



Security Industry Authority

Working in the Private Security Industry: A guide for disabled people

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Why should I work in private security?

Private security operatives play a vital role in protecting society. They are the security guard at the entrance to your local supermarket, the door supervisor at your favourite nightclub, the armoured van guard carrying the locked box of cash into your bank and the CCTV operator at your local shopping mall. Private security operatives keep people safe by preventing and tackling crimes that can range from theft to serious violence. They also have an increasing role in protecting us from terrorism. Alert private security might deter a terrorist attack while private security operatives are likely to be first on the scene to help if an attack occurs.

These are jobs with lots of variety. You could be guarding the stage at a festival, patrolling a city centre or acting as a bodyguard to the CEO of an international corporation.

Can I work in private security if I have a disability?

Disabled people can and do work in private security.

You will need particular skills, abilities and knowledge to work in private security. The ability to be calm and professional, particularly under pressure, are important. So is reliability, vigilance, good judgment and strong communication skills. Physical abilities can be necessary for some jobs, for example, to enable you to patrol an area or escort out of a nightclub someone who is violent. However, there are different types of jobs in the private security industry and lots of different places where you could be doing them. This means that disabled people can find a job in private security that is right for them.

This booklet is to give information about the different roles in private security so that you can see which roles might be best for you. It summarises how to get the licence you need to work in particular private security jobs.

In-house and contracted security

There are two categories of private security employer. You need to understand the difference because to work in one category requires a licence from the Security Industry Authority (SIA) and the other doesn't.

If you are employed as in-house security you will be providing security directly for your employer. For example, a store detective who is employed directly by a department store to deter or catch shoplifters.

If you are employed as contracted security you are employed by a private security business. This business has contracts with other businesses or organisations to provide security services to them. For example, a bank hires a private security company to transport cash for it. This private security company employs you to drive an armoured van and deliver the bank's cash.

You need an SIA licence to work in contracted security, but not if you work as in-house security. The exception to this is door supervision. Door supervisors and vehicle immobilisers need an SIA licence whether they are in-house or contract.

SIA licensing is explained later on in this booklet.

Different types of private security jobs

Cash and Valuables in Transit

Cash and Valuables in Transit (CVIT for short) involves transporting and guarding cash and/or valuables against being destroyed, damaged or stolen. You collect the cash and/or valuables from one place and then deliver them somewhere else in an armoured car. You might be doing this for banks, shops, local authorities or anyone else who needs valuable property to be moved safely and securely.

Vigilance is very important in a CVIT job. You have to be able to spot potential dangers and act to reduce the chance of robbery, e.g. by choosing the best routes and places to stop.

You also need to be calm and professional, particularly when under pressure.

As driving is a big part of this job, you will need a valid driving licence. If you are working for a private security business, you will also have to have an SIA licence.

Day-to-day tasks in a CVIT job include making deliveries (often in heavy, secure boxes) and checking that these deliveries have been correctly handled. This may include talking to the people you are collecting valuables items from and the people you are delivering them to. You may be planning routes for your daily



pick-ups and deliveries. You may also have to take care of the armoured car you drive to make sure it is roadworthy and clean.

In a CVIT job you need to be able to regularly talk over a radio with a depot. If there was an emergency, you need to be able to talk over the radio or phone with the police and emergency services.

CVIT jobs can be very structured. There are routines and procedures that you must follow. You need to be able to keep to time so that your deliveries arrive when they are meant to arrive.

Although you might spend a lot of time on deliveries, there are times that you might be asked to help out in other areas such as in a vault.

An SIA licence is required if you do a CVIT job for a security contractor.

Security Guarding

A security guard's job is essentially to protect people and property. A big part of this is taking action to reduce the chances of damage to property, theft, and harm to people. For example, this can mean checking ID and bags so that only the people who are allowed to enter can come into a building. It could mean patrolling an area on foot or by car, or even with a guard dog. It may involve going around a building to check that doors are locked. A security guard might also report theft to the police and then give evidence in court on what has happened. Sometimes just having a security guard on duty can discourage crimes such as theft or vandalism.

Security guards often have a key role in the event of an emergency such as a fire. They help to evacuate a building and speak to the emergency services.

Security guards have an important role to play in preventing terrorist attacks. Terrorists will often engage in hostile reconnaissance – seeing how effective the security is and looking for vulnerabilities they can exploit in an attack. Security guards need to keep an eye out for hostile reconnaissance and report it if they see it. Good security might discourage terrorists from launching an attack.

There is a lot of variety in what security guarding jobs can involve. You might be guarding an empty warehouse at night, welcoming people to an office building or guarding an A&E department in a hospital.

Depending on the job, there might be a lot of interaction with the public or very little contact. However, good communication skills are always important as you will need to write reports and use a radio.



Security guarding jobs might require you to patrol and watch an area for hours at a time.

These jobs offer a lot of flexibility and may involve shift work. The hours can be long, with shifts of 12 hours or more not uncommon.

An SIA licence is required if you are a security guard working for a security contractor.

Public Space Surveillance (CCTV)

When most people think about what public space surveillance involves, they probably imagine a person sitting in a dark room watching a bank of screens showing live pictures from CCTV cameras in public spaces and buildings. These jobs can involve that, but there is much more to these roles than most people probably imagine.

Public space surveillance by CCTV is essentially about preventing and detecting crime and disorder. It's also about spotting potential threats to the public such as fire and terrorism. A good public space surveillance operator can quickly identify an issue and report it to the police or other emergency services. This allows the police or other emergency services to respond quickly and so might save lives.

You may be required to identify and keep vital evidence of crimes that might later be used in court.

The location of public space surveillance work can vary. You might be based in a central control room a long way from the actual cameras, a small control room on the site itself or at the reception of an office or factory. What you are monitoring varies too. It could be a commercial property, shop, high street, school or college, hospital, train station or lots of other locations.

These jobs are indoors and involving sitting for a long time. You need to be able to use video screens and be computer literate. It's also crucial that you are someone who can be alert, observant and able to concentrate for long periods of time.

You need to understand body language and people's behaviour so that you can



monitor crowds and identify trouble. Once you have spotted something suspicious, you need to be able to track specific people using the cameras.

Good communication skills are needed for when you alert the police or other emergency services. You also need good communication skills for giving evidence in court and staying in touch with colleagues over the phone or radio.

This means that these jobs require people who are calm in difficult or highly pressured situations.

Public space surveillance jobs involve shift work. They may involve working in the evenings and into the early hours as well as at weekends. You might be doing this as part of a team or on your own.

An SIA licence is required if you are monitoring public spaces in order to deter and/or detect public disorder and are working for a security contractor.

Door Supervision

Door supervisors work at licences premises (i.e. venues that have a licence to sell alcohol to drink on the premises). This includes pubs, nightclubs, sports venues, concerts and festivals.

The job of a door supervisor is to protect the venue, the customers and their colleagues. A big part of this is refusing entry to anyone they consider unsuitable and removing from the venue people who are behaving badly. This can involve checking tickets as well as checking ID to make sure no one under-age gets in. It can also mean only letting in people who keep to the dress code. As a door supervisor, you would check that people are not carrying harmful things like drugs or weapons. This means sometimes doing body searches and you might use metal detectors too.

Preventing disorder is a big part of being a door supervisor. Door supervisors patrol inside and outside venues in order to spot arguments and fights and illegality like drug dealing. This means being observant and knowing how to read a situation. Good door supervisors can put people off causing trouble or trying to do anything illegal.

Door supervisors operate in small teams that keep in contact by radio. Door supervisors call the police if there is serious trouble and work with the police if someone has to be arrested.

The venues door supervisors work in are often noisy. If it's somewhere like a nightclub, then the venue may be dark and have flashing and/or strobe lights.



Door supervisors often need to manage crowds and queues. If there is an emergency like a fire, they will be responsible for evacuating the building and helping people to safety.

As a door supervisor, you will sometimes have to deal with people who are drunk or under the influence of drugs. There will also be times when you have to deal with people who are violent, including towards you and your colleagues. Unfortunately, people can sometimes also be unpleasant and rude towards door supervisors. You need to be able to keep calm and have good communication skills so that you can defuse situations and keep the peace.

If a door supervisor cannot defuse a situation, then they may have to use physical intervention. This involves using direct or indirect force to limit another person's movements. This can be done by holding, directing or restraining them. You would be trained on physical intervention as part of the qualification you must get to apply for an SIA door supervisor licence. To get this qualification you must do a physical demonstration of what you have learned about physical intervention. The training provider has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled people to do this training, including the demonstration during the test. However, if the training provider feels that it cannot make reasonable adjustments, then you will not be able to get the qualification and so cannot become a door supervisor.

A door supervisor may sometimes need to help people who are vulnerable, like young people or people at risk of sexual exploitation.

Door supervisors will need to know what to do in a situation in which customers might need first aid.

Being a door supervisor may require you to stay at a door for several hours at a time and in all weathers.

A lot of door supervisor work is in the evening and may carry on working into the early hours of the morning. Work is often at weekends and part-time work is common.

You need an SIA licence to work as a door supervisor whether you are employed directly by the venue (in-house security) or if you are working for a business that sends you to guard the venue (contracted security).

Close Protection

Close protection officers are often called bodyguards. Their job is to provide physical protection to a person and sometimes to several people. The person that they are protecting is referred to as the “principle.” As a close protection officer you would protect the principle from harm and quickly get them to safety if they were threatened. These threats might include violence, kidnap, robbery and harassment. There are several areas of specialism within close protection, including celebrity protection, VIP and high net individual worth protection, maritime protection and hostile environment protection.

Films and TV give the impression that close protection work is glamorous. While it can be exciting and interesting, it can often be more mundane. It can involve things like planning routes, searching rooms and buildings the principle is visiting, searching vehicles and escorting the principle.

Close protection work is demanding and you are likely to need to be physically fit to do it. It requires you to be calm under pressure, reliable and trustworthy. You need to be able to quickly identify threats, make decisions and take appropriate action. Good communications skills and a high standard of professionalism are also important.

Flexibility is required as you may need to follow principles at any time of day or night, wherever they are going. This means that you may travel a lot, sometimes internationally.



A benefit of this is that close protection work allows you to see things that you would not normally see.

A lot of close protection officers are ex-military or ex-police as they have skills and experience that are useful in the job.

The companies that employ close protection officers may expect that you know self-defence and other combat techniques. This is not covered in SIA specified training and you do not need this training to apply for a licence. You may therefore have had to pick up these skills elsewhere (e.g. the military) or get them before you start applying for jobs.

It is likely that you will be expected to be able to drive to a high standard and to use a radio.

You will frequently work as part of a team with other close protection officers.

Vehicle Immobilisation

Vehicle immobilisation (sometimes called wheel clamping) is only legal on private land in Northern Ireland. This means that private vehicle immobilisation is a very small industry.

Vehicle immobilisation involves:

- restricting the movement of vehicles, for example, using a wheel clamp;
- removing vehicles from a property, for example, towing a vehicle away;
- charging for the return of a vehicle that has been removed; and
- charging for removing something restricting the movement of a vehicle, for example, a wheel clamp.

Good communication skills and the ability to defuse potential conflicts are important. You will also need to be able to drive.

An SIA licence is required to do this job.



Key Holding

Key holding is about keeping any key (or similar device for operating a lock) safe and secure for someone who has paid for the key to be looked after. In practice, key holding can also involve:

- locking and unlocking a property as needed;
- going to a property if the intruder or fire alarm goes off to make sure things are alright. This can involve calling the emergency services if they are needed and securing the property if it has been broken into;
- letting people into the property, for example, builders;
- going to the property to collect deliveries; and
- providing a key if the client has lost their copy.

Employers are likely to need you to be able to drive, and have a valid driving licence, because of they may need you to visit properties. Being able to drive is not a requirement of having an SIA licence.

This job is likely to involve a lot of routine and you will need to be good at following procedure.

You require an SIA licence to do this job.

Management

As well as the frontline jobs described in this booklet, it is also possible to work in management in the private security industry. This could be managing any of the activities described here.

Directors, managers and supervisors of staff whose job requires them to have an SIA licence should also have a licence issued by the SIA.

How SIA licensing works

This booklet has been written by the Security Industry Authority (SIA). It is a public body whose job is to regulate the private security industry in the United Kingdom. A big part of how we do this is to make decisions on whether or not to give licences to people who want to work in particular jobs in the private security industry. These jobs are the ones described in this booklet. It is illegal to work in one of these jobs without an SIA licence.

There are two types of licence – front line and non-front line.

A front line licence is needed if doing licensable activity – door supervision, security guarding, public space surveillance (CCTV), CVIT and close protection. Front line licence holders are issued with credit card sized plastic cards.

A non-front line licence is needed if you are managing, supervising and/or employing individuals who do licensable activity and are not doing this activity yourself. This includes directors of companies. Non-front line licences cover key holding. They are issued as letters. Someone who holds a front line licence can do non-front line activities without needing a separate licence.

To qualify for a licence to work in any front line licensable activity, you must:

- be aged 18 or over;
- pass an identity check;
- pass a criminal record check;
- have the appropriate, SIA recognised, licence-linked qualification (see next section for more information); and
- have the right to work in the United Kingdom (UK).

To qualify for a licence to operate in a non-front line role you must:

- be aged 18 or over;
- pass an identity check; and
- pass a criminal record check.

There is a fee for processing all licence applications. The fee is payable whether a licence is granted or refused. No part of the licence fee is refundable. The current fee is set out on the SIA website (www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk).

If you pay your own licence fee, you may be able to claim tax relief against your taxable income.

We will take into account any recent mental health problems where you have been subject to compulsory detention or to other compulsory measures in the five years prior to your application. We will not seek out information about any mental health problems which have not been subject to compulsory measures or resulted in compulsory detention.

If you have had any recent mental health problems requiring detention or other compulsory measures, you will be required to provide a current medical report outlining the condition and any ongoing treatment(s). The report must be from the treating psychiatrist, psychologist, therapist or a general practitioner who is in regular contact with you and has monitored your condition.

Licences last for 3 years (apart from vehicle immobiliser licences, which last 1 year). They can be renewed by applying again.

Getting a qualification

You need an SIA recognised qualification in order to get a frontline SIA licence to work as a security guard, door supervisor, close protection officer, CIVT operative or vehicle immobiliser. The qualification must be achieved before you can apply for a licence. You do not need a qualification to get a frontline key holding licence.

What you have to learn and how long the training lasts varies depending on which qualification you are trying for. You can find out more details on what the training involves on our website –

<https://www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk/Pages/licensing-training.aspx>

We have written a training specification for each qualification. This sets out what you need to know in order to pass the training. Awarding organisations then use these training specification to create qualifications. The training and testing for these qualifications is then done by training providers. These training providers are independent of us.

The Equality Act 2010 requires training providers to make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled people to do training and gain qualifications. If a training provider decides that it cannot make a reasonable adjustment, then this is an issue you need to take up with the training provider.

To get the door supervisor qualification you need to do a physical demonstration of the physical intervention skills you have learned. This is in the qualification as it is essential that door supervisors have the skills needed to protect themselves, colleagues and members of the public from violence. If you are uncertain whether you will be able to do this physical demonstration of what you have learnt, then you should speak to the training provider. They will decide whether they can make a reasonable adjustment to enable you to do this aspect of the training.

Getting a job

Having an SIA licence doesn't guarantee you a job in the private security industry. You have to look for these jobs in the same way as you look for any other job.

Employers in the private security industry have the same legal duties as other employers. This includes a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled people to work for them. This could include changing working hours, changing the location where you work or providing special equipment. Further information on reasonable adjustments is on the website of the Equality and Human Rights Commission – <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en>

An example of how an employer can make a reasonable adjustment

Tim got his first SIA licence when he was 18. He was hired as a security guard by a large security company and the first event at which he worked was a major sporting event. However, when he started working nights he struggled to stay alert and to function. It was only when he was diagnosed with mild epilepsy that he understood why working nights made him feel awful. People with epilepsy often need a constant sleeping pattern to reduce the risk of seizures, to function well and to feel alright.

Tim told his employer about his epilepsy. His employer moved him off nights and started offering him day shifts.

“My employer was really understanding and flexible. I've really benefited from the adjustment and it's now been more than two years since I had a seizure.”

– Tim

If the help you need to do a job isn't covered by reasonable adjustments, then you may be able to get help from Access to Work. To get help from Access to Work you need to have a paid job, or be about to start one or return to one. You will be offered support based on your needs. This might include a grant to help cover the costs of practical support such as help getting to and from work or special equipment. This grant doesn't have to be paid back and won't affect other benefits you receive. However, you might not get this grant if you already receive certain benefits.

If you are applying for jobs in the private security industry, you can give information about Access to Work to prospective employers to show them how you might be supported to do a job.

Access to Work does not apply if you live in the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man. There is also a different system in Northern Ireland.

Further information on Access to Work is on the Gov.UK website – <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>

Additional information

Security Industry Authority

<https://www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk>

Setting a Better Future: A BSIA guide to careers in the private security industry

A guide to working the private security industry written by the British Security Industry Association.

<https://www.bsia.co.uk/Portals/4/Publications/148-securing-a-better-future.pdf>

Skills for Security

The sector skills body and standards setting organisation for the private security industry.

<http://skillsforsecurity.org.uk/>

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Great Britain's national equality body. Its job is to make Britain fairer by safeguarding and enforcing the laws that protect people's rights to fairness, dignity and respect.

Remploy

A private company that aims to enable disabled people to access employment and careers. It helps disabled people prepare for, find and move into work.

<http://www.remploy.co.uk/jobs>

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