

## **JOB PROFILE: SECURITY OFFICER**

### **WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?**

Security officers, or security guards, make sure that buildings, valuables or people are safe and secure. They help prevent theft and damage, and deal with emergencies.

As a security officer, you could work for a range of organisations and your role could vary depending on the industry you work in. Your duties could include:

- patrolling, securing and monitoring premises, sometimes with the aid of closed circuit television (CCTV)
- supervising on the door for a large organisation (check the Door Supervisor profile for details)
- guarding cash or other valuables in transit in a security vehicle
- airport security, which involves searching aircraft, passengers and luggage and guarding the airport boundaries.

You would need to keep accurate records and when necessary, write short reports for use by the police or courts. Your duties could involve customer care, signing-in visitors, giving directions and working with guard dogs (check the Dog Handler profile for details).

### **HOURS AND ENVIRONMENT**

You could work long hours, up to 48 hours a week, sometimes with additional overtime. Evening and shift work is very common.

Some jobs involve driving, and for cash-in-transit work you will spend much of your time in a security van. You may work on your own or in a small team.

You would usually wear a uniform and protective clothing, especially for cash-in-transit work.

### **SKILLS AND INTERESTS**

You would need:

- a mature and responsible attitude to work
- honesty and integrity
- a polite and helpful manner
- reasonable levels of physical fitness
- the ability to write short reports and follow written instructions
- confidence to challenge or tackle people when necessary
- the ability to use your initiative and make quick decisions to deal with unexpected situations
- the ability to work with technical equipment, such as CCTV.

### **ENTRY**

You do not usually need formal academic qualifications to start work as a security officer, however, a good general standard of education would be helpful. Previous experience working in the police or armed forces will give you an advantage when looking for work.

To work as a contracted security officer or guard in England and Wales you need a Security Industry Authority (SIA) licence; check Training for details.

Employers will carry out checks on your personal and work history for up to ten years, and you will need to declare any criminal convictions.

## TRAINING

As a new security officer, you will receive on-the-job training and supervision from your employer. Extra training may be available to help you gain skills in areas such as dog handling and first aid.

You may need to hold a Security Industry Authority (SIA) licence. This currently depends on whether you are an employee or a contractor.

### Employee, working in-house

As a security officer directly employed to carry out duties for your employer, on premises managed and operated by your employer (not contracted out to a customer), you do not need to be licensed by the SIA. Licensing in this area is under review.

### Contractor, working for a third-party

As a security officer employed by a contractor or agency to work for a customer of that agency, you need an SIA front-line licence. To qualify for this you need:

- to be at least aged 18
- to satisfy identity and criminal record checks
- to have completed relevant SIA approved training.

SIA training takes around four days, and can be completed before you begin work or as part of your initial induction when you start in your first post. If you already have a security qualification you may be exempt from part of the course. Check the SIA website for details of awarding bodies.

### Other SIA licences

CCTV operation – if you use CCTV equipment as part of your work, you may need an additional SIA licence.

If part of your work involves guarding valuables in transit, you may need an SIA Cash and Valuables in Transit

(CVIT) licence. Check the SIA website for more details.

### Additional training

You could also work towards qualifications such as NVQ Level 2 in Providing Security Services, and City & Guilds Certificate for Security Guards or Security Practitioner.

Skills for Security offer a range of courses relevant to the security industry, including a level two Security Practitioner Training Programme. To help you move into security management, they also run a security supervisor training programme. Check their website for details.

The International Professional Security Association runs security induction, supervisory management and specialist professional development courses. Check their website for details.

## OPPORTUNITIES

Job opportunities are increasing throughout the country. Employers range from large organisations to small, local, private security firms. It is important to look for a reputable company, who will give you training and reasonable pay and conditions. Many security companies are registered with the **British Security Industry Association (BSIA)** and the **International Professional Security Association (IPSA)**.

With experience, you could progress to senior or chief security officer, then supervisor. With additional qualifications you could go into security management or training, or go on to set up your security company.

## ANNUAL INCOME

- Starting salaries can be between £12,000 to £15,000 a year.

- Experienced officers can earn around £20,800.

*Figures are intended as a guideline only.*

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

### **Skills for Security (Incorporating SITO)**

Security House  
Barbourne Road  
Worcester  
WR1 1RS  
Tel: 0845 075 0111  
<http://www.skillsforsecurity.org.uk>

### **International Professional Security Association (IPSA)**

Northumberland House Business  
Centre  
11, The Pavement  
Popes Lane  
Ealing  
London  
W5 4NG  
Tel: 020 8832 7417  
<http://www.ipsa.org.uk>

### **Security Industry Authority (SIA)**

PO Box 1293  
Liverpool  
L69 1AX  
Tel: 0844 892 1025  
<http://www.the-sia.org.uk>

### **British Security Industry Association (BSIA)**

Security House  
Barbourne Road  
Worcester  
WR1 1RS  
Tel: 01905 21464  
<http://www.bsia.co.uk>