



WORKING AS A SECURITY GUARD

There are many ads in the newspaper and on the internet promising a great career and good pay as a security guard. This is not often the reality. Many security guards receive low pay, no benefits and have little protection on the job. Understand the requirements of your job and know your rights. It's up to you to stay safe and be aware of bad employers or training scams.

TRAINING AND LICENCING - WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Do I need a security guard licence?

Yes. If you are a security guard, private investigator, bodyguard, bouncer or loss prevention personnel, the law requires you to have a valid licence. You can be charged if you are working without a valid licence under the Private Security and Investigative Services Act, 2005. You are responsible for getting the licence, not your employer. This means you can change employers and not have to renew your licence. You are also responsible for renewing your licence before it expires. As of January 30th, 2012 security guard licences are valid for 2 years.

Employers or potential employers can find out if you have a licence by contacting the Private Security and Investigative Services Branch or looking at the on-line registry which lists all licence numbers. Don't worry it doesn't list your name or private information!

Am I eligible for a licence?

Before you enroll in a training program or apply for the licence, you must be eligible:

- Are you older than 18 years of age?
- Can you legally work in Canada?
- Do you have a criminal record?

There are over 80 offences that may prevent you from getting a licence. Information on getting a pardon can be found through the National Parole Board at 1-800-518-8817.

Do I have to take a training course?

Yes. As of April 15th, 2010, you must take a training course and are required to pass the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services' exam before you can apply for a security guard licence. If you fail the exam, you have to pay for it again. Once you pass the exam, you may apply for a licence. Names of all students who pass the test will be sent to the Ministry.

Keep track of your expenses: the training program fee, exam fee, licence fee, and your uniform. You may be able to claim these expenses on your annual income tax return and reduce the income tax you have to pay.

Make sure that your course includes First Aid and CPR training. These skills are required to complete the general training and qualify for a licence.

PROTECT YOURSELF!

Not all training programs are the same. Many agencies require that you pay them in order to get security guard training and even "guarantee" employment. A training program should be approved by the **Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services**. Only the businesses listed on their website can give you the required training and help you make an appointment for the exam at a registered examination test centre. Beware of false promises or training that does not prepare you properly to pass the test.



If you are an employee of an agency or company, and not unionized or self-employed, you are covered under the Employment Standards Act (ESA). This is the law that covers workers in Ontario, including security guards. The Ministry of Labour is the governing body that enforces the ESA and the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA). A worker can file a complaint against their boss here.

Call 1-800-531-5551 or go to their website at www.labour.gov.on.ca

BASIC RIGHTS

Are you being paid minimum wage?

You must be paid at least minimum wage for every hour you work. As an employee you are also entitled to overtime pay, vacation pay and public holiday pay. Contact S.W.E.A.C for more details.

My boss pays me in cash.

Is this legal?

Some security guards, often night club security, are paid in cash. This is legal, **HOWEVER** your boss **MUST** provide you with a record of pay or "pay stub" every time you are paid. You may not be eligible for Employment Insurance or other benefits if you are not provided with this record.

Are you getting a break?

Every worker is entitled to a 30 minute break, or two 15 minute breaks. These are unpaid and provided for every 5 hours worked.

3-hour minimum.

If you are called into work for a shift, you must be paid for at least 3 hours if you are sent home early. This is only if you were scheduled to work more than 3 hours that day.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Are you covered by the Workers Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)?

WSIB may pay a portion of your wages if you are injured on the job and not able to work. This is important protection to have. Normally, the company or agency who issues your paycheque pays the WSIB premiums. Ask your boss if they provide this coverage. Not all companies have to. Find out more by contacting WSIB at 1-800-387-0750 or www.wsib.on.ca.

Be safe on the job.

Many security guards are put in dangerous situations as part of the job. You may be expected to apprehend a shoplifter or trespasser or even stop a fight at a night club. A good training program will ensure that you know what to do in these situations. It's not only important to protect yourself, but to ensure you do not harm anyone unintentionally by using force. Security guards have unintentionally injured and even killed people while on the job due to excessive force. It's not worth it. Make sure you know what to do.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Some security guards complain that companies choose guards for certain locations based on their race or age for example. If you feel you are being treated differently due to your age, race, gender, or another human rights ground, call the Human Rights Legal Support Clinic at 1-866-625-5179. They can help you determine if you are facing discrimination.

PROTECT YOURSELF!

Keep records of the dates and times you work and the site location. If there is a problem later on, this can be a useful record to calculate what may be owing to you.

GET SUPPORT!

Contact the Sudbury Workers Education and Advocacy Centre for more information on your rights.

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