

Private security officer qualifications and selection criteria

[Law](#), [Security](#)



Security personnel whether armed or unarmed must be selected carefully. Priceless lives and countless millions in property are entrusted to them daily. This is the reason why the International Association of Chiefs of Police Private Security Liaison Committee came together to come up with minimum criteria for their selection. Each State was then given the freedom to add to these requirements making more stringent should it choose to do so.

This paper looks into the requirements for the State of Washington, and makes a comparison of the same with those laid out by the aforementioned committee. There are two categories of private security officers and these are armed and unarmed. The armed guards must meet the requirements set forth for the unarmed guards with a little extra. According to the set requirements set forth by the committee, any person desiring to join up with any private security firm must first of all be either a US citizen or have legal alien status.

This requirement is matched by the State of Washington (Revised Code of Washington, 2009). Each one should also be at least eighteen years of age unless they are applying for the armed position, for which they must have attained 21 years of age. This is also the same in Washington State. Whereas the committee makes the possession of a driver's license optional, the requirements for the State of Washington do not mention it at all. However, proper identification is required prior to getting a license although no mention is made of what the documents needed would be.

One is to produce the documents asked for in the application form given to them by the director of the company of employment (Revised Code of

Washington, 2009). According to the committee however, one must produce proof of residence by giving their address. He or she must also give their full names, date of birth, proof of citizenship and a social security number. In addition to this, the committee insists on two sets of finger prints while the State of Washington asks for one. The committee also asks for 2 passport sized photos.

These are not at all mentioned in the requirements for the State of Washington, but could be listed in the employers form. Criminal history cannot be ignored. The State of Washington is very strict on this aspect demanding that anyone desiring to be a private security guard not have been convicted of any crime at all in any jurisdiction. The director of licensing has the right to withhold any license if he or she judges it appropriate without considering the restoration of employment rights act, based on the applicant's criminal history (Revised Code of Washington, 2009).

The committee on the other hand requires that they be not convicted or plead guilty to a felony in any jurisdiction, a misdemeanor that involved moral turpitude, dishonest behavior, the use or possession of controlled substances and acts against government authorities. In the case of armed security guards an FBI check must be conducted. However this is left as optional for unarmed guards. The State of Washington carries out these checks using the Washington State Patrol first and then they forward to the FBI as well (Revised Code of Washington, 2009).

Additionally, one should not be declared incompetent by a court of law due to mental illness or a defect that has not been expunged or removed from their record. The State of Washington on the other hand says that should they have information that the person is unable to work for mental or physical reasons, they authorize a certified or licensed health professional to test the applicant's mental and/or physical ability (Revised Code of Washington, 2009). The committee further says that employment history must be fully disclosed with the last 7 years verified to the best of the company's ability.

Additionally, 3 personal references must be provided and checked and a recognized drug test carried out which the applicant must pass. Again, these requirements are not mentioned in the State of Washington requirements. Other suggested requirements include that the applicant must have at least completed a high school education or its equivalent, if he or she had been in the military prior to applying for the license, his or her military discharge records should be produced and also they must demonstrate mental and physical ability to perform their duties. For the armed applicants a psychological evaluation should be carried out.

None of these requirements are mentioned in the requirements set out by the State of Washington. Some different criteria set forth by the State of Washington include an application fee for both armed and unarmed officers, they must also have completed and passed the training requirements of the director of licensing as well as have received a letter of offer or be employed by a licensed security firm at the time of application. Regarding armed

security guards, the commission must have issued them a current firearms certificate before they can be licensed.

The license can also be in the form of an endorsement on their unarmed security guard license if the Director of licensing deems it fit (Revised Code of Washington, 2009). Due to sensitive nature of their work it is clear that private security guards should be people of high ethical standing. The selection criterion is able to judge this to a point, but the individual must have high integrity in order to carry out their duties as they should.

References

Washington State Legislature. (2009, January 9). Revised code of Washington. Retrieved March 25, 2009. <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?Cite=18.170&full=true>