

What's In a Title?

THE DIRECTOR OF SECURITY

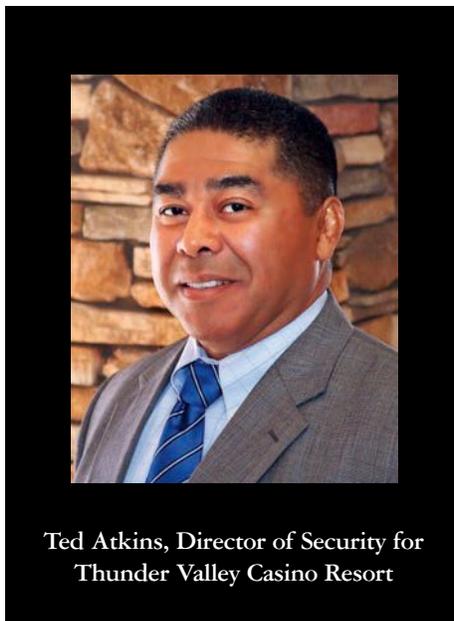


Whether you are flying internationally or attending a local event, security is always a top consideration. And with each passing month, public safety at large gatherings is of greater concern. To learn about a day in the life of a Casino Security executive, we reached out to Ted Atkins, Director of Security for Thunder Valley Casino Resort (TVCR). He has been with TVCR for the past year, and before that had 8.5 years at Chukchansi Gold Resort & Casino. Prior to this, he was a Texas Highway Patrolman for 4 years, which came after 21 years of service in the Navy.

G&L: Tell us about TVCR.

TA: Located 30 miles east of Sacramento, the casino features more than 250,000 square feet of gaming space, including 2,500 slot and video machines, 103 table games and a 240-seat Poker Room. TVCR is also home to a luxury 17-story hotel with 297 rooms, including 40 suites. All rooms are beautifully appointed with oversized marble bathrooms, European spa showers and flat-screen televisions. The outdoor pool is complete with private cabanas and a poolside bar.

The property boasts 14 restaurants and bars including: High Steaks Steakhouse, Red Lantern, Thunder Café, The Buffet and an expansive Food Court. The award-winning High Steaks Steakhouse is the region's only AAA Four Diamond accredited outdoor resort dining experience, offering the finest cuts of prime dry-aged steaks, market fresh seafood, a prized wine list and elaborate dessert selections made by Thunder Valley's acclaimed pastry team. Illusions is the newest bar and ultra-lounge, offering guests an upscale venue with elite and luxurious appeal. This two level ultra-lounge occupies 3,500 square feet in the center of the AAA Four-Diamond resort destination, and features a



Ted Atkins, Director of Security for Thunder Valley Casino Resort

delicious food menu with a variety of signature flavorful beverages.

G&L: How many people are under you, and to whom do you report?

TA: The TVCR Security Department is comprised of 115 team members. As Director of Security, I oversee the entire department, which includes: Administrative staff, Workers Comp/Safety Specialist, Security Investigator, Claims Manager and Security Administrative Assistant. My Security Manager manages: Security Officers, Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), Bike Patrol Officers, Mobile Patrol Officers, Field Training Officers, Assistant Shift Supervisors and Shift Managers.

G&L: Describe a typical day in your work schedule.

TA: Prior to arriving on property I have already checked my e-mails several times and responded accordingly. Upon arrival, I prefer

to park away from the entrance so that I can observe the property as I walk in. This practice allows me to observe the Security Officers who are patrolling the parking lots and parking garage. I also walk different routes on my way to the office to observe the property, guests and team members in an effort not to be so predictable. By walking different routes, I keep my Security Officers on their toes!

I also encourage my administrative staff to walk with me. This gives me an opportunity for a one-on-one conversation to speak about their job performance, goals, personal growth, etc. I also believe this is important because I want to lead by example and this allows Security Officers to see my presence, and passion, for safety on the floor and all around the casino. While walking the property I make sure to acknowledge each one of the Security Officers and address any issues that may arise.

When I arrive into the Security office I walk by all the offices and greet my administrative staff, and any Security Officers who may be in the office writing reports. At my desk I check for phone messages and return all calls promptly, and double check my calendar to make sure that I am prepared for the back-to-back meetings that I attend to stay abreast of matters on property.

On any given day one of my staff members will stop by my office in need of my time to ask questions, advice or assistance. This is why I have an open door policy and tell my staff that if the door is open, they do not need to check in with my Assistant and can come and talk to me at any time.

G&L: What are some of your top departmental priorities?

TA: Training, Training, Training. My goal as Director is to coach, mentor, train and empower, and I am very passionate about educating and training my staff. Training provides knowledge, and knowledge is power because it

provides our officers the confidence to handle incidents in a calm and professional manner while providing guests with our award winning AAA four-diamond level of service.

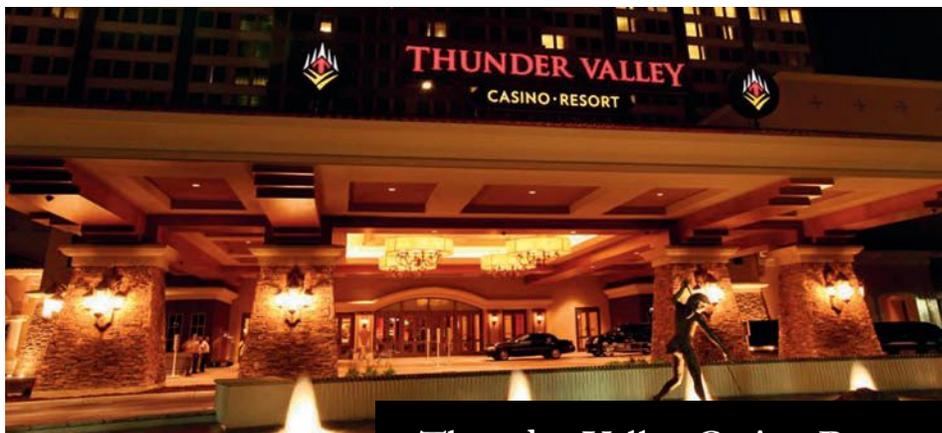
Last November TVCR sponsored and hosted a three-day Crisis Intervention Team Training (CIT) that was attended by numerous outside law enforcement agencies and public safety personnel from Northern California. The goal of the training was to increase knowledge of the debilitating nature of mental illness, and to promote positive contacts between law enforcement and those who suffer from mental illness. The training was also attended by several of our administrative staff and Security Officers, and the training provided them with additional skills and resources in dealing with individuals who are experiencing a mental health crisis on our property.

We plan on hosting another event in spring, and I look forward to expanding this training and making it available to as many of my officers and outside law enforcement agencies as possible. I am also working with my Security Manager to implement Verbal Defense and Influence training, which is aimed to prevent and manage conflict using non-escalatory and de-escalatory verbalization skills. This training is proven to reduce complaints, liability, and injuries while improving performance, morale and overall safety.

G&L: What were some of the scariest situations you have faced in your career?

TA: During my career I have experienced many situations that people would refer to as “scary.” However, there is one particular moment that stands out above the rest, and I will never forget. I was involved in an incident where an altercation was occurring between two groups and a handgun was pointed at our faces. As soon as we saw the gun, we froze. We were not scared during the incident, however when the adrenaline wore off I was definitely shaken up after realizing what could have happened in that split second. Usually, after the adrenaline wears off, you have time to reflect about what could have happened and your mind starts to run all the worst possible scenarios in your head. I have always believed that my discipline will see me through these incidents because my training will take over, as failure is not an option (that’s twenty years of military experience coming out).

G&L: Where do you see the future of the industry going?



Thunder Valley Casino Resort



TA: Security remains an integral part of the casino industry, and due to the recent tragic events around the world, and here in the United States, I believe the presence of security will be brought more into the forefront. The challenge will be how large of a role physical security, or security technology, will play. The security department does not generate revenue and therefore spending for security needs is not always a top priority. The world I grew up in has changed, and unfortunately we must face an uncertain future.

I would like to thank Ted for his time and comments, and hope that with Security professionals like him, that the world will become a safer place for all law-abiding citizens. Until next issue, please take care.

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Security Salary Ranges			
Casino Size	Manager	Director	Vice Pres
Small	55K-65K	65K-75K	75K-90K
Medium	55K-70K	85K-100K	90K-120K
Large	65K-80K	95K-135K	110K-150K
Mega	70K-95K	115K-155K	125K-180K