

Module 1: Introduction to the Private Security Industry

Duties and Responsibilities of a Security Guard

Security guards play a crucial role in safeguarding individuals, property, and information. This section aims to outline the main duties and responsibilities associated with these security functions.

Security guards are employed by various clients and employers across different sectors. In Ontario, the security industry is regulated by the Private Security and Investigative Services Act, which defines a security guard as someone who "performs work, for remuneration, that consists primarily of guarding or patrolling for the purpose of protecting persons or property" [Private Security and Investigative Services Act, 2005, c.34, s.2 (4)]. According to this law, anyone engaged in such work must possess a valid license to operate as a security guard.

The security services industry comprises various roles, each contributing uniquely to the overall security framework. Law enforcement officers mainly enforce federal and provincial laws and provide support during emergencies. Recently, there has been a notable shift from public law enforcement to private security due to the increasing volume of incidents faced by police services as populations grow. Security guards have thus become essential in ensuring the safety of Canadian citizens.

Specialized roles within the private security sector include private investigators, who gather information about individuals' locations and activities, and loss prevention specialists, who focus on identifying and apprehending criminals. Mobile patrol services, which involve uniformed guards responding to alarms and patrolling extensive areas in vehicles, exemplify the transition from public to private security. These services offer a cost-effective alternative to police response, which can be expensive for property owners.

Overview of Duties and Responsibilities

Security guards are tasked with protecting people, property, and information. Their duties can vary widely depending on the site they are assigned to. To perform these responsibilities effectively, security guards must understand the significance of their role and be aware of the general duties they may be required to perform daily. They should stay informed about industry changes and developments and understand the expectations and obligations towards their clients, the public, and their employers.

The security industry is rapidly growing in North America, with private security increasingly taking on a public role. According to a recent Statistics Canada survey, there are now more security guards in Canada than police officers:

Private security personnel outnumbered police officers in both 1991 and 1996. In 1996, there were 59,090 police officers in Canada compared to 82,010 private security personnel, including 12,230 private investigators and 69,780 security guards.

Despite no decrease in criminal activity, police agencies are expected to do more with fewer resources. The increasing gap between police services and demand must be addressed, and based on the experiences of the past few decades in the United States, it is likely that private security will continue to fill this gap.

Public and Private Security

The security industry is divided into two main sectors: public and private.

Public Security

Public security agencies are government-funded groups dedicated to public service. These agencies include municipal, provincial, and federal police forces. Legislation in each jurisdiction authorizes and empowers these agencies, mandates specific training, and establishes an objective complaint review process. Police forces possess broad powers generally recognized by the public, including:

- Preserving the peace
- Preventing crimes and other offenses
- Assisting crime victims
- Arresting or detaining criminals or those suspected of criminal activity
- Drafting and laying criminal charges
- Investigating crimes
- Seizing evidence
- Testifying in court
- Executing search and arrest warrants

Private Security

Private security differs from public security in several key ways. Private security services are provided to clients for a fee and are generally limited to the client's property. Unlike public security, which serves the public interest, private security focuses on protecting the client's interests. In Canada, legislation typically does not grant private security providers the same powers of detention, arrest, and search and seizure as those extended to police.

Private security encompasses measures taken by individuals, partnerships, and corporations to protect their interests. These measures typically involve safeguarding property (such as client-produced goods and the facilities and equipment used in production), personnel (including employees and public visitors), and information about the products, property, facilities, and processes. Industrial security is increasingly becoming a crucial aspect of private security.

Companies seeking private security without the expense of developing their own security unit often contract the services of external security companies. This approach allows companies to avoid the costs associated with managing and administering security functions, such as monitoring individual security guards' performance, training, and providing benefits packages.

By distributing these administrative and other costs among all clients, security firms can reduce the cost of services for any single client. Contracting security services also helps companies avoid complications arising from union and employee contract negotiations, as these issues remain with the private security firm owners.

Additionally, private security firms operate independently of the host company's politics. Employees may trust an external security guard more and be more cooperative during investigations than they would be with internal agents.

Lastly, independent security companies can develop expertise beyond the scope of in-house security operations. Depending on a company's specific security needs, it might be more advantageous to engage experts rather than rely on in-house or general contract personnel.

The Role of a Security Guard

The primary role of a security guard is to protect people, property, and information. They hold responsibilities toward various stakeholders:

To the Employer

As a security guard, you are responsible to your employer for the security and protection of property. This includes:

- Ensuring premises and property are protected effectively against various natural and man-made threats.
- Preventing, detecting, and responding appropriately to criminal and quasi-criminal activities on or against the client's property.
- Performing duties in a manner that instills client confidence, ensuring they do not lose business or face substantial civil claims due to security services' conduct.

To the Public

Security guards are often tasked with protecting the public from loss or injury. This involves:

- Interacting with law enforcement officials and the justice system when necessary, such as apprehending and detaining individuals who have committed criminal offenses. Security personnel can supplement police efforts by conducting preliminary investigations or securing crime scenes until police arrive, and they may provide valuable information to law enforcement.

- Acting as a figure of authority during emergencies, offering leadership and guidance due to their position.
- Possessing information that can assist emergency personnel during crises. For instance, directing firefighters to the quickest route to a fire scene or industrial accident or warning emergency crews about danger zones within a site.
- When criminal charges are laid based on information provided by a security guard, and proper procedures were followed in making the arrest, the security guard may be required to testify in court. They must confirm that the evidence was legally acquired, produce or identify exhibits, identify the accused, and present testimony professionally.

To Yourself

Security guards should recognize their role as professionals, bearing significant responsibilities. Often, they are responsible for protecting substantial amounts of property and equipment, sometimes worth hundreds of thousands or even millions of dollars. Therefore, they must perform their duties with seriousness and responsibility.

Observe, Deter, Record, and Report

Although the role of a security guard can vary, one fundamental responsibility remains constant: providing protection to personnel, property, and information. It is important to understand that the days of security guards using force and intimidation as a means of enforcing peace are largely over. While physical intervention may still be necessary in some situations, the majority of tasks assigned to security guards involve observing, deterring, recording, and reporting.

Deterring and Detecting Crime

A security guard's presence alone can deter most criminals from attempting illegal activities on the site. However, if someone does attempt to commit a crime, the response should follow the client's protocol. Not all clients want individuals charged or the police called immediately. The response should be predetermined by the client and the security company, and the security guard should be familiar with their Post Orders.

If calling the police is necessary, providing valuable information can help them apprehend the criminals or stop the crime in progress. Security guards should take detailed notes to remember as many specifics of the incident as possible.

Building good relations with the police is crucial, as security guards and local police forces together form a security team. It is also essential for security guards to know what actions they are legally allowed and not allowed to take. Throughout a security guard's career, they will

handle a variety of duties, but the primary duty in all situations is to observe, deter, record, and report.

Qualities of a Professional Security Guard

Character

Security guards must exhibit honesty, courage, alertness, discipline, and loyalty. Since they are responsible for safeguarding company and customer property, honesty is crucial. Failure to prevent theft or damage, accepting bribes or gratuities, or allowing violations of company rules can lead to immediate dismissal.

Maintaining alertness is essential and can be a matter of life and death. Although duties like patrols may become monotonous, guards must remain vigilant to ensure their safety and the safety of others. Routine tasks are designed to protect personnel and facilities, which may involve danger, necessitating constant alertness.

Guards must promptly obey and properly execute all orders from superiors. Regulations typically state that a guard should never leave their post until relieved by another officer or ordered to do so. Personal feelings and preferences should not influence job performance. Loyalty to the job, the security industry, and their respective companies is vital. All decisions must prioritize the organization's best interests, and guards must be trusted with confidential information.

Attitude

As the first contact for visitors or employees, a security guard's demeanor significantly impacts perceptions of the company. Three key factors related to attitude are:

- Courtesy
- Restraint
- Interest

Courtesy involves showing consideration for others, reducing friction, and making interactions pleasant. By being courteous, security guards can gain cooperation, essential for carrying out their duties. While answering questions, giving directions, and enforcing rules, guards must remain courteous. A firm attitude should not be belligerent. Repeated or seemingly ridiculous questions should be met with courteous and pleasant responses.

Guards should act without haste or undue emotion, avoid abusive language, refrain from arguing, and avoid using force whenever possible. A calm and dignified demeanor garners respect and is usually more effective than aggression. Political, religious, and societal opinions should not be discussed on duty, and tolerance for others' opinions is essential. Guards must perform duties without a threatening attitude and should find some level of satisfaction in their

job. Without some reward or interest in their role, a guard's attitude toward the public and other employees may deteriorate.

Duties of a Security Guard

Individuals must obtain a Security Guard license if they perform work, for remuneration, primarily focused on protecting persons or property. This encompasses roles such as bodyguards, bouncers, loss prevention personnel, mobile patrol guards, event security, and hospital security. You might also be part of a corporate security detail, armoured car service, or a concierge at an upscale condominium.

Each role demands the ability to work in diverse environments and interact with various people. Effective security guards must provide excellent customer service, be knowledgeable about their duties, and skillfully apply the law.

Deliver Excellent Customer Service

This involves being honest, polite, interested, helpful, friendly, accountable, knowledgeable, quick, intelligent, accurate, and respectful. Guards should act in ways that put people at ease, reassuring customers that they are there to help. They need to be quick problem solvers and know the appropriate course of action for any situation at their post or duty.

Through words and actions, guards should demonstrate respect and courtesy to everyone they interact with, including those they are directing, instructing, or advising. While enforcing their duties, guards must remain polite and friendly.

Communication Skills

Strong communication skills are essential for security guards. They must be able to speak clearly to ensure understanding. Being aware of coping mechanisms for stressful situations, both for themselves and others, is crucial as they may need to mediate disputes. Paying attention to all forms of communication, both verbal (voice) and somatic (body language), is important for effective interaction.

Values of Good Service

Good service values significantly impact the level of service and customer satisfaction. These values are consistent across the service industry and influence how customers perceive the value of the product and the service they receive.

Imagine dining at an upscale restaurant. You would expect exceptional service from the waiter or staff, anticipating they will earn a generous tip. Similarly, you would expect the food, given its high cost, to meet high standards.

Consider staying at a top-tier hotel. Your expectations would include impeccable treatment, pristine room conditions, a welcoming lounge area, and friendly, professional staff.

When visiting a clothing store, you might prefer a salesperson who listens to your needs and offers helpful suggestions over a pushy, commission-driven staff member. This highlights the importance of genuine interest in helping customers.

Understanding these aspects helps identify attributes that create good service quality. As a security guard, you are expected to excel in delivering these key areas. Reflect on the following examples and consider the attributes you would associate with professional, high-quality service from a restaurant or hotel:

- Efficient
- Clean
- Courteous
- Friendly
- Knowledgeable
- Helpful
- Fast
- Grateful

Conversely, you would not appreciate being served by someone who is moody, irritable, opinionated, angry, or unpredictable.

Knowledge of Duties

Security guards must be well-versed in company policies and procedures, site-specific guidelines, and operational orders. They should understand their boundaries and limits as outlined by the Private Security and Investigative Services Act, 2005, and respond lawfully and ethically to any situation encountered during their duties.

Skillful Application of the Law

This involves knowing and adhering to the law, post orders, and company policies. Security guards, the general public, and peace officers all play roles in maintaining community safety, each with different responsibilities and authority levels. Security guards act as professional witnesses for peace officers and police officers, ensuring their actions stay within acceptable boundaries and knowing when to call the police if a situation escalates beyond their capabilities.

Professional Conduct

Security guards should always act professionally, considering how their actions appear to others. Their conduct should align with the image of a professional officer, not just someone in a uniform. They should avoid drawing unnecessary attention to situations, creating positive witnesses while avoiding negative ones. Professionalism translates into improved job performance.

Roles of a Security Guard

1. Customer Service Representative
2. Patrolling Sites
3. Loss Prevention Personnel
4. Securing Buildings
5. Enforcing Rules and Regulations
6. Conflict Management
7. Liaison to Emergency Services
8. Report Writing

These duties must be performed competently and within the rules and regulations of the Private Security and Investigative Services Act of Ontario. Security guards should understand the laws governing the security industry and the specific laws they are authorized to enforce. These laws define the guard's powers of arrest and limit their actions, ensuring that all persons are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. Even if a criminal act is witnessed, such as shoplifting or trespassing, guards must remember that everyone is entitled to their day in court.

Professionalism, Public Relations, and Personal Image

This area is one of the most crucial aspects to focus on and improve during your working time at any site. Your interactions with people, how you carry yourself, your body language, posture, and attitude all play significant roles. Everyone you meet is quietly evaluating you, including those who pay for your services. This constant evaluation can be both an opportunity and a challenge. Awareness of your words and actions can propel your career to new heights and earn recognition. However, minor mistakes and oversights can quickly result in reassignment to another job site.

Improving Self-Image

To ensure you are putting your best foot forward and are seen positively by those who finance your paycheck, pay careful attention to the following areas:

1. **Body Language & Mannerisms**
2. **Vocabulary and Speech Patterns**
3. **Personal Hygiene**
4. **Uniform**

Body Language & Mannerisms

Your body language conveys a stronger message about yourself than any other observable method, except maybe fashion and clothing style. Before you speak, people form an opinion based on your appearance and posture. First impressions are formed within seconds and are rarely changed. Stereotypes and past experiences with similar roles or fashion styles influence these initial judgments. It is essential to create a positive first impression and foster a positive image of your position, company, and personality to challenge any negative stereotypes.

Tips for Positive Body Language:

- **Posture:** Avoid slouching. Sit and stand with shoulders back and relaxed, as if trying to touch your shoulder blades together.
- **Eye Line:** Maintain relaxed eyes and avoid squinting. Make eye contact when speaking.
- **Head Position:** Keep your head level, avoid tilting or looking down. Your head directs your posture, so keep it up and look ahead when moving.
- **Gait:** Walk in a relaxed manner with sure and firm steps. Take your time and walk with confidence.
- **Tension:** Stay relaxed. Tension is noticeable and can hinder your natural movement.

Vocabulary and Speech Patterns

Effective communication significantly impacts how others perceive you:

- **Clarity:** Speak clearly and ensure your words are understood.
- **Politeness:** Use polite language and show respect in your interactions.
- **Professionalism:** Avoid slang and maintain a professional tone.

Personal Hygiene

Maintaining personal hygiene is critical for a professional image:

- **Cleanliness:** Ensure you are clean and well-groomed.
- **Freshness:** Use deodorant and maintain fresh breath.
- **Appearance:** Keep your hair neat and nails trimmed.

Uniform

Your uniform should always be clean, pressed, and worn correctly:

- **Neatness:** Ensure your uniform is free of stains and wrinkles.
- **Fit:** Wear a properly fitting uniform.
- **Presentation:** Wear your uniform with pride and ensure it represents your role professionally.

Vocabulary and Speech Patterns

Effective communication requires not only the art of listening but also speaking properly. The words you choose and how you use them greatly impact how people will treat you and how they interpret your point of view.

The Art of Listening

When listening to a complaint or customer, be fully present in the moment. Do not think ahead or prepare a response while the other person is speaking. Just listen completely to the argument presented. Key aspects include:

- **Eye Contact:** Maintain eye contact to show that you are engaged.
- **Posture and Body Language:** Stand still and avoid distracting mannerisms like fidgeting. Your body language should convey that you are there to listen and help if possible.

Speaking with Empathy

When speaking with others, try to match the type and sophistication level of their language. Use the same descriptive words they are using. This is called empathetic communication. It is not about copying them but relating to their level of education and upbringing through the kind of language you use. Key points include:

- **Vocabulary:** Use similar words to those the other person uses.
- **Tone of Voice:** Keep your tone calm and pleasant.
- **Pacing:** Speak slowly to ensure clarity and give the listener time to understand.
- **Explanation:** Take your time to explain things fully.

Voice and Presence

Your voice affects how others perceive your actions. Speak calmly and, if necessary, forcibly, but always politely with the intent of assisting others. Key aspects include:

- **Recognizability:** Ensure your voice and manner make it easy to recognize you as an officer.
- **Calmness:** When nervous or hurried, relax and take a breath. Speaking slowly helps convey calmness.
- **Politeness:** Use "please" and "thank you" to maintain politeness, even when being forceful.
- **Awareness:** Be conscious of how and to whom you are speaking. Interactions should be appropriate for the context.

Professional Interactions

All your interactions should maintain a high level of service, regardless of whom you are helping. Remember that even while resolving issues, you are observed by those around you. Key points include:

- **Consistency:** Ensure that your level of service is professional at all times.
- **Values of Good Service:** Be polite, courteous, respectful, knowledgeable, efficient, helpful, friendly, and authoritative.

By focusing on these aspects of vocabulary and speech patterns, you can enhance your communication skills, improve your interactions with others, and project a professional image in all situations.