

## **Best Practice: Security Guard Whistles**



**Category:** Communications  
**Location:** Laem Chabang, Thailand  
**Date Observed:** June, 2005

**Description:** The facility issued whistles to all security guards, and devised a basic system of whistle codes to denote different security and safety issues.

**Discussion:** Whistles are a simple, highly effective, and very inexpensive means of medium distance communication that can be used by security guards and other facility personnel. Whistles can serve as a primary form of medium distance communication if two way radios or cell phones are unavailable or cost prohibitive, or as a secondary (backup) form of communication in the event two way radios or cell phones fail. Basic whistle codes can be devised to alert other security officers or facility managers to safety or security issues. Whistles are a good deterrent to advise unauthorized persons approaching a closed area that they should turn back. Whistles require no maintenance, are water and weather resistant, and are almost 100% reliable in all conditions. Placing a whistle on a lanyard keeps it from being lost or broken.

**Potential Down-side:** Whistle use gives away the location of the user, and can be easily heard by violators as well as others. During a security operation, two way radios are relatively silent (especially when equipped with an earpiece) and a suspicious person or violator will likely not know that security guards are closing in on them. In comparison, whistles will alert a violator that their presence has been detected, possibly giving them an opportunity to flee. Whistles (1/4 mile effective range) do not have the range of two way radios (1 – 5 mile effective range non-repeated, unlimited effective range with repeaters) or cell phones (unlimited effective range). Excessive use of whistles can be annoying to other port users.

**Conclusion:** While two way radios provide a more effective means of security communications, providing whistles to security guards is a very effective means of providing secondary communications capability, and/or basic communications ability if two way radios are unavailable or cost prohibitive.

**Cost:** \$1 - \$3 (USD) apiece.