Module 1: Principles of working in the private security industry

Chapter 1: The main characteristics and purposes of the private security industry

The SIA has 3 main aims:

1. The compulsory licensing of individuals undertaking designated activities within the private security industry
2. To recognise quality service by managing the voluntary Approved Contractor Scheme (ACS)
3. Introduction of business licensing for all regulated security companies



The key purposes of the private security industry

Security is a state or feeling of being safe and secure. The UK's private security industry provides manned and technical protection in an effort to prevent and detect crimes and other unauthorised activities and raise standards within the industry.

As well as protecting premises, people and their property, security operatives also help to prevent and detect crime, prevent or reduce loss, waste and damage, as well as monitoring and responding to safety risks.

Security can be provided to clients in 3 main ways:

- **manned security** – where one or more security operatives work on a site, providing both a deterrent against crime and an immediate response to incidents as they occur
- **physical security** – physical deterrents such as locks, alarms, barriers and grilles to help reduce crime
- **systems** – electronic and other technical systems used to monitor premises for crime and other dangers, such as intruder alarms, fire detection systems and closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems

A 'security operative' is the general term used throughout this book to describe any person paid or used to provide any kind of manned security to a client or premises. This term includes door supervisors, uniformed security officers (including key holders), store detectives, CCTV operators, cash and valuables in transit operatives and close protection operatives.

The professionalism within the private security industry, alongside the licencing regime of the security industry authority, are both aimed at raising standards within the sector.

The aims and functions of the Security Industry Authority (SIA)

The organisation responsible for regulating the private security industry is the Security Industry Authority (SIA). The SIA is a non-departmental public body reporting to the Home Secretary, under the terms of the Private Security Industry Act 2001. Its mission is to protect the public by regulating the industry effectively through individual and company licensing, to remove and reduce criminality, to raise standards, to recognise quality of service and to monitor the industry generally.



The SIA's main functions are to:

- protect the public and regulate the security industry through licensing
- raise standards (through the Approved Contractor Scheme)
- introduce business licensing for all regulated security businesses
- monitor the activities and effectiveness of those working in the industry
- set and approve standards of conduct, training and supervision within the industry
- keep under review the private security industry and the operation of the legislative framework
- increase customer confidence

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Licensable roles under the Private Security Act

Door supervisors – those who carry out security duties in or at licensed premises (for example pubs and nightclubs), preventing crime and disorder and keeping staff and customers safe.

Security officers (guarding) – those who guard premises against unauthorised access or occupation, outbreaks of disorder, theft or damage. They may also guard one or more individuals against assault or injuries that occur as the result of the unlawful conduct of others. This protection is given by providing a physical presence or by carrying out a form of patrol or surveillance to deter crime.

Security officers (key holding) – key holding is where a security officer keeps custody of, or controls access to, any key or similar device for operating (whether mechanically, electronically or otherwise) any lock.

Cash and valuables in transit operatives – those who guard property against destruction or theft while using secure transportation of the property in specially manufactured vehicles.

CCTV operators – those who carry out guarding activities using closed circuit television equipment to either monitor the activities of members of the public in a public or private place or to identify a particular person. This includes the use of CCTV to record images to be viewed on non-CCTV equipment.

Close protection operatives – those who guard one or more individuals against assaults or injuries that might be suffered as a consequence of the unlawful conduct of others.

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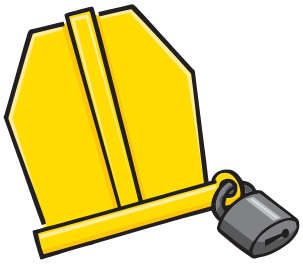
Vehicle immobilisers are only licensed by the SIA in Northern Ireland. These are security operatives who either remove or relocate vehicles, restrict the movement of vehicles using a device or release vehicles after demanding or collecting a charge.



Other as yet non-regulated sectors of the private security industry include private investigation, event security, electronic security and fire systems.



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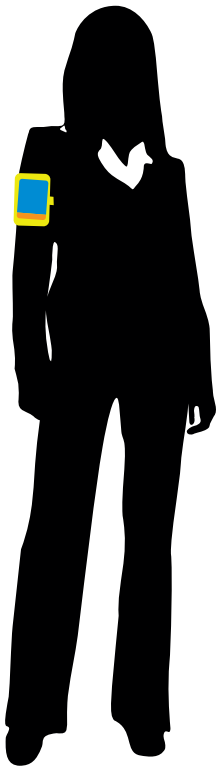
Furthermore, security operatives must always conduct themselves in strict accordance with the SIA's **standards of Behaviour** for their particular role within the industry, as well as their own organisation's values and standards. For further information about the SIA, please visit: **www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk**



Individual licensing

SIA licensing currently covers door supervision, security guarding, key holding, CCTV operations, cash and valuables in transit operations and close protection. Licensing ensures that security operatives are 'fit and proper' persons who are properly trained and qualified to do their jobs. The SIA also sets and approves standards of conduct, training and supervision within the industry.

Anyone wishing to work as a security operative must have an SIA licence before they start work. To work without a licence is a criminal offence, carrying fines of up to £5,000 or up to a 6-month prison sentence.

It is also a criminal offence for an employer to use an unlicensed security operative. To get a licence, you need to apply to the SIA itself. Your identity will be verified, you will be required to undergo the specified training, your criminal record will be checked and you will be required to pay a licence fee. Your licence will last for 3 years, after which time you will need to renew it.

Approved Contractor Scheme

The SIA's Approved Contractor Scheme (ACS) introduced a set of operational and performance standards for private security companies.

Companies that can prove that they can meet these standards can be awarded Approved Contractor status, which provides their customers and clients with independent proof of the company's commitment to quality.

Standards of behaviour

It is very important that all security operatives conduct themselves professionally at all times. Clients and members of the public expect security staff to act in a certain way.

But what qualities should security operatives possess?

Security operatives should be:

- professional
- polite
- sensitive
- honest
- reliable
- responsible
- courteous
- fair
- dedicated
- alert
- observant
- helpful
- approachable
- smart in appearance
- tactful
- self-disciplined
- cooperative
- patient
- loyal
- positive
- good communicators
- effective problem solvers
- team players
- handle sensitive situations

Above all security operatives should have integrity and be prepared to take responsibility for their actions.

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Community safety initiatives

Working with the various private and community crime reduction initiatives in the area can go a long way towards helping security operatives keep their premises and clients safe.

This is done by helping to reduce the opportunities for crimes to take place. For example, local authorities now use Safer Community Partnerships to help reduce crime and the fear of crime in their areas. They work together with the police, the other emergency services and other relevant public and private organisations to try to reduce crime, public disorder, reoffending, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse and vandalism.

Working with national and local crime reduction initiatives like these can help security operatives to raise levels of security for themselves, the public and for their own clients and customers, as well as helping to reduce crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour in the area generally. Sharing information with these other initiatives and groups can also help to improve a security operative's knowledge of what is happening in the area in which they are working.



Crime reduction initiatives try to do this by:

- improving the physical security of vulnerable areas
- improving the environment itself
- removing the means and opportunities to commit crime
- using extra lighting to improve visibility in an area
- using warning signs
- controlling access to certain areas at specific times
- using CCTV
- using radio communications between various organisations and companies
- making use of local and national Pubwatch and Shopwatch initiatives
- using the yellow and red warning cards in conjunction with the local Pubwatch policy

How assignment instructions support the security operative role

The documents used to describe what the client requires of the security company are known as assignment instructions (A.I.s). They are primarily used for security sites and retail but are not commonly used in licenced premises.

Assignment instructions will state when certain duties, such as a patrol, must be carried out.

They also state the emergency procedures, emergency contact numbers and the numbers of other key individuals that you may need to contact, e.g. maintenance contractors.

Assignment instructions are confidential and should never be discussed with individuals outside of the security team and your management.



Benefits of using CCTV

CCTV has become one of the most essential pieces of technology used to monitor sites/ premises.

Ideally, CCTV cameras should be monitored at all times while the business is functioning. The CCTV operator can then direct security operatives to points of high risk while monitoring their safety. This is a cost-effective method of deploying security resources while keeping staffing to a minimum level.

Many customers and staff find CCTV reassuring as the presence of CCTV is known to be a deterrent to some criminals. If used correctly, the footage can be used as evidence in court.

CCTV can also be used to assist in investigations, for example for accidents or thefts. This can prevent malicious claims against companies, for example if someone attempts to push a trolley up an unsuitable escalator despite having clearly seen the signage prohibiting this action. CCTV cannot, however, be used to spy on people.



All businesses must register their systems with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO regulate the use of CCTV systems and storage of all personal data via the Data Protection Act 2018.

At each entry point to the premises, there must be signage stating that CCTV is in operation, as well as stating the name and number of the responsible person. Only approved and trained persons can view live footage.

Storage of the footage must be secure and the images must only be retained for the time period stated on the approval. This is usually 28 days, but approved time periods may vary.

CCTV must not be used where people are likely to be in a state of undress, e.g. the toilet cubicle.

Limitations of using CCTV

The use of CCTV can frighten some people, as they may feel that their privacy is being violated. Some people will even avoid certain areas because they do not want their image to be captured.

The cost of CCTV equipment has decreased significantly over the last 10 years, however the initial outlay for good and sufficient equipment can still be cost prohibitive for some businesses.

Poorly positioned cameras are more likely to be damaged prior to the occurrence of an illegal act. A camera cannot prevent crime, and a damaged/vandalised camera cannot do anything.

The capability of the CCTV operator, and their familiarity with blind spots or poor lighting, is key when looking to gain footage that is acceptable for use in court and for maintaining the continuity of evidence.

Although a CCTV system needs a human being in order to be fully effective, sometimes that person may use the cameras for the unauthorised monitoring of friends or even just someone they like to look at. This is misuse of the equipment and is illegal in many cases.