifting in supervision, in view of the circumstances.

Take another example, imagine that a security officer on a parking control assignment for a major cultural event has been instructed by his supervisor to deny access to one reserved parking lot. A supervisor other than the officer’s, because of his mobility and overview of the parking and traffic conditions, reaches the opinion that the growing traffic congestion can only be relieved by routing traffic into the empty lot—not to relieve the congestion could have serious
repercussions on the event itself. The supervisor, knowing he or she is accountable for the decision, can command the security officer to let the cars in. Such direct orders which are made out of the normal chain of command are invariably given under a time pressure, that is, a decision and action must be instant in accordance with the situation in hand. The consequences of delaying action to locate the proper supervisor could be serious if not grave. Such automatic shifting in the line of command, always of a short duration, requires full understanding on the part of all department members at all levels. Such shifting does not violate the principle of unity of command; rather, it enhances and supports the principle by having a rule and understanding of the exception. Remember that exceptions add credence to rules.

**3.5 FUNCTIONAL OR STAFF SUPERVISION**

Functional supervision is the temporary supervision of an employee by a supervisor to whom the employee is not normally assigned. Functional supervision may occur at the direction of an assigned supervisor or in the absence of an assigned supervisor.

(a) Employees are accountable to a functional supervisor in the same manner as they would be to their assigned supervisor during the time they are within the functional supervisor’s span of control.

(b) A functional supervisor is responsible for the following functions related to those employees who temporarily fall within his/her span of control:

(i) General direction of individual work and work assignments;

(ii) Co-ordination of individual work with Department mission and goals and with the work of other individuals in the unit;

(iii) Quality control on individual work;

(iv) Discipline and coaching, as necessary; and

(v) Providing input to the assigned supervisor regarding employee performance and career development issues.
While every employee has his or her own supervisor, there are a number of occasions and situations in which the employee must perform at a time or location outside the immediate control of this supervisor. An example would be an alarm operator and alarm serviceperson working the graveyard shift. Their supervisor works the day shift. By agreement, the graveyard watch commander, in another pyramidal structure within the Security Department, assumes functional (or staff) supervision over these two security employees. As a functional supervisor the watch commander has responsibility for a limited degree of supervision but not complete control.

There are two aspects to this functional supervision. The first is that the watch commander in all probability has no technical competence in alarm operations or servicing, so he or she cannot give commands that would interfere with performance. This means his or her supervision is limited to such things as promptness, following general orders applicable to all personnel, and conduct on the job.

The second aspect of functional supervision is that it is essentially advisory in nature. The functional supervisor can discuss problems with the subordinate, make suggestions, point out mistakes, but he or she lacks authority to take disciplinary action. Certainly he or she can cause disciplinary action by reporting the problem to the subordinate’s supervisor; that supervisor can take the corrective action, but the staff supervisor cannot.

**SELF-CHECK 3.4**

“There are numerous occasions and conditions in which the employee must perform at a time or location outside the immediate control of this supervisor”. Explain.

**ACTIVITY 3.3**

Suppose you are a functional supervisor, make a list of your do’s and don’ts.
3.6 SUPERVISORY TRAINING

Perhaps the most common shortcoming in the security industry is the failure to properly prepare and equip new supervisors with the tools to discharge their important responsibilities. A line employee on Friday may become a new supervisor on Monday, with no distinguishable difference in the eyes of former peers.

You must have heard people say often, “If I were the supervisor I would...”? After becoming a supervisor, many of them are then heard complaining, “Why did I ever become a supervisor?” They undoubtedly enjoy their new status and package, but that is not an indicator of increased satisfaction or enjoyment at the office/factory.

The frustrations that go with being a security supervisor are often brought about by lack of adequate training. Too many organisations fail to provide basic training to supervisors, or they provide the wrong material. Therefore, supervisors think they are something they really are not. Their expectations for themselves and their employees are not being met or fulfilled.

This feeling leads to general frustration on the job, lack of motivation, deterioration of self-esteem, and a decline in the organisation’s security effectiveness. As a result, supervisors overcompensate for their shortcomings. They create needless paperwork and establish a make-work environment for themselves. To them, the process of supervision becomes more important than ensuring productivity.

When supervisors are given training in principles of supervision, they are usually taught PODSCORB or a similar theory. PODSCORB is a popular acronym for planning, organising, directing, staffing, co-ordinating, reporting, and budgeting.

The problem with teaching this theory is that an administrative and managerial theory is being taught to those who have a totally different role in the organisation. Although a security supervisor is a part of the management team, he or she has a much different function in the overall scheme of events.

While supervisors may perform some of the functions defined in PODSCORB, such as planning, organising, staffing, reporting, and budgeting, the fact remains: the supervisor’s role is to supervise. As a part of management, supervisors should at least be aware of management and administration processes, but they do not need total exposure to it. Instead, emphasis in their training should be on
directing, controlling, co-ordinating, communicating, motivating, and leading. In other words, people skills.

Once supervisors know what is expected of them, they will feel better about themselves, work with more confidence, and develop pride in their work. Since pride and other positive feelings spread, the entire organisation benefits.

Also, when a supervisor knows what supervision really entails, the job becomes less difficult and more manageable. In fact, the job loses some of the negative aspects of a job and takes on more characteristics of a profession. While this approach may not lower a supervisor’s frustration level, it will help the supervisor get a better handle on frustrations that come with the job.

A supervisor is responsible for developing teamwork and making the work force into a well-functioning, smoothly-operating unit. He or she guarantees that the organisation’s objectives are met by getting activities done through employees. The supervisor interprets management’s policies and procedures to the work force and serves as the buffer between the management and the labourers.

Supervisors do some planning, which involves finding and analysing facts to determine present and future needs. Organising and staffing involve assigning security officers to the positions for which they are best suited and to the places and at the times they are most needed. Co-ordinating is a core function of supervision. Reporting is a function from which nobody can escape. Budgeting is the manager’s or administrator’s job. Let’s now look more closely at the supervisor’s direct responsibilities.

Supervision involves guiding employees, usually subordinates, toward accomplishing goals established by planning within prescribed guidelines and according to set procedures. The chief security administrator is concerned with achieving goals and the supervisor is concerned with the procedures for achieving those goals.

The communication process involves many factors - cultural, environmental, and psychological. With such a diversity of influences affecting good communications, there will inherently be a number of barriers. They may be physical loud noises, somebody else’s voice; visual (looking out a window during a conversation); personal (fatigue, illness); attitudinal (biases and prejudices, differences in rank and title); or semantic (different meanings for the same word). Two important points should be considered in breaking down communication barriers:

(a) Failure to listen is probably the biggest barrier to effective communication, and
(b) Two-way communication is more accurate than one-way communication.

If the organisation is to be productive, communication barriers need to be overcome. This responsibility is largely the supervisor’s and can be accomplished if the supervisor.

(a) Determines the objectives of the communication,
(b) Practices empathy,
(c) Obtains feedback—both verbal and non-verbal,
(d) Keeps subordinates informed,
(e) Is consistent in communicating,
(f) Makes action speak louder than words by practicing what he or she preaches, and
(g) Listens, understands, and is understood.

The supervisor fulfils his or her control responsibility through following up with inspections and report reviews, taking disciplinary action when necessary, providing corrective measures, and guiding employees and operations for which he or she is held directly accountable.

General supervisory control is concerned with daily supervision of subordinates’ activities and the oversight of routine security operations and services. It is at the daily, operational level that the supervisor’s presence and leadership ensure program development, support of policies, and conformance with procedures.

Control must be provided so that all who exercise authority will be held responsible for their actions. Control and co-ordination are the glue that holds the organisation together.

Employee development is the heart of the supervisor’s job. It is the area in which much self-satisfaction can be gained. It is also perhaps the most frustrating part of the job because the spotlight is on the supervisor from all the sides subordinates, peers, superiors, and self. All the previous functions discussed have been command functions in which the supervisor plays an important part. Now, the supervisor is in charge.

Since a person cannot be held responsible for accomplishing an order unless he or she has been delegated the authority to accomplish it, the supervisor must be able to delegate effectively. In delegating tasks, the supervisor should give the subordinate sufficient authority to match the responsibility given.
Once a task has been delegated, the supervisor’s job begins. It is now time to make sure that the task is carried out according to management’s wishes. Management should be concerned only with the end result; supervisors should be concerned about how the end result is achieved (policy versus procedure). If the supervisor delegates well, he or she will save valuable time for performing other supervisory responsibilities rather than performing routine operational activities.

One of the biggest mistakes supervisors make is not having a clear understanding about what motivates their employees. The worst assumption is thinking that subordinates are motivated primarily by one thing. Different employees are motivated by different things. A supervisor needs to know his or her employees. The supervisor who continually reflects an atmosphere of strong self-motivation in front of subordinates will have little trouble motivating them.

The supervisor’s role is to motivate subordinates by providing a rewarding job and challenging environment in which they will maintain a high level of efficiency and productivity. The supervisor, being the part of management in the daily forefront of activities, must possess certain traits and characteristics that will project his or her leadership role in a positive way.

Besides the above all supervisor’s role also includes to Conduct Courses i.e., Junior Command Course for all supervisors in order to instil the commanding skill, communication skill and relevant laws, communication, equipment, how to write comprehensive report - adopt 4W 1H (When, Where, Who, What & How).

**SELF-CHECK 3.5**

List the important points that should be considered in breaking down communication barriers.
Supervision has been defined as the task of getting work done how and when the management wants it done-willingly. Best performance is the ultimate goal of supervision.

The effective supervisor will best ensure the performance of his or her subordinates by constant inspection. He or she will be sensitive to individual employee differences in providing both criticism and encouragement.

This supervisor must have the authority (both in discipline and in employee evaluations) to carry out his or her responsibilities. As the man-in-between management and the employee, the supervisor should play an active part in the process of communication both upward and downward.

Significant principles of effective supervision are limited span of control and unity of command. The latter principle (no employee can serve two bosses) is not violated by functional supervision, which is exercised over employees only temporarily under a supervisor's control.

Functional supervision is both limited and advisory in nature. A good employee does not always make a good supervisor.

Effective security management will provide adequate training for new supervisors. Training brings confidence in both the supervisor and those who will serve under him or her.

**KEY TERMS**

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TOPIC 3  THE SECURITY SUPERVISOR’S ROLE

SELF-TEST 1

1. Define supervision. What is the ultimate responsibility and goal of supervision?

2. Explain how you would handle the situation if you were asked by a superior to change your rating of a subordinate’s performance.

SELF-TEST 2

1. In what way is the supervisor “the vital link between the employee and security management”?

2. What are the two factors influencing a supervisor’s effective span of control?

3. Give two examples of legitimate exceptions to the principles of unity of command.