

A S I S I N T E R N A T I O N A L

Chief Security Officer – An Organizational Model

ANSI/ASIS CSO.1-2013

AMERICAN NATIONAL STANDARD



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1. SCOPE, SUMMARY, AND PURPOSE

1.1 Scope

This model is applicable to the private, public, and not-for-profit sector organizations. The model provides a structure to evaluate and define the role and necessary aptitude for the security/risk management function in an organization. It provides a methodology to evaluate and respond to a dynamic spectrum of threats to tangible and intangible assets on both a domestic and global basis.

1.2 Summary

This model is presented at a high-level and designed as an organizational guide for the development and implementation of a strategic security framework. The structure is characterized by appropriate awareness, prevention, preparedness, and necessary responses to changes in threat conditions. Specific considerations and responses are also addressed for deliberation by individual organizations based on identifiable risk assessment, requirements, intelligence, and assumptions.

1.3 Purpose

This standard is a model for organizations to use when developing a leadership function to provide a comprehensive, integrated, and consistent security/risk strategy to contribute to the viability and success of the organization. This model refers to this leadership function as the senior security executive. Some organizations designate this role/function as the *Chief Security Officer (CSO)*. **The CSO designation is a concept descriptor and not necessarily a recommendation for the position title.** This role/function may be a standalone position or as one that has been incorporated within an existing senior-level executive's accountability to the organization's leadership team.

2. NORMATIVE REFERENCES

The following documents contain information which, through reference in this text, constitutes foundational knowledge for the use of this American National Standard. At the time of publication the editions indicated were valid. All material is subject to revision and parties are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the material indicated below.

ASIS International ANSI. (2008). *Chief Security Officer organizational standard*. [Online].

Available:

< <http://www.asisonline.org/guidelines/guidelineschief.pdf> > [2008, October].

3. OVERVIEW

Businesses, public and private organizations and associations continue to experience dynamic and complex risk environments. The effective management of these environments is a fundamental requirement today and will continue into the future. Boards of Directors, shareholders, stakeholders, and the public all expect organizations and government agencies to anticipate, manage areas of risk, and set in place a comprehensive and cohesive strategy across all functional lines. In addition, it is expected an organization's leadership will respond quickly and effectively to events and incidents that threaten organizational assets and operations. Thus, a proactive strategy for security/risk mitigation supports sustainable, healthy, productive organizations and is a critical responsibility of senior leadership and governing boards.

The goal of this model is to define the skills and competencies that are essential to the active protection of an organization and to produce effective responses to a dynamic and emerging threat environment. Effective leadership across all levels of an organization, especially within its security functions, is imperative. Organizational and brand reputation, the uninterrupted reliability of the technical infrastructure and normal business processes, the protection of physical and financial assets, the loss or compromise of intellectual properties and trade secrets, the safety of employees and customers, and the preservation of shareholder confidence all rely, to a large degree, upon the effectiveness of a responsible and accountable senior executive.

The complexity of risk environments creates a diverse matrix of interrelated threats, vulnerabilities, and impacts; therefore, the safeguards against these risks are interdependent at all levels. A successful model for organizations is to have a designated single point of accountability at the senior governance level with responsibility for crafting, influencing, and directing an organization-wide security/risk strategy. In these organizations, accountability is clearly defined and supports role imperatives. The ability to influence strategy and address matters of internal and external risk exposures requires such a leadership role.

4. REPORTING RELATIONSHIP

It is strongly recommended that the position report to a key senior-level executive of the organization so as to ensure a strong liaison with designated leadership bodies such as the Board of Directors and its operating committees or in the appointed and/or elected governing public agency councils, oversight committees, boards or designee(s). This alignment within the organizational hierarchy should signal executive commitment, support, and the importance of such a role.

5. MODEL FUNCTION

Table 1 illustrates the scope of an organization's security/risk program, including functional areas of responsibility, key processes, and discussion of work elements that should be found within an organization. It is not intended to be a complete road map for every program and initiative within a given process since these should be customized and would naturally vary based on numerous geographical, political, cultural, industry sector, legal, and other specific requirements.

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Leadership should clearly establish strategic accountability and exert effective influence on the security and risk mitigation activities of the organization in order to achieve organizational goals and objectives. Governance may take the form of a single Enterprise Risk Management Council; separate risk committees to address key risk areas or processes; actual managerial and budgetary accountability and/or various combinations to better align with and adjust to evolving organizational structures. Each organization's unique culture, business model, public purpose, and/or needs should guide specific decisions establishing the best structure. This model is intended to assist any organization considering its best approaches and provide guidance on placement of the role, the skills, and competencies required within the organization.

While many different approaches may be taken to align the role within an organization's culture, to aid in understanding and facilitating the design and implementation, this model presents a representative framework (see Table 1) and position description (see Annex A).