



# Manpower Update Report

## Security Services Industry and Disciplined Services Sector

# 2025



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Security and Disciplined Services Training Board (SDTB) extends its sincere gratitude to the members of the focus group for their invaluable time and insights regarding the manpower situation in the Security Services industry. The perspectives provided by focus group members, along with data from leading recruitment platforms, have been essential in shaping the findings of this report.

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# INTRODUCTION

## Background

The Security and Disciplined Services Training Board (SDTB) of the Vocational Training Council (VTC) is appointed by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). According to its Terms of Reference, the SDTB is responsible for determining manpower demand of the security services industry, assessing whether the manpower supply matches manpower demand, and recommending to the VTC the development of Vocational and Professional Education and Training

(VPET) facilities to meet the assessed training needs. A new approach for collecting manpower information is adopted to enhance the effectiveness and better reflect the dynamics of the manpower situation in various industries.

Under the new approach, one full manpower survey, which collects companies' manpower data through questionnaires, is conducted every four years and is supplemented by two manpower updates through desk research and focus group meetings.

The SDTB completed its latest full manpower survey in 2022. The manpower update was conducted in 2024.

The contents of the manpower update reports are based on two information sources:

- (i) A focus group meeting collecting the views of industry experts on the latest development of the industry, its manpower and training needs, recruitment and retention issues, and suggested solutions for the challenges; and
- (ii) Desk research analysing recruitment advertisements, including the offered salaries, qualifications, and work experience requirements of different job levels of the industry.

## Objectives

The objectives of the manpower update are as follows:

- (i) To examine the latest trends and development;
- (ii) To explore the job market and training needs;
- (iii) To recognise recruitment challenges; and
- (iv) To recommend measures to meet the training needs and to ease the problem of manpower shortage.

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# METHODOLOGY

## Overview

With reference to the 2022 full manpower survey of the security services industry, this update report aims to provide qualitative descriptions of the recent development of the industry through focus group meetings, supplemented by quantitative findings from desk research.

## Focus Group Meeting

The focus group meeting is intended to collect the industry's view on the latest trend in manpower development, training needs, and recruitment difficulties, etc. Members participating in the focus groups are representatives from the following types of companies:

- (i) Type I- Security Guarding Services;
- (ii) Type II- Armoured Transportation Services; and
- (iii) Type III- Security Systems Installation/Maintenance/Repair/Design/Others.

Two focus group meetings, moderated by the SDTB Secretariat, was held in November 2024. The moderator

initiated the discussion with general

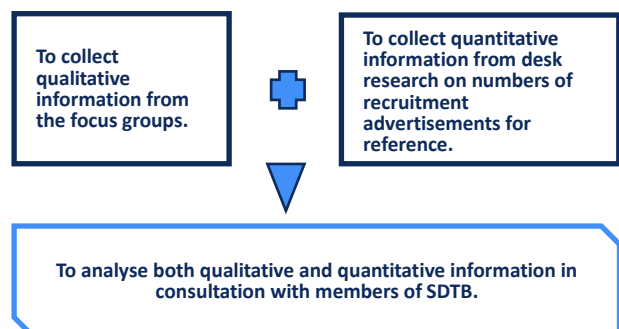
questions and probed into a more specific context to collect in-depth information on relevant topics in the discussion guide.

## Desk Research

An employment information system was developed to capture recruitment advertisements from CPjobs, CTgoodjobs and other major online recruitment portals. Recruitment records were collected between September 2023 and August 2024 for the industry. Information was mapped against the list of related companies under the Security and Guarding Services Industry Authority (SGSIA) and duplicated records were removed during the process. As a result, some 39,000 relevant recruitment records were used for analysis.

## Data Analysis

The analysis consists mainly of the following three steps:



# Limitations

As this report is not based on a comprehensive manpower survey, the findings and recommendations from the focus group meetings are primarily qualitative in nature. Therefore, the manpower update report emphasises trends in manpower rather than precise metrics. Job advertisement data was sourced from major recruitment websites and the Labour Department, excluding other channels such as social media or personal referrals. Consequently, no definitive correlation could be established between the number of recruitment advertisements observed and the employment figures recorded in the full manpower survey. Furthermore, since the data reflects only a snapshot of a specific period without historical context, it serves as supplementary reference information to the focus groups' findings and should not be directly compared to the results of a full manpower survey.



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# FINDINGS

The SDTB has identified several factors affecting the development of the industry to facilitate discussion by the focus groups. The focus group members were invited to give their views on relevant questions in relation to those factors to understand the influences on the recent development or changes in respective licensed types of security services companies in the industry.

## Manpower Situation of the Industry

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### Changing Consumption Patterns and Their Effects on the Security Services Industry

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With the full reopening of borders, Hong Kong residents increasingly travel to the Mainland for shopping and leisure during weekends and holidays. This shift in consumption habits has significantly impacted the security services industry, particularly in services like Cash-in-Transit (CIT) and retail security guarding.

The growing trend of spending in the Mainland, coupled with a decline in retail activity in Hong Kong, has resulted in the closure of numerous large chain stores. This has directly led to the loss

of key contracts for CIT services for security services companies. The shrinking retail market has placed considerable strain on CIT operations.

While online and mobile payment methods have gained prominence, cash usage, though less common, remains relevant in specific areas. Traditionally, a significant portion of Type II security services companies was centered around servicing currency exchange shops. However, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the permanent closure of many of these establishments, severely affecting this area of operations. These services companies have strategically adapted by focusing on providing specialised support for banks, particularly in ATM-related operations. This shift has driven companies to diversify their service offerings further, ensuring resilience and sustainability in an evolving market landscape.

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# Impact of Market Trends on Type I Security Services

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Type I security services companies have been impacted to varying extents by the evolving market trends. High-end clients, including financial institutions and data centres, have significantly reduced their staffing requirements. Over time, many clients have downsized their security needs, with some sites shifting from eight-hour to 12-hour shifts to manage costs more effectively. These changes have significantly affected Type I security services companies, as they adapt to the ongoing trends of downsizing and business closures.

The recent economic challenges, further exacerbated by the effects of COVID-19, have especially impacted the property security sector. Traditionally, owners' corporations relied on 24-hour security to maintain safety and peace of mind. However, during the pandemic, staff shortages and COVID-19-related absences left security posts vacant for extended periods, prompting many owners' corporations to reassess their security needs. As a result, many owners' corporations believed that 24-hour full-time security was no longer necessary, opting instead for a 12-hour day shift for security guards or

supplementing with additional CCTV cameras and access control systems. The financial benefits of using monitoring systems, as opposed to hiring full-time security guards, have made this approach more viable for many clients, illustrating the shifting dynamics in the security services industry.



# Adoption of Advanced Technology in the Industry

The security services industry has come to recognise the growing importance of advanced technology, not as a replacement for physical security guards but as a critical tool to address manpower shortages and enhance security operations. With the challenge of sourcing sufficient personnel becoming increasingly significant, security services companies are turning to technology to fill these gaps and ensure operational efficiency. For instance, in shopping malls, Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven tools, such as heat maps, have become vital for identifying crowd formations that security personnel might miss. These AI systems are capable of detecting sudden crowd build-ups more effectively than human staff, who may struggle to respond in a timely manner without such technological assistance.

CCTV systems have undergone significant advancements, evolving from standalone setups to integrated components of larger, connected networks. This integration enhances efficiency but also introduces new challenges, such as increased vulnerability to cyberattacks, particularly if security personnel are not adequately trained to manage these technologies. Modern AI-enabled systems with advanced tracking capabilities now support security guards by monitoring multiple cameras simultaneously, enabling them to concentrate on identifying unusual or suspicious activities more effectively.

Despite the potential benefits, significant challenges remain. Frontline staff, in particular, may face difficulties adapting to these technological advancements due to limited digital literacy. Additionally, budget constraints have become a major barrier to the widespread adoption of advanced technologies. Some companies, having reduced spending in recent years, find it increasingly difficult to allocate the necessary resources for technological upgrades. Implementing AI systems requires significant upfront investment, which may be out of reach for some organisations, particularly in the current economic environment.

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## The Limitations of Advanced Technology in Human-Centred Situations

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While security services companies have been increasingly incorporating advanced technologies to streamline their operations, these innovations often fall short of providing the human-centered approach and immediate responsiveness that physical security personnel deliver. For example, in large venues such as shopping malls, if someone experiences a fall, a robot may detect the incident and inquire if the person is fine, but it cannot replicate the empathy and nuanced interaction of a human security guard. A security guard, for instance, can assess the individual's condition, inquire if they feel unwell, and offer to contact family members or emergency services. This personal engagement not only addresses the immediate needs of the individual but also provides reassurance and helps build long-term relationships.

However, robotics driven by standard operating procedures offers several advantages, including polite, consistent, and predictable performance. Unlike human performance, which can vary from day to day, robots can consistently follow protocols, ensuring tasks are performed in a uniform and timely

manner. This can be especially valuable in situations requiring repetitive tasks or when accuracy and reliability are crucial.

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## Overcoming Resistance and Embracing Innovation

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The security services companies have been actively promoting to their clients the adoption of technology, particularly electronic access control systems, in older buildings. Initially, many clients, especially elderly residents, were hesitant about these changes due to fears or unfamiliarity with new technologies. Over time, however, this attitude has shifted as personal electronic devices have become more commonplace and widely understood. For instance, in a housing estate predominantly populated by older residents, there was significant resistance when electronic access was first introduced. Many residents expressed uncertainty about automation and its implications. Despite this, all towers in the estate eventually transitioned successfully, highlighting the growing acceptance of technology. As familiarity with these systems increased, discussions naturally evolved to explore ways to optimise operations further. Many estates have started to prioritise cost-cutting

measures by embracing greater automation in their security operations. Newer buildings, for example, are increasingly being designed without traditional security counters. Instead, they rely on systems such as access

cards for residents and QR codes for visitor registration.

## Government Policy

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### Cybersecurity Law

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To address the growing global risk of cyberattacks, the government is taking steps to strengthen the cybersecurity of critical infrastructure, including sectors such as energy, telecommunications, transportation, and financial institutions. A bill was introduced to the Legislative Council in 2024 to advance these efforts. The Security Bureau intends to focus on eight key industries; however, this may pose significant challenges for security services companies operating in these areas. For instance, if a data center suffers a cyber breach, liability could cascade down the chain to security services providers. This scenario underscores the complexity of addressing cyber threats, as these attacks often involve advanced tactics that are difficult for many security services companies to anticipate or mitigate.

A major hurdle is the financial strain cybersecurity requirements impose. Cyber defences demand substantial investment, yet many businesses, including security services providers, operate under tight budgets.

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# The Abolition of Mandatory Provident Fund Offsetting Arrangement

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The Legislative Council passed the Employment and Retirement Schemes Legislation (Offsetting Arrangement) (Amendment) Bill 2022 on 9 June 2022, aiming to eliminate the use of accrued employer contributions under the Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) system to offset severance payments and long service payments. The government has announced that this arrangement will be abolished starting 1 May 2025. The arrangement will undoubtedly have a significant impact on the operating costs of security services companies. While the service fees charged to clients remain relatively stable, will need to allocate a larger budget towards MPF contributions, leading to a notable increase in the overall operating costs. Over the next 5 to 10 years, it is anticipated requiring substantial budget increases, particularly due to the aging workforce with long service tenures. Furthermore, as a contractor company, these impacts are even more pronounced. For instance, under government contracts, even after the conclusion of a two-year agreement, there remains a requirement to provide severance payments, as mandated by

government regulations. This further contributes to significant financial pressure of security service providers. Additionally, the government has yet to fully clarify the details of the MPF offsetting subsidy, especially regarding application procedures and maximum limits. This remains a pressing and concerning issue of the industry.

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## Proposed Shift from “418” to “468” Requirement on Employment Benefits

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Under the current provisions of the Employment Ordinance (EO), employees who work for four consecutive weeks and log at least 18 hours per week are considered to be employed under a “continuous contract” (the “418” requirement). The Labour Advisory Board has recently proposed a shift to a “468” requirement, where employees who work for the same employer for an aggregate of 68 hours or more within four consecutive weeks will be considered as being employed under a continuous contract. This change is intended to provide enhanced protection for part-time employees, casual workers, and substitute workers by ensuring they are entitled to EO benefits, such as holiday pay, leave, and severance.

For Type II and III security services companies, which predominantly employ full-time security guards and technicians, the proposed shift to the “468” requirement is unlikely to have a significant impact. Part-time employment in these companies is rare, and most employees already meet the criteria for continuous contracts under the existing provisions.

The proposed changes would have a more significant impact on Type I security services companies, which employ a large number of part-time personnel. Under the “468” arrangement, many part-time security guards working 12-hour shifts across seven shifts per month would exceed the 68-hour threshold, making them eligible for benefits similar to those of full-time employees. Since most part-time security guards work for multiple security services companies, they could claim benefits from each, potentially receiving more paid holidays than full-time employees. As a result, part-time security guard roles have become increasingly attractive compared to full-time positions, leading to a growing number of full-time security guards transitioning to part-time work. In addition, some companies may offer special packages to convert part-time security guards into full-time employees, with fewer working hours and salaries than traditional full-time roles, in order to comply with the “468” rule.

This arrangement also presents risks, especially when a part-time security guard works for multiple companies. In the event of a workplace injury or occupational disease, determining liability becomes more complicated. If a worker fails to report the injury at the company where it occurred, instead claiming another company for easier compensation. This may lead to legal disputes and increased costs for the employers involved. Such situations highlight the need for clear reporting procedures and careful management of claims to avoid unnecessary legal and financial challenges.

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## Importation of Labour

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To address the manpower shortage in the industry, some security services companies have resorted to importing security personnel from Mainland China through the Enhanced Supplementary Labour Scheme. However, this approach presents several challenges for them. For instance, if the imported staff do not live near the border, security services companies must provide accommodation, along with other benefits such as medical and insurance, which increases the overall compensation package and financial burden on employers.

In addition, imported security guards are required to complete a security

training course under the Quality Assurance Security Recognition Scheme (QASRS) before they can receive their Security Personnel Permit (SPP). The entire process of obtaining the SPP takes approximately three to four weeks, during which time employers are unable to assign security duties to them; however, employers are still obligated to pay them during this waiting period.

Cultural differences between imported personnel and the local workforce can create management challenges. Effective supervision requires an understanding of their language, values, and cultural context.

Miscommunications or management issues may arise due to the differences between Hong Kong and Mainland Chinese cultures. Additionally, imported personnel come from various provinces, and security companies may not have a complete understanding of their previous work experience or personal history. This uncertainty can raise concerns about potential misconduct or illegal activities. To mitigate these risks, security services companies may need to implement ongoing monitoring and additional security protocols, which further increasing both operational costs and management complexity.

Despite rising operational and staffing costs associated with importing security guards, many companies continue to do

so, highlighting the severe manpower shortage of full-time security personnel. This underscores the urgent need to fill vacancies and maintain essential services amidst an acute labour shortage in the industry. Additionally, many companies have observed that imported security guards often demonstrate strong work attitudes, including politeness, hard work, and professionalism. This positive influence may set a higher standard for local security guards, encouraging them to adopt similar qualities and improve overall service quality in the industry.

# Other Factors Affecting The Security Services Industry

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## The Growing Trend of Part-time Security Guards

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Given the increasing difficulty in employing full-time security guards, many security companies are increasingly relying on part-time personnel. In some small- to medium-sized companies, the ratio of full-time to part-time security guards can be as high as 1:6. Many individuals are choosing part-time roles over full-time positions due to the flexibility they offer, allowing a better work-life balance. Additionally, part-time security guards benefit from immediate cash payments and the ability to adjust their incomes, which helps them meet financial requirements for social benefits, such as public housing subsidies.

While part-time security guards can effectively substitute for full-time staff during shifts, managing their schedules can be challenging. Some security services companies create detailed profiles for each part-time worker, noting their preferred locations and typical availability to assist with rostering. However, this flexibility also introduces logistical difficulties.

Furthermore, clients generally prefer full-time security personnel, as part-time security guards are often less familiar with the specific sites they are assigned to and may not have developed relationships with the residents, which can affect the overall security experience.

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## Impact of Emigration on the Security Services Industry

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The emigration wave has had a relatively modest impact on the security services industry, primarily affecting management-level positions rather than frontline staff. However, a notable trend has emerged recently, with some individuals who had previously emigrated choosing to return to Hong Kong. This shift is largely driven by challenges in advancing their careers in their original fields abroad, where job opportunities may be limited. As a result, some individuals have chosen to transition into the security services industry. This influx of returning talent is temporarily easing the longstanding workforce shortages in the sector.



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# Challenges in Managing Security Services Contracts

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Security service contracts typically span from two to four years, with government contracts generally set at a two-year duration. For security services companies, longer-term contracts present distinct challenges, particularly when it comes to pricing. When entering into such agreements, companies must forecast future price increases to account for inflation and rising operational costs. However, this often requires balancing the risks posed by fluctuating economic conditions, which can have a significant impact on the company's ability to plan effectively. In practice, clients are often reluctant to accept steep price increases, making it difficult for companies to secure meaningful adjustments to their rates.

The unpredictability of economic factors, such as inflation, labour shortages, and shifts in client expectations, complicates long-term contract management. Companies are often caught in a difficult position, attempting to provide competitive pricing while maintaining profitability in an uncertain environment. On the other hand, shorter-term contracts, while providing more flexibility in adjusting prices, can hinder a security

company's ability to plan for manpower and training needs effectively. Frequent contract renewals may lead to challenges in workforce stability and continuity, requiring companies to strike a delicate balance between contract length, pricing flexibility, and the long-term development of their workforce.

Within the framework of security service contracts, companies often include clauses that allow for the reassignment of staff to different locations. When a service concludes or a contract ends, employees are typically informed about the need to transfer to another site. However, this practice assumes that the employee's skillset aligns with the requirements of the new location. If an employee is not suited for the available roles, the company may be obligated to provide severance payments. This is particularly challenging in sectors that require specialised skills, such as investment banking, where finding appropriate roles for employees after a contract end can be difficult. If no suitable positions are available, the company may face the financial burden of severance payments. This highlights the added complexities of staffing management in the security industry, particularly when working with clients who require specialised skills.

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# Challenges of an Ageing Workforce in the Security Services Industry

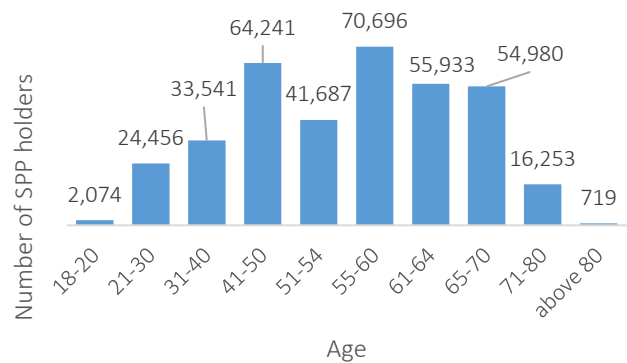
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The security services industry is grappling with the challenges posed by an ageing workforce, which is increasingly affecting the industry's operations and long-term sustainability. As the older generation of security guards retire, there is a growing shortage of experienced personnel to fill their roles, placing pressure on companies to maintain effective service levels. This shift not only impacts the availability of skilled staff but also raises concerns about the physical capabilities of older security guards. As they age, many of them face health-related issues that may limit their ability to perform certain tasks, especially those requiring physical stamina or rapid response times. Additionally, the decreasing influx of younger talent into the industry compounds the problem, making it difficult for companies to replace retiring workers with experienced individuals. This gap in staffing leads to heavier workloads for remaining employees, which can result in burnout and higher turnover rates. With fewer younger staff entering the industry, the industry faces significant difficulties in sustaining operational capacity and ensuring the well-being of its workforce.

The combination of an ageing workforce and a lack of new talent presents a serious challenge for the future viability of the security services industry.

According to the SGSIA statistics, as of 31 December 2024, 65.7% of valid Security Services Permit (SPP) holders were within the age range of 51 to 80 years old, while only 34.1% of them were less than 50 years old. The details of the age distribution of the valid SSP holders as of 31 December 2024 is shown below:

**Age Distribution of Valid SPP Holders as at 31 December 2024**



# Recruitment Difficulties

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## Challenges for Recruiting Younger Staff

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The industry has been facing significant difficulties in attracting younger staff, a trend that continues to challenge the industry's growth and sustainability. Many young individuals view the entry-level salaries in security as low, often seeing them as the minimum acceptable wage. As a result, they tend to delay entering the industry, sometimes opting to wait until they are older, typically in their 40s or 50s, after exploring other career options. This delay in entry is further compounded by a broader perception that security work is less prestigious compared to other professions, which leads to a lack of interest from younger talent.

While some younger individuals do eventually take on security roles, their engagement with the industry tends to be short-lived, often lasting no more than a year, and frequently in part-time positions. The reasons for this are multifaceted, with lifestyle preferences and career goals playing a key role. For many young staff, especially recent graduates who are still determining their long-term career paths, security

work is often viewed as a temporary solution. The stability it offers, especially for those who may need to support themselves or their families, can be an attractive option, but it is rarely seen as a lasting career. During their time in the industry, younger employees frequently use their security positions as a stepping stone to explore other sectors such as disciplined services sector.

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## Challenge for Recruiting Security Guards at Supervisory Level

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In the industry, the salary gap between supervisors and security guards is relatively narrow, despite the substantial differences in their responsibilities. Supervisors are tasked with a wide array of duties far exceeding those of standard security guards. These responsibilities include drafting detailed incident reports, managing and updating standard operating procedures, overseeing multiple shifts, and ensuring adequate staffing. They are also on-call to address emergencies, absenteeism, or other unforeseen challenges. Supervisors frequently coordinate part-time staff to fill

vacancies or step in to cover shifts themselves when necessary. Additionally, they oversee on-site operations, resolve logistical issues, and facilitate seamless coordination among employees. However, budgetary constraints often prevent companies from hiring enough supervisors, resulting in a high guard-to-supervisor ratio. This imbalance places excessive pressure on the existing supervisors, leading to heavier workloads and heightened job demands. Despite the critical nature of their roles, the relatively modest salary increases offered to supervisors compared to the substantial rise in responsibilities have made these positions less appealing to experienced security personnel. Many are reluctant to transition into supervisory roles, viewing the compensation as inadequate for the level of responsibility required.

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## Low Social Status of the Security Services Industry

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The security services industry often grapples with a negative public perception, where security guards are frequently regarded as holding low-status positions in society. This stereotype poses significant challenges in attracting new talent, particularly among younger generations who may

be deterred by concerns over social image and limited career advancement prospects. Security roles are often mischaracterised as basic, unskilled jobs, associated with low pay and few opportunities for professional growth. Such perceptions not only diminish the role's value but also fail to recognise the comprehensive skill set required of modern security personnel, including critical thinking, effective communication, and the ability to handle complex situations in a professional manner. Addressing these misconceptions is crucial for elevating the industry's reputation and appealing to a broader and more diverse pool of talent.

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## Geographic Preferences

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Security guards generally prefer working close to their place of residence, as it minimises commuting time and enhances overall convenience, contributing to a better work-life balance. This preference is particularly evident in densely populated urban areas, where individuals are increasingly looking for jobs that offer proximity to their homes. As a result, recruiting security personnel for certain regions, especially like Hong Kong Island or remote areas, has become increasingly difficult. Furthermore, the operating of the third airport runway has added another layer of complexity to the

staffing situation. The expansion has required the employment of a significant number of security guards, many of whom reside in the northern New Territories. This has further strained the security workforce, as

many of these guards are now committed to positions at the airport. Consequently, the availability of security personnel for the area has been reduced.

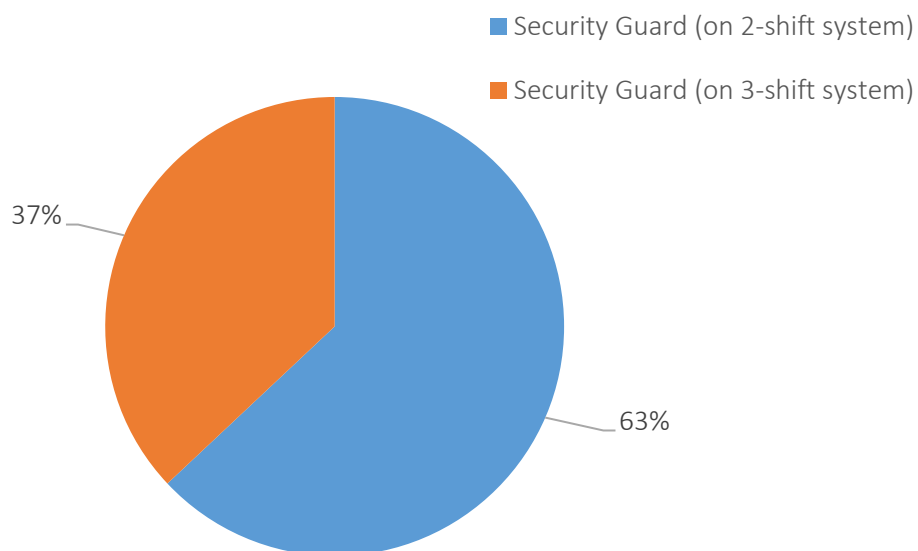
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## Long Working Hours

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Working in the security services industry often entails long hours, with many security guards working 12-hour shifts six days a week. This demanding schedule deters potential candidates from entering the field. To address this issue, security services companies are increasingly offering 3-shift schedules instead of the traditional 2-shift model to attract new talent. The desktop research indicates that 37% of job advertisements in the industry are for part-time security guards, while 63% are for full-time positions, reflecting the industry's effort to provide more flexible options to meet workforce needs.

**Percentage of security guards recruitment advertisements by shift system**

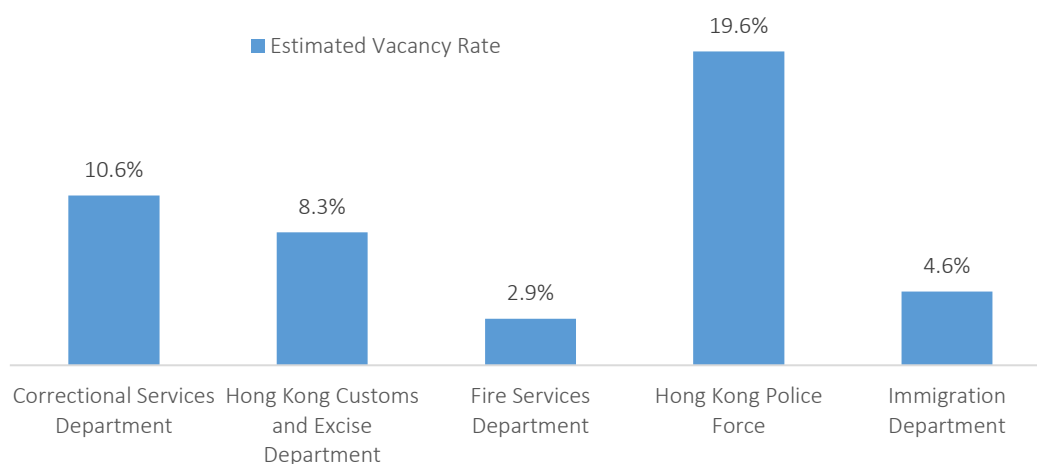


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# Recruitment Difficulties of Disciplined Service Departments

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The challenges in recruitment are not limited to the security services industry; the disciplined services sector also faces difficulties in attracting talent. As of November 2024, the estimated vacancy rates<sup>1</sup> for five disciplined service departments are as follows:



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<sup>1</sup> The data originates from HKSAR press releases, fact sheets, and official websites of the disciplined services departments. While the publication dates for the strength and establishment figures of various departments vary, the vacancy figures were disclosed on 23 November 2024 in an HKSAR press release.

# Training Needs

As the role of security guards expands to meet evolving industry demands, training security personnel must address a comprehensive range of skills that go beyond traditional security duties. The following areas are critical to ensuring guards are well-prepared to perform effectively:

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## Soft Skills

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Customer service skills are a crucial aspect of training for security personnel, emphasising professional and courteous interaction with visitors, clients, and staff. Interpersonal communication training focuses on fostering respectful and effective dialogue to create a positive impression. Problem-solving techniques equip them with the ability to address and resolve customer queries or concerns promptly and efficiently. Additionally, training often includes concierge tasks, such as providing directions, assisting with general inquiries, and delivering hospitality-oriented services. These skills are particularly valuable in settings like hotels, residential complexes, and office buildings, where a blend of security and customer care is essential.

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## Emergency Response and First Aid Skills

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Emergency response and first aid training are essential components for security personnel to ensure safety and preparedness in critical situations. First aid training equips security guards with the knowledge to handle medical emergencies, stabilise injured individuals, and provide life-saving interventions until professional medical assistance arrives. Additionally, crisis management training prepares guards to effectively respond to emergencies such as fires, accidents, or evacuations. This training emphasises maintaining calm under pressure and ensuring that responses are both efficient and well-coordinated, helping to safeguard the well-being of those involved.



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## Technical Skills

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Technical proficiency in advanced security systems is key for security personnel to manage modern security operations effectively. Training in CCTV and alarm systems offers hands-on experience in operating, monitoring, and troubleshooting surveillance systems to ensure reliable protection. Additionally, instruction on access control software includes managing and maintaining digital systems, such as visitor registration platforms and electronic access tools, to maintain secure premises. Security personnel are also introduced to emerging technologies like drones, automated patrol robots, and AI-driven security tools, enabling them to incorporate these innovations into their daily operations for improved security and efficiency.

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## Safety and Risk Management Skills

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Safety and risk management training equips security personnel with the skills to assess and respond to potential threats, such as identifying suspicious activities or unauthorised access attempts. Additionally, training focuses on conflict de-escalation, teaching personnel effective techniques

to manage confrontations and defuse situations without escalation, ensuring a safer environment for everyone involved.

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## Legal and Ethical Awareness Skills

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Legal and ethical awareness training ensures that security personnel understand and comply with relevant regulations, including privacy laws, property rights, and incident reporting protocols. Additionally, they are trained to maintain professional integrity and uphold confidentiality, particularly in sensitive situations, ensuring that their conduct aligns with both legal standards and ethical expectations.

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## Cultural Sensitivity and Adaptability Skills

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Cultural sensitivity and adaptability training focus on developing security personnel's awareness and respect for diverse cultural backgrounds, ensuring they provide inclusive and equitable service to all individuals. Additionally, this training prepares security guards to adapt to various environments, whether it be high-end commercial

establishments or residential complexes, allowing them to effectively manage different settings and meet the unique needs of each.

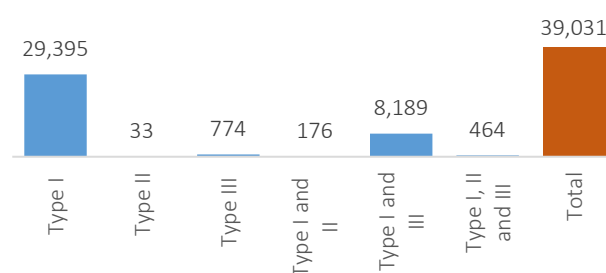
## Future Manpower Demand

The Chief Executive’s 2024 Policy Address identified the Northern Metropolis as a key driver of Hong Kong’s economic growth. Efforts will focus on speeding up economic and housing projects while ensuring responsible fiscal management. In the next five years, around 60,000 housing units across ten new public rental housing estates will be completed. Land from the San Tin Technopole will be made available for development, and the new Huanggang Port building, featuring co-located immigration and customs clearance, will be ready. In the following five years, about 150,000 additional housing units will be constructed, alongside over 10 million square meters of space for economic activities. Major projects like the government building in Kwu Tung North and the expanded North District Hospital will also be completed. These developments will significantly increase the demand for security services. With more public and private housing projects, the need for manpower in the security services industry will rise.

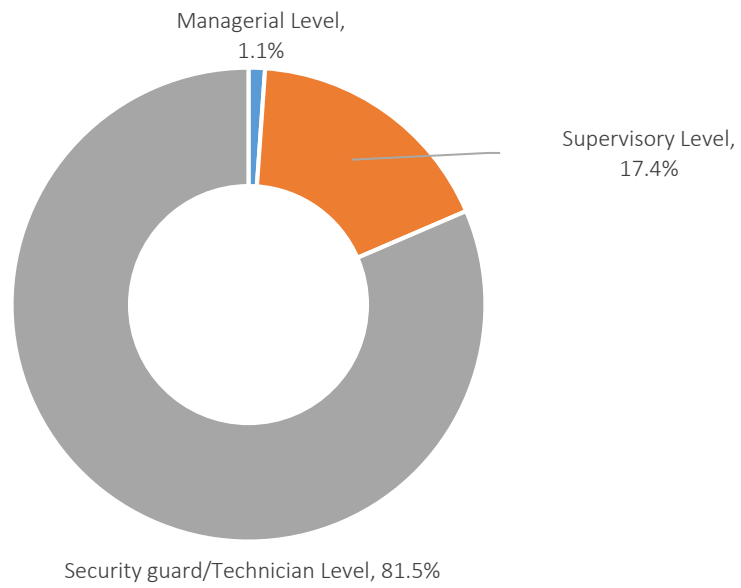
## Statistics of Desk Research

The following data presents the number of security services-related recruitment by license type, the percentage of recruitment advertisements categorised by job level, and the percentage of recruitment advertisements of full-time and part-time security guards as captured by the desk research conducted between September 2023 and August 2024:

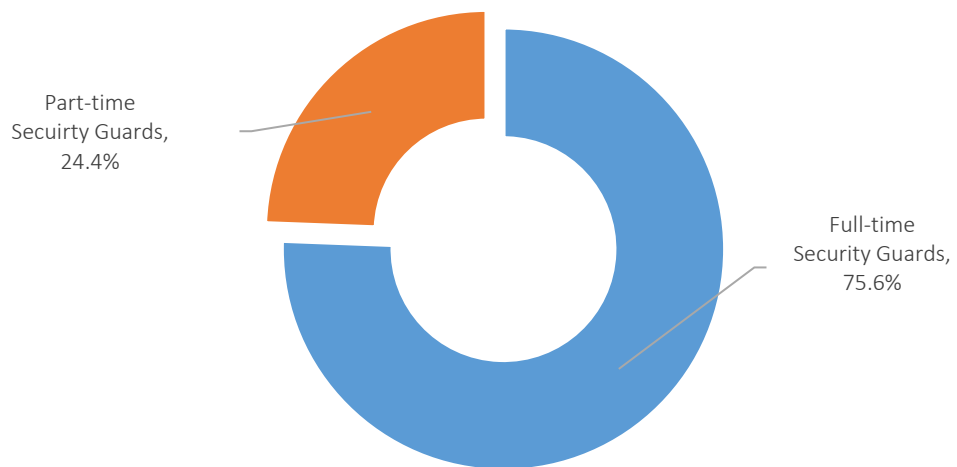
The number of security services-related recruitment advertisements captured by license type



## Percentage of recruitment advertisements captured by job level



## Percentage of recruitment advertisements captured by full-time and part-time security guards



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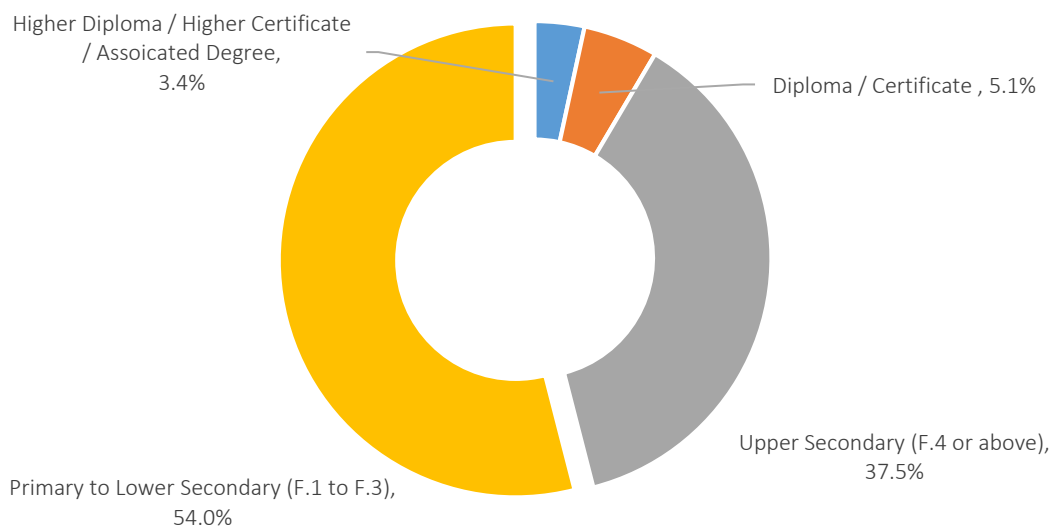
# Required Qualifications and Work Experience

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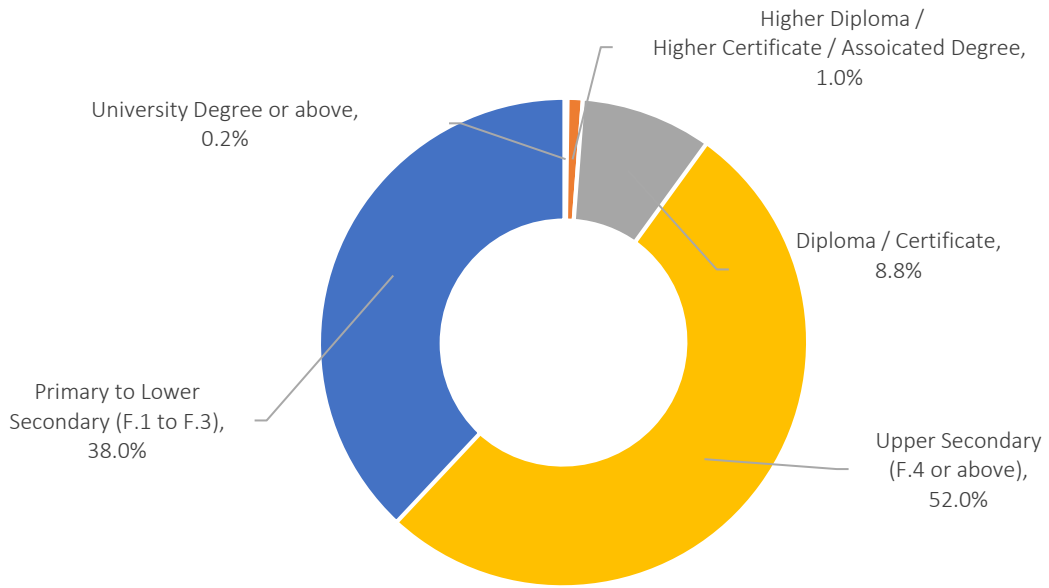
Desk research indicates that the majority of security services companies prefer their security guards/technicians and supervisors to possess at least lower secondary and upper secondary school qualifications, respectively. Additionally, these companies generally expect security guards/technicians to have less than one year of relevant work experience, while supervisors are expected to have three to five years of experience in the field. The proportions of recruitment advertisements specifying qualification and experience requirements for various job levels during the period from September 2023 to August 2024 are summarised below:

## The qualification requirements outlined in recruitment advertisements for security services Personnel by job level

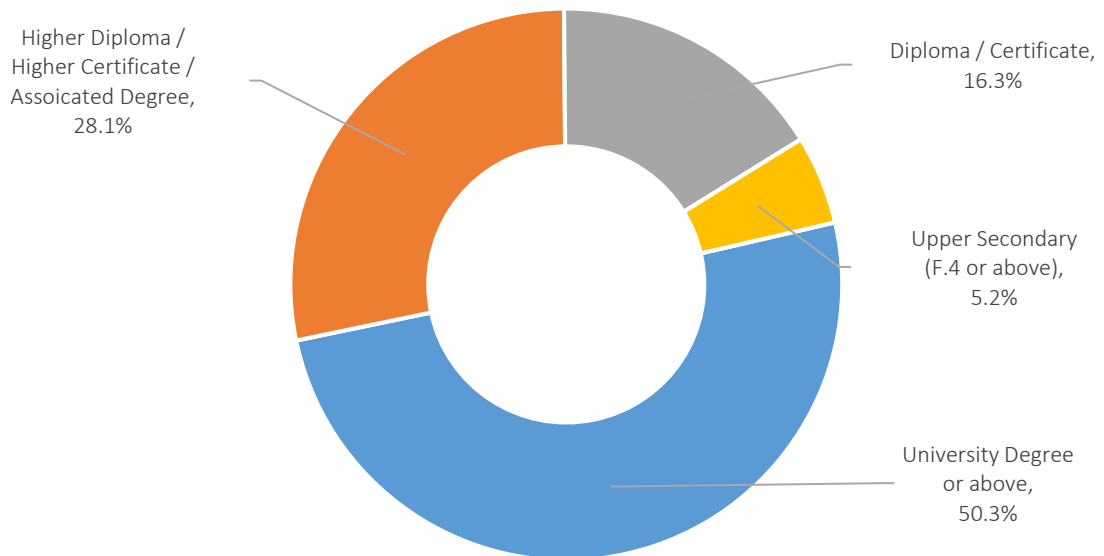
### Security guard / Technician level



## Supervisory level

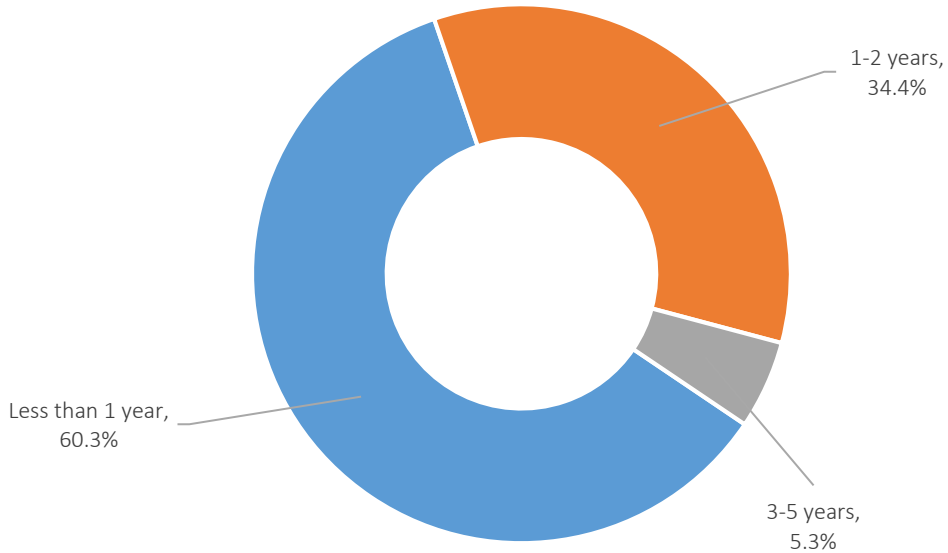


## Managerial level

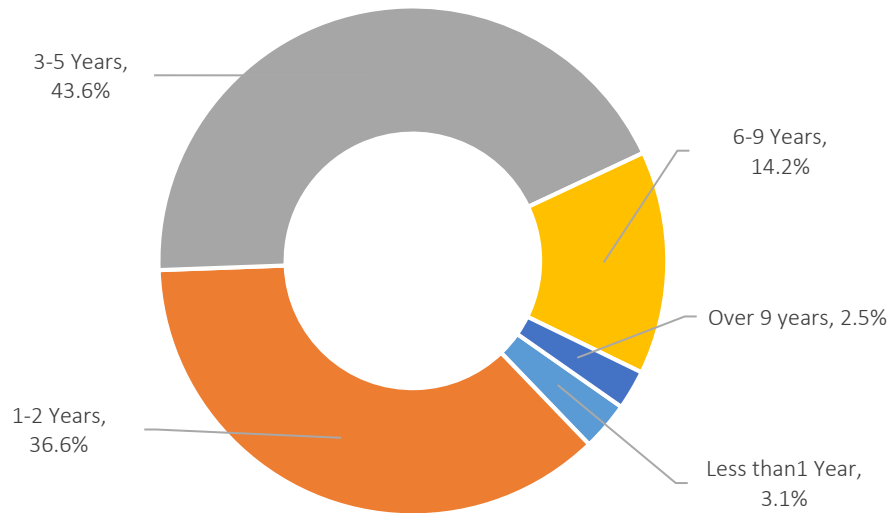


# The work experience requirements outlined in recruitment advertisements for security services Personnel by job level

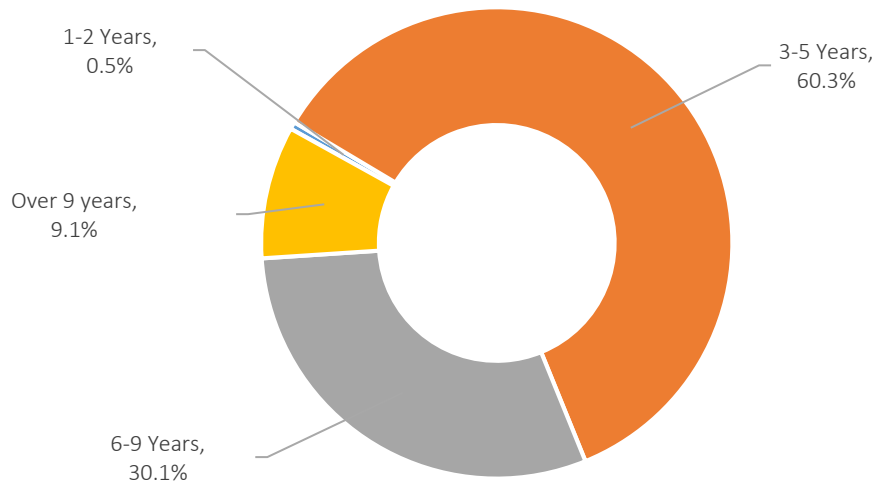
## Security guard / Technician level



## Supervisory level



### Managerial level



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# RECOMMENDATIONS

To support the future growth and development of the security services industry, a collaborative effort is essential among the government, educational institutions, and employers. This partnership should focus on promoting the industry as a viable and rewarding career path while actively highlighting its long-term prospects and opportunities for advancement. Additionally, it is crucial to establish comprehensive training programmes tailored to the needs of both current employees and the younger generation. These programmes should equip individuals with the skills and knowledge required to excel in a dynamic and evolving industry, ensuring a steady pipeline of skilled professionals to meet future demands.



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# The Government

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## **Streamline the Process for Importing Security Guards**

To address the manpower shortage in the security industry, the government should expedite the process of importing security personnel. This includes speeding up the issuance of Security Personnel Permits, allowing employers to assign duties to imported security guards without unnecessary delays. By reducing the waiting period, companies can meet operational needs more.

## **Enhance the Image and Social Status of the Security Industry**

The government should work to improve public perceptions of the security services industry by recognising the critical role security professionals play in maintaining safety and supporting various sectors. Campaigns to highlight the professionalism, training, and diverse skill sets of security guards such as expertise in surveillance, emergency response, customer service, and technology can help uplift their social status. Acknowledging their contributions to industries will further affirm their importance. Additionally, initiatives to improve working conditions and celebrate outstanding service within the industry can reinforce its value in society.

## **Clarify the MPF Offsetting Subsidy Details**

The government must provide comprehensive and transparent information regarding the MPF offsetting subsidy scheme. Clear guidelines on application procedures, eligibility criteria, and maximum subsidy limits are crucial to alleviate uncertainties within the industry. Addressing this issue promptly will help employers better prepare for the financial implications and foster confidence in managing employee benefits.

## **Review the Criteria for Issuing SPP in Response to Evolving Industry Demands**

Over time, the expectations for security personnel have naturally shifted, influenced by developments in technology and the evolving landscape of security challenges. As the role of security guards becomes more diverse, there is a growing emphasis on a wider array of skills to handle more complex situations. Despite these changes, the criteria for issuing SPP have remained relatively consistent. Given the dynamic nature of the security industry, it may be beneficial to periodically review and adjust the criteria and conditions of issuing the SPP to ensure they align with the current demands of the field and effectively equip security personnel to handle modern responsibilities.

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# Education Institutions

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## **Incorporate Advanced Customer Service Skills into Training Programmes**

Educational institutions should design training modules that focus on developing exceptional customer service skills for security guards. Security personnel often serve as the first point of contact in various settings, requiring them to handle inquiries, provide assistance, and maintain a professional demeanour. Training in effective communication, conflict resolution, and empathy will enhance their ability to interact with diverse populations, aligning with the demands of modern security roles.

## **Provide Advanced Technology Training**

As security roles increasingly integrate advanced technology, institutions should offer courses on the use of tools such as surveillance systems, access control software, and emerging technologies like drones and AI-based monitoring systems. Equipping security guards with these technical skills ensures they remain competitive and capable of meeting the industry's evolving needs.

## **Address Geographic Workforce Imbalances Through Location-Based Training Centres**

To mitigate challenges related to staffing preferences and commuting times, educational institutions should establish training centres in key geographic areas. By providing localised training programmes, institutions can attract and prepare a pool of security personnel from these regions, reducing recruitment challenges for employers.

## **Collaborate with Employers to Provide Placement Opportunities**

Educational institutions should foster stronger partnerships with security companies and related industries to enhance job placement opportunities for their students. By collaborating closely with industry stakeholders, institutions can establish internship programmes that provide students with hands-on experience, enabling them to gain practical skills and a deeper understanding of the security services industry. Additionally, job-matching services tailored to graduates' skills and career aspirations can help align talent with industry needs. Such initiatives not only improve employment prospects for students but also ensure that the workforce is well-prepared to meet the evolving demands of the security services industry.

## Offer Flexible Learning Options

Given the diverse backgrounds of security personnel, educational institutions should provide flexible training schedules, such as evening or weekend classes, to accommodate individuals already working in the field. This flexibility can help upskill the current workforce while attracting new talent.

## Industry Briefing and Career Talks

Educational institutions should help students gain a deeper understanding of the security services industry and its career progression by inviting experienced professionals to share their insights and the latest developments within the field. To align with industry demands, educational institutes should offer more security training courses based on the Specification of Competency Standards of security services industry.

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# Employers

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## Offer Competitive Remuneration Packages

Employers should review and enhance the compensation packages for security personnel at all levels. Providing salaries and benefits that reflect the

demanding nature of the work will make the roles more attractive and help address the current recruitment and retention challenges. Competitive pay can also motivate employees to stay longer in their roles, reducing turnover rates and associated training costs.

## Establish Clear and Enhanced Promotion Pathways

Employers should establish structured career progression frameworks to motivate security personnel. By introducing various job levels within the security hierarchy, such as “entry-level security guard” and “technologically skilled guard, they can address diverse employee aspirations. This approach acknowledges that some employees prefer to focus on basic duties, while others are eager to take on more complex tasks, like mastering new technologies. Through this approach, security personnel gain transferable skills, including problem-solving, communication, and customer service, which they can apply when transitioning into more career-focused roles as they refine their professional goals. In addition, the industry must create clear pathways for long-term career development and growth. Without such initiatives, the security services industry will continue to face high turnover rates and struggle to build a stable, experienced workforce.

## **Provide Financial Support for Continued Education**

To promote professionalism, employers should subsidise or fully cover costs for security personnel pursuing additional training or certifications. This could include courses in customer service, advanced security technology, or leadership development. Supporting education not only enhances employee skills but also demonstrates the company's commitment to staff development, fostering loyalty and a sense of value among the workforces.

## **Re-evaluate Compensation Structures for Supervisors**

The current modest salary difference between supervisors and security guards discourages experienced personnel from stepping into supervisory roles. Employers must reassess these structures, offering significant salary increments and performance-based incentives for supervisors. Enhanced compensation would reflect the increased responsibilities and ensure that supervisory roles attract the necessary talent.

## **Incentivise Professional Growth**

Employers should create reward systems that encourage skill development and professional growth. For instance, bonuses, additional leave,

or other perks can be offered to security personnel who complete specialised training, take on challenging roles, or consistently perform well. These incentives can help retain skilled staff and elevate the overall standards within the industry.

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# **Employees**

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## **Take Initiative to Enhance Skills and Knowledge**

Employees should actively seek opportunities to improve their trade-specific skills and knowledge. By upgrading their competencies in areas such as advanced security technologies, customer service, and emergency response, they can increase their employability and open pathways to higher-level roles within the industry.

## **Utilise Available Subsidies for Lifelong Learning**

Employees are encouraged to make full use of government-provided financial support, such as the Continuing Education Fund and the Skills Upgrading Scheme Plus, to pursue relevant courses and certifications. These programmes can significantly reduce the financial burden of professional development and enable employees to acquire new skills without substantial personal cost.

## **Focus on Career Development for Long-Term Growth**

Taking steps to develop employees' expertise not only helps them stay competitive in a rapidly evolving industry but also positions them for better remuneration, promotions, and job security. Lifelong learning enhances their ability to adapt to new challenges, such as the growing reliance on technology and higher customer service expectations in the security field.

## **Embrace Professionalism and Commitment**

Employees should approach their roles with a mindset of professionalism and dedication. By investing in personal growth and demonstrating a commitment to excellence, they can build strong reputations, secure better career opportunities, and contribute positively to the overall image of the security services industry.