Report writing checklist

Before the report goes out

- [ ] The heading is complete: report type, site and exact location, full date, start and end times, guard's name and license number.
- [ ] The six questions are answered: what, where, who, when it happened, when it was reported, how and why (or "unknown").
- [ ] Every entry has a 24-hour time and the entries are in time order.
- [ ] Facts only: no opinions, labels or guesses about cause, cost or blame.
- [ ] What the guard saw is kept apart from what they were told, and by whom.
- [ ] People are named, or described well enough to recognize.
- [ ] Every call, message and handover names who, how and when.
- [ ] Photos, video and footage requests are listed.
- [ ] The last line says how things stood at the end.
- [ ] No slang, radio codes or abbreviations a client would not know.
- [ ] Spelling, names and plate numbers are checked.
- [ ] Signed with the date and time it was written.

The six questions

1. What happened
2. Where it happened
3. Who was involved
4. When it happened
5. When it was reported
6. How and why it happened

Describing a person

1. Whatever made you notice them first (South Carolina's training starts there).
2. Sex and an age range ("about 25 to 30", not "young"), and race or skin tone as part of the full description.
3. Height and build compared with your own: "about my height, 178 cm (5 ft 10 in), thin".
4. Hair (color, length, style) and facial hair, glasses.
5. Clothing from top to bottom: hat, jacket or top, pants, shoes, with colors, logos and writing.
6. Things that do not change: tattoos, scars, a limp, an accent.
7. What they carried and which way they went.

Describing a vehicle

1. Color, then year (or "older" or "newer"), make and model.
2. Body style: sedan, pickup, van, SUV, number of doors.
3. Plate number and the state or province. If there is no plate, or only a temporary one, write that.
4. Anything that stands out: dents, damage, stickers, a roof rack, writing on the side.
5. How many people were inside and which way it went.

> **Every line:** 24-hour time first · what you saw, heard and did · who told you what · exact words in quotes · who you told, how and when. Write it before you leave the shift. Correct with one line and your initials; never erase.

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