



YOU CAN REQUEST A PACK NOW

March 2006 deadline for guard, CIT, CCTV licences

Contract security and cash in transit guards and others have until March 20, 2006 to get a Security Industry Authority licence - but you can start the application process now, says the SIA.

The SIA has been taking licence application pack requests for guards since January 10. That March 2006 date is when it will be a legal requirement for four new licensable security sectors to hold an SIA licence: contract security guarding; cash and valuables in transit; CCTV public space surveillance; and close protection. CCTV operators can

start to apply for a pack from June 27, and close protection people from September 1. The SIA says that spreading the licensing process will ensure businesses continue to run smoothly while employees go through the licensing process. The SIA reports it will also introduce a system for businesses to ask for application forms on behalf of their employees and to return them to the SIA in bulk. To get an SIA licence, applicants will need to attend an approved training course, attain a nationally recognised qualification and pass identity and criminal records checks. Anyone involved in the sectors - employees, managers, supervisors and directors of

security companies - will need to be licensed. Licensing does not include in-house security staff, though last year the SIA did look at whether to close what some in the industry see as a possible loophole, or a potential source of confusion. From February 28, it will be a criminal offence to work as a door supervisor in the South East (bar Greater London) without an SIA licence. Previous local authority licences will no longer apply. London is the last region where door licences come in, the deadline there being April 11. The SIA does add that the deadline dates may be subject to change. Last year's roll-out by regions of licences for door staff went three months behind schedule in some places. □

● You can e-mail for a guide to the limited bulk application process from bulkapplications@the-sia.org.uk. Details will also be posted on the SIA website www.the-sia.org.uk

You've worked in a war zone? Ask Red Cross for a reference

Inevitably, now that licences are coming on stream for various sectors of the private security industry, the process throws up queries. Some are aired in a recent civil service document.

Consultancies sending security staff to work in hot-spots like Iraq have worried (like Control Risks Group, see our November issue) that those contracted staff would not be able to get a SIA licence to work once back in the UK, because the criminal record check required would not run to such lawless places. The Home Office's 'partial regulatory impact assessment' published in November offers no succour. It says that where applicants have been based for six continuous months or more overseas in the last five years, they need to provide a criminal record certificate from the country concerned. If it's a war zone without authorities, the SIA will 'exceptionally consider' written

evidence from the likes of the Red Cross and United Nations. "A reference from a private employer will not be sufficient."

Web info

As for the criminality check, whether an applicant passes depends on whether offences are serious, significant, or minor; and whether it happened less than two, between two and five, or more than five years ago. In borderline cases the SIA proposes a 'points' system. If in doubt - and the application fee is non-refundable - you can self-assess if you will pass the criminality test on the SIA website www.the-sia.org.uk

Other points from the document: Two awarding bodies are authorised to provide security guard qualifications required for licensing: Edexcel and NOCN (with SITO). City & Guilds and NCFE plan to come in.

● Still no date for when Scotland comes in with England and Wales:

Scotland is expected 'in due course'.

● Estimated numbers in private security sectors: guards, 125,000 to 140,000; cash in transit staff, 15,000; close protection operatives, 1,000.

● Not only does the SIA stand by its September 2004 decision to let a door man's licence allow the holder to work as a security guard, it does not rule out other, similar allowances: "The SIA will take a pragmatic approach when looking at cross sector entitlements."

● One such cross-over may be in key-holding, as the SIA is still working out how to licence the key-holder sector, but the document adds: "The industry estimates that 97pc of key-holders activity is carried out by security guarding companies. Dedicated key holder response companies carry out the remaining 3pc."

● "Prosecution for one or more of the offences created by the Act will be an action of last resort."

● The SIA has set up, by region, compliance and investigation teams, eventually to number about 50 staff. □



HAPPY

'The new site is much more secure than our previous location from which we had buses stolen. Here we have safe overnight parking, security barriers, fencing and CCTV.' - Stephen Smith, MD of First's bus operations in Essex, happy with a secured by design new depot.



GUARDING DIRECTOR'S VIEW

Licences to bring professionalism

Wilson Chowdhry, director of guarding company AA Security, tells how his firm has put in the hours before Security Industry Authority licences come into his sector, and gives his views on the effects of licences .

In regards to the forthcoming SIA licensing requirements we have followed a systematic and very pragmatic approach. Initially I attended various training courses allowing myself to become a qualified instructor approved by SITO. Following this I had sourced a training room which I have had approved by SITO and I now operate a SITO-approved City and Guilds training and examination centre. Sourcing contracts with the Employment Centre and the Learning and Skills Council, I have received funding from the Government to not only train my own staff via the 'profit for learning scheme' but also unemployed individuals under the Job Plus initiative with the Employment Service. [The company has recently gained the Employment Service's 'Positive about disabled people' logo.]

Trainers and training

I now have a team of three qualified and mobile trainers able to train in any location providing all costs are met. I would like to offer these services to other companies. All our officers as a standard are put through the relevant BJT [basic job training]; we are qualified to train for the following SITO BJTs: door supervising, retail security, static and patrol guarding; and conflict management (SITO-Maybo). All officers follow our career development plan and complete the 'Professional Security Officer' NVQ level two equivalent City and Guilds examination. During this time we also train all staff to 'appointed person' level, the one-day first aid course.



SIA licences (pictured are sample cards) are coming to contract guarding over the next 12 months

Photo courtesy of the SIA

Web info

We have kept ourselves up to date with all the SIA information that comes via their website; in fact we applied to be part of their Approved Contractor Scheme proposed standard review team. Link Up is an organisation which approves companies that work for the rail industry. To register requires a stringent background search, financial search, a review of your health and safety practices and procedures, accreditations, and training strategies to list a few criteria. We have been members for over four years now.

This prompted Professional Security to ask: clearly licensing requires a lot of work by you - but that you have gone to such trouble suggests you feel it's worthwhile? Is part of the reason you do it, to recruit and retain good staff? It's often said that it's difficult to recruit in London and the south

east (and the SIA licence requirements might make it even harder); is that your experience? AA offers door supervisor and guarding BJTs - do you find any cross-over between the two? Bearing in mind that last year the SIA said a door staff licence could allow someone to work as a security guard, but not the other way around. And finally - how do you see SIA licences affecting guarding in your part of the world?

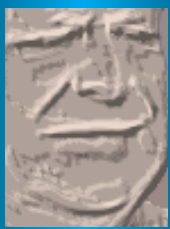
Our staff turnover is less than 10 per cent; for the last five years it has ranged from 13 per cent to 10 per cent and seems to be dropping rather than increasing as we grow.

Monthly meetings

The reasons for this are the fact that we dedicate so much time to enhancing the work environment and conditions of our staff. We have attained Investors in People. During the attaining of this accreditation we developed procedures such as a newsletter, appraisals, monthly meetings at our offices and on site, improvements within the remit of our supervisors and their procedures during site visits, quarterly general meetings (as opposed to AGMs), Christmas parties with commendations given and incentives such as employee of the season (quarterly). During our QGM we select different staff from the security officers to attend so that all members understand the ethos behind the company and feel not only an integral part but realise that their input is valued. Our sites all have an agenda book which allows all staff to recommend topics for discussion within each QGM.

Employee respect

We have found this communication cycle and good vetting procedures such as the 10 year vet, criminal record check (only required for sensitive sites such as schools currently, however we have enforced this since inception), passport and address proof verification and all necessary examination and health documentation (medical test and eye tests for those working with computers, overnight, or lone workers) have enabled us to gain the



UNHAPPY

'The [fashion] industry is spending billions of pounds in fighting the illegal use of trademarks.' -

Rose Marie Bravo, chief executive of clothes firm Burberry, on how 'chavs' (young lower-class folk) are wearing the posh brand ... possibly counterfeits.



CONTINUED ... FROM PAGE 30

respect and commitment from our employees. This is coupled with the fact that we pay rates above the national minimum wage and keep employees in constant work. We are fully compliant with BS 7499 and BS 7858 and have put ourselves forward for NSI Inspection. We are also accredited to BS EN ISO 9001 2000 and comply fully with the requirements of this standard.

Law should help

I do believe the SIA legislation should help in reducing the amount of rogue security companies and improve the professionalism of other companies. I believe that rogue elements that underpay their staff will not be able to cope with the increase in pay rates within the industry due to the change in view that security officers are semi-professional individuals rather than unskilled labour. With the strict penalties for non-compliance and the fact that many rogue companies have not addressed the issue in a positive or pragmatic way we should find many of these terminating business operations. I am disdainful regarding the fact that in-house security individuals are not being included/subjected to the licensing and fear that the extra cost to security companies, could mean that we price ourselves out of the market, with a growing number of in-house initiatives commencing in the security market.

Door 'travesty'

My view on the fact that door supervisors are able to carry out static work is that this is a travesty. When carrying out conflict management training it becomes aware that door supervisors view conflict and its resolution in a completely different way. I am not sure how suited a door supervisor would be at a reception

About the company

AA Security based in Ilford, Essex, are gold award members of on-site guarding audit body The Security Watchdog; and, on the dog-handling side, members of the British Institute of Professional Dog Trainers and the National Association of Security Dog Users. Visit www.aasecurity.co.uk



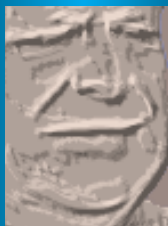
Pictured left to right: Wilson Chowdhry and Mayor Arthur Leggatt of Ilford at the presentation of AA Security's 'Positive about disabled people' logo

where decorum and patience is required. Don't get me wrong, door supervisors are full of good manners, when they want to be; however the nature of their work, and patrons to their workplaces, gives them a harder edge that would not be entirely conducive with reception work. Further training I feel would be a must. The conflict management unit for door supervisors is two days with a two-day course for the BJT. The retail security and static security training includes a three-day BJT with one day conflict management training unit. The important issues that are missing are the use of notebooks, specifics on patrolling and the importance of customer service. I believe individual training courses should be provided for each different type of work and I can tell you that officers trained in retail

security find it hard to understand static and patrol guarding and vice versa.

Should see improvement

In the east of London where there are a large number of rogue security officers I believe we should see an improvement of the image of security services. Our industry has attained a very poor image due to these elements, however the improved training and specific research into individuals hired for work should slowly eradicate this undesirable reputation. We should see a growth in the professional organisations including ourselves hopefully and non-uniformed security officers that cannot speak English should finally become an extinct breed (much like the dodo!).



UNHAPPY

'Knives are easily come by and easy to carry, and the problem is that once someone has been drinking alcohol, if they have a knife they might use it.' -

Del Singh, nightclub owner and chairman of Peterborough Centre Safe, which with Home Office money is using metal-detecting wands at PCS premises.