

WITNESS STATEMENT OF SECURITY GUARD [REDACTED]-16

1. I make this statement anonymously, as I am concerned that if my identity became known publicly it would affect my ongoing ability to get work in the Security industry, and because it contains personal information, including personal medical information.
2. I am licensed security guard.
3. I also work as a ride share driver and food delivery driver.
4. I have a bachelor's degree in Information Technology, but I have not worked in that field.
5. I have held my security license for two years. It is a level 2 license, which is an "entry level" license. To get my licence, I had to attend in-person training. Since I received my license, I have not had any other security training.
6. During the two years after I got my license, I have worked, on average, about 4 or 5 security shifts each week.
7. I regularly do security work at a warehouse. At the warehouse, I work overnight in a gate house.
8. Between [REDACTED] [April and May 2020], I worked at three "quarantine hotels" – the Marriott Hotel, the Novotel on Collins and the Rydges Hotel. While I was working at the hotels, I also worked 2 shifts per week at my regular warehouse job.

Hotel Quarantine Program

9. During April 2020, I had fewer security shifts from my usual employer, so I was looking to pick up more work. A friend of mine was a security guard working at one of the quarantine hotels and he told me that they needed more guards.
10. [REDACTED] [In mid-April], my friend introduced me to a subcontractor who was providing security guards to quarantine hotels. The name of the subcontractor was Silvans Security Pty Ltd and the man was introduced to me as [REDACTED] I had never worked for [REDACTED] or heard of Silvans Security Pty Ltd before my friend introduced me.

11. The introduction was made using What's App. [REDACTED] asked me to provide my security licence and tell him what my availability was. I asked him for shift details.
12. [REDACTED] sent me a message saying:

“This is an important role and we are completing these duties on behalf of the Government via our client, Unified Security. I understand that it could be seen as a boring job but our security staff do get regular breaks and they do get a chair to sit on whilst on post (upper levels). Officers are to wear black suit, white shirt and black tie. The clothes they wear are to be neatly pressed and worn professionally. Shoes are to be black and polished with black socks (No white socks). Officers are to be well groomed, clean shaven, neat hair and clean. Staff are not to lay or sit on the floor at any stage. Staff are not to sleep or watch/ use iPad or laptops at any stage. Staff need to know it is quite easy for the residents to easily sneak their door open and get a photo of our staff. It is for this reason that they need to be looking the part and acting the part. Staff are not only representing Silvans Security Services but they are representing the Victorian Security Industry. They should have pride in what they are doing”.
13. All of the arrangements were made using What's App and it was very casual. I was not asked to provide my visa or any hard-copy documents. I was not asked to undertake any extra training or read any other information about COVID-19 or infection control.
14. In the past, when I have been employed as a security guard, I am usually required to go in person to the new employer's office, sign documents and provide my visa.

Work at the Marriott Hotel

15. I worked my first shift for Silvans Security Pty Ltd on the day after I had first made contact them [REDACTED]. It was at the Marriott Hotel. I found the hotel using Google Maps.
16. I was not asked to do any training before my shift, not even online training.

17. After a few days, [REDACTED] told me that I would be paid \$26 per hour for my work at the Marriott Hotel. I sent Silvans Security Pty Ltd invoices for my work.
18. I worked for Silvans Security Pty Ltd at the Marriott Hotel for [a number of weeks] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
19. When I arrived at the Marriott Hotel for my first shift, I saw that there were guards in the hotel lobby, including guards signing in.
20. At the start of my first shift, I had an orientation session. I was told that there were people staying at the hotel who had arrived from overseas and that my job was to be present on a floor of the hotel. I was instructed not to sleep or use a laptop while I was on duty.
21. At the beginning of each shift at the Marriott Hotel, I would be told which floor I was going to. I would sign a sheet recording which floor I was working on, my security licence number and the time that I started work.
22. The only time I was asked to attend an orientation session was my first shift. Otherwise, when I arrived, I would be asked something like “are you good to go?” From time to time, I was required to attend a 5 or 6-minute briefing, where security guards were reminded not to sleep or look at laptops while they were on duty.
23. The people who supervised me at the Marriott Hotel wore vests with “Unified Security” written on them. One of the supervisors was named Matt. The supervisors sat in the lobby during my shifts. There were usually 5 or 6 security guards sitting with them there.
24. I was given a radio for communication, which allowed me to communicate with the supervisors in the lobby. If I needed to take a break to go to the toilet, I would radio down to the supervisor and they would send a guard to stand in my place.
25. At the Marriott Hotel, I used the lift to travel between the lobby and the floor of the hotel.

Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) at the Marriott Hotel

26. At the orientation, I was given one face mask and one pair of gloves. I was instructed to wear the same pair of gloves and the same mask for my entire 12-hour shift (except that if my gloves got holes in them, I could have a new pair of gloves).
27. I was always given a disposable face mask and a pair of gloves when I arrived on site.
28. I was told by a supervisor, who was wearing a Unified vest, to put my mask and gloves into my pocket when I went on a break, and then put the same mask and gloves back on when I returned from my break. I was required to remove the mask and gloves at the point when I left the hotel floor where quarantined guests were staying, so I took my mask and gloves off before I entered the lift.
29. After 6 or 7 hours, the elastic on the mask loosened and the mask was not so protective.
30. At the end of my shift, I was required to put my used mask and gloves into a specific bin near the lobby.
31. I do not remember being taught how to put on the gloves and face mask, how to wear them, or how to take them off. I do not think that any nurses were involved in my orientation at the Marriott Hotel.
32. Quarantined guests used the same lift as me when they went on fresh air breaks or smoking breaks. When a guest went outside, I observed that they would put on a mask before they left their room. My understanding was that quarantined guests had to wear a mask when they went out. They might have also worn gloves, but I do not remember.

Duties at Marriott Hotel

33. My role at the Marriott Hotel was to be present in the corridor on a floor of the hotel where quarantined guests were staying.

34. I was instructed that, if I saw a quarantined guest trying to leave their room I should use my radio to tell the supervisors and that I should not try to stop the guest myself.
35. Other guards were assigned as “rovers”. Their duties included accompanying guests who went outside the hotel for fresh air or smoking breaks. The “rovers” would also take photos of guards who were asleep on duty and report those guards to the supervisors.
36. I observed that, if a guard was caught sleeping, they would be sent home. During my shifts at the Marriott Hotel, there were one or two times when quarantined guests snuck downstairs to the ground floor. I believe that guards were fired and sent home because they did not notice guests sneaking past them.
37. I sometimes observed security guards delivering “Uber Eats” bags to quarantined guests’ rooms, but I never made any deliveries as part of my work at quarantine hotels.

Contact with quarantined guests at the Marriott Hotel

38. I only had contact with two quarantined guests while I was working at the Marriott Hotel.
39. The first was a guest who asked me for a USB charger. The guest opened the door to their room and said something like “I need a USB. My phone charger isn’t working. If you have one that’d be great”. I said no to him. He asked me to contact the hotel staff in the guest lounge for him - he complained to me that the hotel staff were not assisting him.
40. The second was an old man. Nurses visited his room to help him with his medical needs – I believe that they needed to apply ointment to his skin and give him medicine. The nurses wore a face mask and gloves, as well as a covering over their clothes. I never saw anybody else at the Marriott Hotel wearing a covering over their clothes.
41. When a nurse visited a quarantined guest in their room, the procedure was that two security guards would stand in the corridor, behind the nurses. On one

occasion when the nurses visited the old man, I stood behind them. I stayed in the corridor and did not enter the room.

Food, drinks and breaks at the Marriott Hotel

42. There was a specific section in the lobby of the Marriott Hotel for security guards to sit in when we had a break. There were chairs there, as well as water and coffee. No food was provided.
43. Security guards would usually bring their food from home.
44. Security guards could go outside during their breaks, including to buy food. I saw some security guards bringing bottles of water and packets of chocolate up to the hotel quarantine floors. After 2 or 3 days, the supervisors gave instructions not to bring any food or drinks up to the guest floors of the hotel and not to throw any rubbish onto the floor.

Shifts at the Marriott Hotel

45. I did 4 or 5 shifts each week at the Marriott Hotel. On each day that I worked there, I was sent a roster on What's App which told me the names of the guards who were working in the morning and those who were working in the evening.
46. From seeing the rosters and talking to other guards, I know that some security guards were doing 7 shifts per week at the Marriott Hotel. Some security guards doing 7 shift per week told me that they were also doing shifts at other jobs after they finished at the hotel.
47. I am aware that a security subcontractor named Anthony would immediately give his security guards a 14-day roster for the first two weeks when they started working at the Marriott Hotel. This would have meant that those guards worked 84 hours per week.
48. After a while, Silvans Security Pty Ltd reduced the number of shifts that they offered to each security guard at the Marriott Hotel to between 2 and 4 shifts each week. It was around this time that I worked two shifts for Silvans Security Pty Ltd at the Novotel on Collins.

49. At the Novotel on Collins, there were six guards on a single floor. I was given one set of PPE at the start of each shift. There were bins on each floor for PPE disposal.
50. After a time, Silvans Security Pty Ltd stopped giving me any shifts.

Work at the Rydges Hotel

51. At the Rydges Hotel, I worked for a different subcontractor. The subcontracting company was called SSG Security, and I believe that a man named [REDACTED] was in charge of the company.
52. I had never worked for [REDACTED] before, but one of my friends used to work for him. I do not know [REDACTED] surname, [REDACTED]
53. I sent a text message to [REDACTED] on [in mid- May] [REDACTED], telling him that I was looking for shifts. [REDACTED] asked for me for my security licence and information about my availability. He did not ask me for my visa or for any other documents or information.
54. By text message, [REDACTED] told me to wear a black suit with a white shirt and a black tie. He also texted me the address of the Rydges Hotel.
55. My first shift at the Rydges Hotel was on [the day after I'd first contacted [REDACTED]] [REDACTED].
56. When I worked for [REDACTED] I had to fill in time sheets saying what shifts I had done. The time sheets mentioned my first name, my last name, my security license number and my bank details. I did not need to provide any invoices to [REDACTED] and I was paid directly into my bank account.
57. [In late May] On [REDACTED], I was asked to fill in an employment form with my personal details. A few days later, [REDACTED] visited the Rydges Hotel while I was working there – that was the first time that I met him in person. From time to time, [REDACTED] would visit the Hotel while I was on shift.

58. There was no briefing session or orientation at the Rydges Hotel. Before I started, [REDACTED] told me to find the person sitting at the front and said that they would direct me.
59. There was a person sitting at the front in the lobby. He wore a Unified Security vest but he may have been employed by [REDACTED]. At the start of my first shift, [REDACTED] told me which floor of the hotel to go to.
60. When I started at the Rydges Hotel, nobody explained to me that some of the guests in quarantine had tested positive for COVID-19. Another security guard told me that after 2 or 3 days.
61. I did not use radios for communication at the Rydges Hotel. I was given a phone number and I texted that number when I wanted to take a break.
62. On the floors where quarantined guests were staying, the only people I saw were nurses, hotel staff delivering food, and other security guards.
63. I was not ever told to avoid going to certain areas of the hotel, or to stay in particular areas.
64. During my shifts at the Rydges Hotel, I do not remember seeing anyone wearing a vest with "Authorised Officer" written on it or identifying themselves as an "Authorised Officer".

PPE at the Rydges Hotel

65. When I started working at the Rydges, [REDACTED] told me to wear a face mask and gloves during my shift, to throw away my mask and gloves each time I left the hotel floor for a break and to put on a new mask and gloves when I returned from my break. I understood that was the rule for the security guards.
66. After 2 or 3 days, the rule changed. [REDACTED] told me that there was a shortage of masks and gloves and that from now on I would just get one mask and one pair of gloves for each shift. He instructed me to put my mask and gloves in my pocket when I went for a break. He told me not to put my mask and gloves in my pocket in front of the hotel's security cameras.

67. While I worked at the Rydges Hotel, there was no special bin for security guards to throw away our used face masks and gloves. At the end of each of my shifts at the Rydges Hotel, I put my used mask and gloves in a bin near the elevator on the floor where I had been working. I then opened the door to the fire escape stairs (using my uncovered hands), walked down the stairs and left the hotel through the lobby.
68. There was hand sanitiser for guards to use at the Rydges Hotel, but I do not think that it was the proper alcohol-based sanitiser.
69. During my time at the Rydges Hotel, I also saw guards smoking together – not sharing cigarettes, but not social distancing. Some guards put holes in their gloves so that they could use their mobile phones.

Contact with quarantined guests at the Rydges Hotel

70. I did not see any quarantined hotel guests going for cigarette breaks or fresh air breaks at the Rydges Hotel. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
71. During one of my shifts at the Rydges Hotel, I had to stand behind a nurse while she visited a person inside the room. I stood in the corridor outside the room. The nurse was wearing a mask, gloves and a covering over her clothing – all the nurses working at the Rydges Hotel wore that “full PPE kit”.
72. The nurse in the room was there about a COVID-19 test. I heard her telling the guest about the procedure and what would happen if the hotel guest tested positive or negative for COVID-19.

Breaks at the Rydges Hotel

73. During my shifts at the Rydges Hotel, there were four security guards allocated to each floor. Two guards would go on a break, while the other two guards remained on duty on the floor.
74. During shifts, one guard would stand at each end of the corridor.

75. There was an area in the lobby of the Rydges Hotel for security guards to sit during their breaks. Water was provided in that area, but no other drinks were provided and there was no food. My observation was that most guards went outside to buy coffee and food. If we were on a break, we would take our mask and gloves with us. They would be in our pockets.
76. I brought my food from my house.

Shifts at the Rydges Hotel

77. I did [REDACTED] shifts each week at the Rydges Hotel.
78. During each shift, I was allowed to have three breaks:
- i. A 15-minute break after 3 hours;
 - ii. A 30-minute break after 6 hours; and
 - iii. A 15-minute break after 9 hours.
79. If I needed to go to the toilet in between those times, I would text the supervisor in the foyer and he would send up another security guard to take over from me.
80. At the Rydges Hotel, I used a toilet that was next to the lobby. If I needed to go to the toilet whilst on shift, I would call down the lobby using my phone. A Replacement guard would then be sent up. When he arrived, I would put my mask and my gloves in my pocket, and use the stairs to go down to the lobby and use the toilet. I would put my mask and gloves back on when I got back up onto the floor.
81. During the first few days at the Rydges Hotel, I would throw away my face mask and gloves before I went to the toilet and then put on a new face mask and gloves before I returned to duty. After a few days (when the rule changed), I would put my mask and gloves into my pocket when I went to the toilet, go down the stairs, use the toilet and then put my face mask and gloves back on when I returned to the hotel floor where I was working.

COVID-19

82. On the [weekend before my last shift at Rydges] [REDACTED], I worked overnight at my regular warehouse job.
83. During my overnight shift at the Rydges Hotel on [REDACTED] I began to feel like I had a cold. On one of my breaks that night, I noticed some of the other guards were sniffing but I thought that was because it was a cold night.
84. By the early hours of [REDACTED], I had a slight pain in my throat, a running nose and a bit of coughing. During my shift, I felt like I might have a fever, because I had chills. My body felt weak.
85. I did not tell anyone at the Rydges Hotel that I felt unwell – I thought it was just a common cold and nothing to worry about
86. After my shift ended, I drove straight home in my own car (I drove to and from all my shifts at the Marriott Hotel and the Rydges Hotel alone in my car).
87. That morning, on the freeway, I noticed a sign that said: “*if you have symptoms, get tested*”.
88. When I got home, I went to bed and slept until 2pm or 3pm. When I woke up, I could feel that something was wrong. Normally I feel energised after sleeping, but that day I felt weak. I ate something and went for a walk.
89. I remembered the sign that I had seen on the freeway and went to the [local] hospital. [REDACTED]
90. I was tested for COVID-19 at the hospital. It was the first time that I had been tested for COVID-19. Hospital staff told me to stay at home until I had the results of the test.
91. [REDACTED] [That afternoon] I took some medicine which I feel helped my symptoms and made me feel a bit better. I was feeling fine in the evening and did not have any cough or running nose.
92. I was not rostered on to work at the Hotel [REDACTED] [that night]. I did 3 or 4 food deliveries for [REDACTED]

93. I woke up at around 9am on [the next day] [REDACTED]. I got a phone call from the hospital, telling me that my COVID-19 test was positive. They told me to wait at home and said that the Department of Health and Human Services (the **Department**) would call me.
94. The Department telephoned me at around 11.30am.
95. I lived in a share-house with 3 housemates. All of my housemates were also security guards. When I tested positive for COVID-19, [none of them were working in Hotel Quarantine at that time] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
96. I self-isolated at home and, as far as I know, none of my housemates contracted COVID-19.
97. For the first two weeks after I tested positive for COVID-19, I had constant pain in my throat, pain in my chest and a slight cough each morning. On [a day during the first week] [REDACTED], I had a fever.
98. On [REDACTED] [In early June], the Department telephoned me and said that, if I was symptom free for the next three days, I would be free to leave my home. I took rest for two or three days after that.
99. In the evening [3 nights later after that call from the Department] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], I made some food deliveries.
100. During the [next] night on [REDACTED] I couldn't breathe properly. I called the Department and then went to the hospital. I was treated at the hospital for 6 hours.
101. I was tested for COVID-19 at the hospital and the test was positive. I telephoned the Department after receiving the positive test result. The Department told me that, because it had been 14 days since my first positive test, I was allowed to go out.

102. That week, I worked at my regular job at the warehouse. As far as I know, nobody at the warehouse contracted COVID-19.

Signed at Melbourne

in the State of Victoria
on 18th August 2020

