



City launches security training program

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The city has launched a pilot program to train private security guards so they can better detect potential threats and breaches at commercial buildings in the city.



The program, announced by Mayor Michael Bloomberg Wednesday, will begin with training for 253 guards from 31 buildings, who will undergo 40 hours of training from Police Department experts on topics such as recent trends in terrorism.

Officials said members of Local 32BJ -- a union representing security guards and other building workers -- will be trained and more guards will be schooled if the program is successful.

"After 9/11, it became clear that the true first responders are those who are on site," said Michael Fishman, president of the union.

Police Commissioner Ray Kelly said that off-duty police and recent retirees from the department will conduct classes.

Kelly said the guards will receive "open source" or publicly available information on how to better detect fake documents, spot a suspicious package or how to help police if an evacuation is necessary.

"We can only make New York City safer with this type of program in the months and years ahead," Kelly said.

In response to past criticism that security guards are often paid just above minimum wage and perhaps lack the incentive to go beyond their regular duties, Fishman said nonunionized guards need to be paid more across the city and across the country if they're to see their work as "career path" jobs.

The program, called New York Safe & Secure, will train officers from buildings managed by Fisher Brothers and Vornado Realty Trust. The course work was designed by the Office of Emergency Management and the Police Department, with help from John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

Officials said the training will include modern methods used by terrorists, learned from recent attacks around the world. They will also get tips on evacuation measures and what do in the event emergency workers, such the Fire Department, are called to their building.

They will also get training on identifying various types of explosives used by terrorists and how to

detect fake identifications.

The two companies will continue to pay the guards while they're in training, officials said.

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