Security and Disciplined Services Training Board

Manpower Update Report

Security Services Industry and Disciplined Services Sector

2026

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.

Contents

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 and 2025.

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

(i) A focus group meeting collecting the views of security services 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 of the security services industry;
(ii) To explore the job market and training needs of the security services industry;
(iii) To recognise recruitment challenges of the security services industry;
(iv) To recommend measures to meet the training needs and to ease the problem of manpower shortage of the security services industry; and
(v) To compile manpower and training data across the disciplined services departments.

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.
(vi) A company that engaged a large number of security guards.

Two focus group meetings, moderated by the SDTB Secretariat, were held in December 2025 and January 2026. 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.

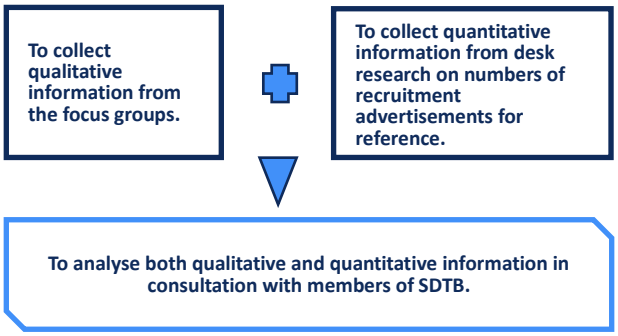
Desk Research

An employment information system was developed to capture recruitment advertisements from CPjobs, CTgoodjobs and other major online recruitment portals. Recruitment records were collected between August 2024 and July 2025 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 34,000 relevant recruitment records were used for analysis.

Manpower and training information for the disciplined services sector was collected from their factsheets, official websites, and the Civil Service Bureau.

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.

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 the security services industry.

Latest Trends of the Industry

Competitive Dynamics

Security services in Hong Kong are highly competitive, with providers under constant pressure to differentiate on cost, service quality, and reliability. In response, they are moving beyond traditional guard deployment and exploring operational levers that scale, most notably technology and training. To this end, many companies are adopting new tools to improve the efficiency of security operations. These technologies create a solid foundation; however, the full return on investment only emerges when frontline staff are trained to use them confidently and consistently. With consistent training and clear workflows, these technologies enhance safety and service quality across residential estates, commercial properties, logistics hubs, and other client locations.

At the same time, several structural challenges are becoming more pronounced. One of the most pressing matters is manpower planning. Many security guards prefer roles with lower stress or higher pay, or opt for short, flexible shifts on a week-to-week basis. This preference pattern complicates workforce planning and requires management to adjust rosters more frequently to maintain coverage and service standards.

Client expectations are also evolving. Rather than procuring standalone guarding services, clients increasingly expect integrated solutions that combine security with property services, such as facilities management, under a single contract. This one-provider model is especially common in large housing estates and broad property management agreements, where the vendor is responsible not only for keeping people safe but also for ensuring smooth daily operations of the property.

Privacy Concerns and Resident Hesitation of New Technologies

Although the industry has made efforts to adopt advanced technologies, many residents, especially older residential buildings still expect to see staff at the lobby managing visitors and maintaining order. This expectation slows the adoption of full integration of new security systems. While tools such as smart cameras, access gates, and other technologies can take over some tasks, many residents remain cautious. Concerns about personal data collection and misuse, particularly the risk of biometric details being exposed, are common. Most residents prefer to wait until other buildings have successfully implemented these changes and demonstrated their effectiveness before proceeding.

To build confidence, security service providers often run live demonstrations to show how technology can handle daily security tasks and reduce costs. Even with these demonstrations, many owners' corporations remain hesitant. They frequently request additional proof from other sites before deciding on implementation. There have been cases where some owners' corporations spent months preparing to introduce facial and fingerprint recognition devices, but they canceled at the last moment after resident objections, despite clear explanations that the system only stores key data points rather than full images.

In contrast, security technologies in public and utility spaces, where speed and smooth flow are priorities, are accepted more easily. In busy travel hubs, for example, identity checks move faster, baggage screening is more advanced, and some patrol vehicles operate autonomously while being monitored from a control room. Because the public values quick movement in these settings, these systems gain support more readily.

Compliance Responsibilities for Type II Security Services Companies

Type II security services companies often handle valuables and cash logistics, moving high-value items across districts and borders. This work requires strict documentation and verification to prevent money laundering and meet international compliance standards. When shipments involve overseas partners, compliance teams, typically from banks, regulators, or security providers, expect clear proof that all funds are legitimate and properly

accounted for.

Local operators sometimes struggle to produce the required documents quickly, slowing processing and reducing competitiveness when partners prioritise speed and transparency. Although basic checks such as customer identity verification and declarations for large cash or negotiable instruments are already in place, traditional processes are challenged by modern transaction patterns, especially when funds move through internet banking, where tracing the flow is more complex.

To strengthen compliance, security services companies train frontline staff to collect complete source-of-funds records, audit trails, and well-maintained documentation from the outset. Another emerging requirement is cybersecurity, as more clients inquire about storing digital assets alongside physical valuables, strong digital protections must complement physical security. Providers offering custody for both safe rooms and digital wallets must protect the premises, the devices, and the data.

Challenges in Equipment Procurement for Type III Security Service Providers

Type III licensed security services companies face significant challenges related to client procurement policies, which directly impact project delivery. Large logistics operators and data centers often impose strict equipment requirements, sometimes mandating U.S. or European brands based on internal policies or risk frameworks, while others prefer Chinese-made systems for their cost-effectiveness and ease of sourcing.

In many cases, Chinese-made camera lenses and devices perform as well as or better than U.S. or European options at roughly a fifth of the cost, and many now include advanced smart features such as abandoned-object detection, line-crossing alerts, and loitering detection, making these systems highly competitive.

However, even when hardware prices drop, the labor-intensive nature of installation remains unchanged. Tasks such as site surveys, cable installations, device mounting, network configuration, software integration, alert testing, and documentation still require skilled labor and time, and cutting corners risks

reliability and compliance.

Price-sensitive clients often push for lower bids, squeezing installers' margins, yet the workload does not shrink. When clients require non-Chinese parts, installers may charge more to cover higher costs and complexity, but this also introduces longer lead times, supply constraints for approved brands, and reduced flexibility from being tied to a single product ecosystem, all of which can delay projects.

To stay competitive, many providers adopt dual-ready designs, enabling them to deliver solutions with either Chinese or non-Chinese systems. This approach helps meet diverse client demands while managing cost pressures, supply risks, and scheduling challenges.

Adoption of Advanced Technology in the Industry

The security services industry is shifting toward a new model that offers complete service bundles combining manpower and technology. These packages go beyond traditional guarding by incorporating innovations such as robot patrols for routine rounds, smart video analytics to minimise false alarms, and centralised control rooms for faster, coordinated responses. The objective is not simply to reduce headcount but to deliver greater efficiency and reliability.

Robots Move from Watching to Acting

Robot technology has advanced rapidly in the past six months. What was once a simple rolling unit limited to flat surfaces has evolved into a walking patrol partner capable of navigating real-world buildings. These new robots can climb stairs, use lifts, and cross dangerous areas. This means they can access more locations, move between floors, and enter risky zones first to assess the situation.

The industry has been adopting robots in fire drills. Walking robots equipped with heat-sensing cameras and video systems can locate the hottest spots. Initial actions are basic, such as calling for assistance or keeping someone in place until human responders arrive, but they serve an important purpose. In shopping areas, robots are already detecting unusual events and sending alerts. The next step is moving beyond risk identification and reporting to taking controlled actions under clear rules.

As robots take on more active duties,

clear standards are essential. Key questions include whether patrol robots should be formally registered like camera systems, whether operators need specific qualifications, how much physical intervention is allowed, and who updates training when local procedures differ across sites. Industry bodies and public agencies are being asked to publish guidance covering law, ethics, and safety, and to maintain centralised training resources so updates reach every operator.

The change is already visible. Public housing estates are now deploying patrol robots, and more sites are preparing mobile units. For example, large car parks have been testing patrol vehicles that continuously read number plates, reviving the original goal of car park rounds, spotting cars that stay beyond paid time and identifying patterns that may require attention. What was once a routine compliance activity evolved into a continuous, real-time verification process, enabled by robots that can access areas beyond human reach and perform tasks swiftly and safely.

Strengthening Cybersecurity in Cloud-Based Surveillance Systems

Keeping camera footage in the cloud has become standard practice, but it introduces a significant cybersecurity challenge. In the past, surveillance recordings were stored on local machines and often deleted after one or two weeks. Today, many recordings are retained in cloud-based storage to avoid local failures. This shift raises tough questions from clients who can access the footage, such as how the data is protected during transmission and storage, and what safeguards prevent unauthorised use.

Security service providers now work closely with Information Technology security experts to address these concerns through robust cybersecurity measures. In this regard, the service providers have been investing more effort than before in isolating the camera network from office systems, implementing firewalls and intrusion prevention at network edges, and securing every connected device to prevent them from becoming entry points for attackers.

Despite these efforts, a gap in assurance remains. Security services companies that install electronic security systems must hold a proper license, but advisors who provide cybersecurity services are not subject to local statutory licensing. Many rely on brand-issued certificates, which vary widely in quality, leaving buyers to judge by reputation rather than a clear public standard. A practical solution would be to establish an official local cybersecurity certification for the security-services industry and mandate baseline requirements in every contract. These steps would not only strengthen trust but also help align Hong Kong's security services industry with leading global data-protection practices.

Access Control Choices and Emerging Digital Solutions

Residential complexes often face two main choices for managing access through doors and gates. One option is the familiar Octopus card, which most residents already carry. The other is a simpler, low-cost card system managed entirely by the estate. Octopus feels convenient because it is part of daily life, but it comes with ongoing service fees and locks the building into a single platform. Over time, this dependency makes switching difficult, as readers, software, and routines are tied to that setup. A self-managed card system avoids annual fees and gives owners' corporations the flexibility to choose their own readers and make changes when needed. The trade-off is responsibility: the estate must handle setup, testing, and day-to-day maintenance.

Looking ahead, some in the industry see potential in a government-backed access solution using the iAM Smart app, which works with phone taps or QR codes. The concept promises convenience, but it must be designed carefully. If one app becomes the sole gateway for public housing, it could tilt the market too far toward a single operator, giving that party excessive control over money and data while squeezing out integrators who have invested in other controller brands.

Manpower Situation of the Security Services Industry and Disciplined Services Sector

Security Services Industry

Manpower Supply

Manpower supply in the security services industry remains under pressure despite steady demand. While there are over 360,000 Security Personnel Permit (SPP) holders, many treat the role as a fallback option rather than a primary career, making availability unpredictable. A significant portion of the current workforce is older, which limits their ability to handle physically demanding tasks such as long patrols, stair climbing, or working in harsh environments. At the same time, younger workers tend to choose jobs that feel less stressful or offer more social interaction, making recruitment challenging.

To maintain coverage, some employers turn to importing security guards through the Enhanced Import Labour Scheme. The benefits include reducing absenteeism, lowering the average workforce age, and more stabilised attendance.

Security services companies have been adopting flexible staffing models to cope with shortages. One practical strategy is building a float pool to maintain a core full-time team covering 60 to 70 percent of service hours, adding a trained float pool, and capping part-time staff to absorb absences. This approach helps meet contractual manpower requirements and achieve high coverage rates, often targeting 98 percent of rostered shifts.

Looking ahead, manpower supply will remain a critical challenge. Employers who invest in clear procedures, simple training, and predictable scheduling will have an edge in attracting and retaining talent. While technology will reduce repetitive tasks, human roles, especially those requiring judgment, communication, and compliance, will continue to depend on a stable and well-managed workforce.

Manpower Demand

Manpower demand in security services industry remains strong. In high-rise residential buildings, residents still expect a human presence in lobbies for reassurance, visitor handling, and quick intervention when disputes arise. While buildings are adding smarter cameras, stronger access control, and better dashboards, most are moving toward hybrid models rather than full automation. This means fewer repetitive patrols, but more roles focused on control room monitoring and customer-facing duties.

Beyond housing, several sectors are driving demand even higher. Logistics hubs and e-commerce facilities require 24-hour coverage for large inventories, along with trained personnel to manage access points, monitor camera feeds, and respond quickly to incidents. Data centers are another growth area, demanding tighter screening, clear communication, and higher training standards, creating specialist roles that go beyond generic guarding. Busy travel terminals also remain people-intensive, for example, screening machines and fast identity checks reduce manual steps, but trained staff are still needed to handle exceptions, guide passenger flows, and intervene when necessary.

Compliance adds a new dimension to manpower needs. As Hong Kong expands high-security storage and explores custody for digital assets, companies need security personnel who understand basic documentation, such as verifying customer identity and source of funds, and can work alongside cybersecurity teams. This mix of physical and digital protection creates specialist roles that will not disappear with automation.

Looking ahead, technology will take over low-value rounds and repetitive checks, but human roles will shift toward control room operations, rapid incident handling supported by smart tools, and clear communication with residents and visitors. Specialist posts for data centers, logistics hubs, and large transport sites will grow faster than standard guarding positions.

Disciplined Services Sector

According to the factsheets and figures published on the websites of various disciplined services departments, the establishment of different disciplined departments is as follows:

(i) Hong Kong Police Force:
27,222 regular officers and 3,971 civilian staff; plus 3,416 Auxiliary Police volunteers.

(ii) Fire Services Department:
10,690 uniformed staff and 786 civilian staff.

(iii) Immigration Department:
7,202 uniformed officers and 1,572 civilian staff.

(iv) Customs and Excise Department:
7,517 posts (including 6,286 Customs and Excise Service members, 548 Trade Controls Officers, and 672 general grade staff).

(v) Correctional Services Department:
7,193 staff managing 29 correctional facilities.

(vi) Government Flying Service:
331 personnel for flight operations, engineering, and administration.

Government Policy

Importation of Labour

Some Type I licensed security services companies have leveraged the Enhanced Supplementary Labour Scheme to bring in security personnel from the Mainland, helping to close staffing gaps and stabilise daily operations. Type II licensed security services companies have also added imported workers to roles such as drivers and frontline security staff. The priority is reliability and continuity of service, not cost reduction. These hires help maintain rosters and ease the persistent challenge of recruiting local guards, particularly for physically demanding or overnight shifts, as imported personnel are often younger, physically fit, and in some cases have military experience. Several companies also report that imported staff bring a positive attitude and strong work ethic, which boosts morale and motivates local teams. Employers emphasise that these hires supplement rather than replace local staff, maintaining equal pay for equal work. For sensitive technical roles, non-local technicians are paired with senior local engineers to reassure clients and uphold quality standards. The focus is on stability and service quality, not cost savings.

Many imported security personnel understand that Hong Kong may not offer a long-term career path, yet they remain highly satisfied because pay and working conditions are stronger than in their home markets. This creates a stable, motivated workforce that supports service quality and helps companies meet manpower commitments.

That said, some in the industry are concerned that new applications for imported labour could be paused while the scheme undergoes review by the relevant authorities.

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

Under the Employment Ordinance, the previous “418” rule, four consecutive weeks with at least 18 hours per week, was replaced by the “468” requirement. Under this new rule, employees who work for the same employer for an aggregate of 68 hours or more within four consecutive weeks are considered as continuous contract. This change aims to give stronger protection to part-time, casual, and substitute workers, ensuring they receive statutory benefits such as holiday pay, annual leave, and

severance.

While the intention is positive, the impact on manpower planning is significant. Security services companies now face tighter compliance obligations and more complex scheduling requirements. To stay within the thresholds, some companies have reduced weekly hours for part-time security personnel or implemented arrangements such as two months of work followed by a one-month break. Others have required personnel to work longer shifts or additional days in order to convert them to full-time status. Over time, these pressures have pushed many security services companies to shift their strategy toward hiring full-time security personnel rather than part-time, as permanent roles help reduce administrative overhead and improve coverage reliability.

Some security personnel prefer part-time arrangements for income-planning purposes, for example, keeping their earnings at a level that preserves eligibility for government benefits such as public housing. However, as rosters become tighter, these requests will be increasingly difficult to accommodate.

Verification adds another layer of complexity. The current licensing system allows individuals to hold active registrations with multiple security services companies, which complicates checks on employment history. To avoid compliance risks, some employers refuse to hire candidates with overlapping affiliations until they complete proper exit and entry steps.

Other Factors Affecting the Security Services Industry

Price Competition and Industry Health

Industry participants indicated that the market is currently entrenched in a 'lowest-price-wins' cycle, an unhealthy equilibrium where aggressive tendering and cost-cutting dominate decisions. Service prices continue to fall under intense competition and client pressure, leaving little room for innovation or workforce investment. This race to the bottom has real consequences, shrinking margins, declining service quality, and falling staff morale. Some security services companies reported that certain maintenance contracts barely cover transportation costs, forcing them to rely on high-volume work just to stay afloat.

The long-term impact of this pricing model is concerning. When profitability depends on volume rather than value, security providers struggle to invest in training, compliance, and staff development, which are essential pillars of a healthy industry. Low prices also discourage skilled workers from entering or staying in the industry, worsening manpower shortages and increasing turnover. Over time, this erodes trust between clients and providers, as expectations for quality and reliability clash with the reality of underfunded operations.

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Standards and Their Growing Role in Security Contracts

ESG standards have been increasingly influencing how security service contracts are awarded. Large organisations, such as banks, public projects, and major corporations, now expect clear disclosures on carbon footprint, workforce diversity, training hours, and safety records. These requirements are no longer optional; they have become a fundamental part of what makes a bid complete.

In property tenders, price still tends to dominate, and ESG factors often remain secondary. However, the industry's message is clear that ESG is becoming a core measure of credibility and responsibility, not just a formality. Companies that start tracking these metrics and integrate them into

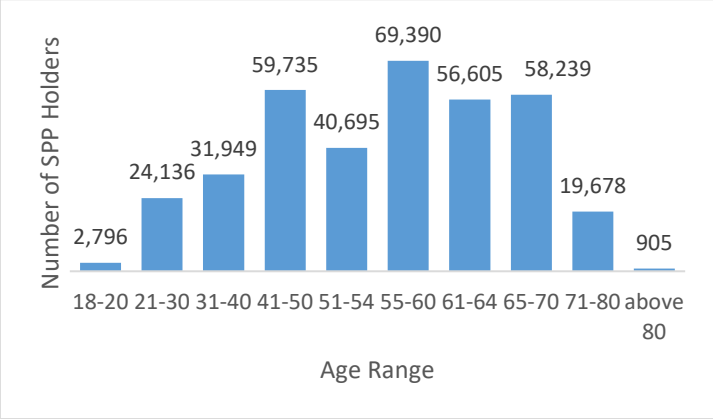
proposals will be better positioned to win contracts in a market that increasingly values both competitive pricing and principled practices.

Recruitment Difficulties

Ageing, Identity, Image, Long Working Hours, and Youth Attraction

The security services industry faces persistent recruitment challenges that extend far beyond simple manpower shortages. The workforce is aging, with many security personnel and technicians in roles that demand long hours, physical effort, and exposure to harsh environments tasks that become increasingly difficult with age. According to the SGSIA statistics, as of 31 December 2025, 67.2% of valid SPP holders were within the age range of 51 to 80 years old, while only 32.8% of them were less than 50 years old. The details of the age distribution of the valid SSP holders as of 31 December 2025 is shown below:

Age Distribution of Valid SPP Holders as at 31 December 2025



At the same time, younger people are not entering the security services industry, largely because of the image of the industry.

In housing estates and property sites, frontline staff often deal with disputes, complaints, and stressful situations. Many young candidates prefer jobs they perceive as more social or enjoyable, such as ride-hailing, food delivery, or retail, where they can maintain better work-life balance and enjoy flexible schedules, even if the pay is lower. The industry's low perceived status adds to the problem. Entry requirements are minimal, often limited to short courses and basic licensing, which reinforces the view of security roles as "watchman" jobs rather than professional careers.

This perception discourages ambitious candidates and limits the talent pool.

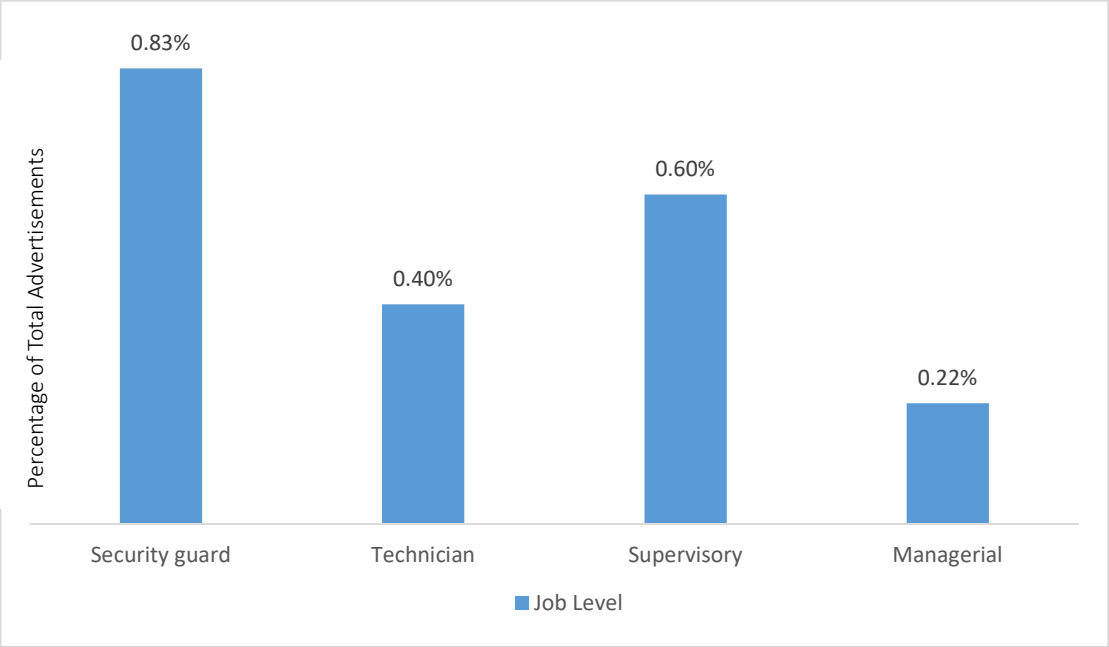
In response, some security services companies have been working to elevate the status of the role and provide clearer career pathways. Initiatives include improved job titles, structured progression from junior to supervisor to manager, and promotion criteria tied to practical skills such as first aid, advanced security training, and recognised certifications, which help make the work more meaningful. Older security personnel have been reassigned to lighter duties following health assessments, allowing companies to retain their experience while aligning responsibilities with their capabilities.

Branding is another focus. Companies have been presenting security roles as modern and professional through public outreach, clear uniforms, and titles that reflect expertise, such as “Screening Specialist” or “Control Room Analyst.” This signals that security work requires skill and judgment, not just presence.

Training Needs

Training is a critical enabler for workforce development, ensuring staff continuously upgrade their skills and keep pace with the evolving demands of the industry. Despite its importance, our desk research indicates that very few job advertisements explicitly highlight the training opportunities provided by employers. This suggests a potential gap between the industry's upskilling needs and how companies communicate their talent-development efforts to prospective employees.

Among the postings reviewed, only a limited number of companies clearly specify that training will be provided to staff. The distribution of recruitment advertisements mentioning training, broken down by job level, is presented below:



Based on the findings above, it is recommended that security services companies place greater emphasis on structured skills training for their staff. To enhance service quality, strengthen workforce capability, and meet evolving industry expectations, companies should consider offering the following types of skills training.

Security Services Industry

Operational Skills

Training should go beyond theory and focus on practical, lifelike situations. Security personnel need hands-on experience with scenarios such as responding to a night-shift alarm, resolving a lobby dispute, assisting a lost child, or managing a fire alert. Such training should incorporate the actual tools they will use, including smart cameras, access panels, patrol robots, sensors, and cloud-based video consoles. Regular refresher sessions and centralised training resources further ensure that every team member stays aligned with evolving standards and best practices.

Site-Specific System Skills

Extra training should be delivered when a site installs new technology, robotic patrols, high-speed gates, or specialised sensors. Instruction should focus on practical steps on how to start and stop systems safely, recover from faults, switch to manual mode if needed, and who to contact for support. The aim is fast recovery and consistent performance at that specific site.

Technician Diagnostic Skills

Security system technicians need hands-on skills to keep security systems stable. Training should cover following vendor guides, checking power and cabling first, setting zones and alerts correctly, testing data flow end-to-end, and documenting changes so others can repeat them. With basic vendor coaching, technicians can handle routine setup and troubleshooting; only complex cases should go to specialist support. This reduces trial and error, cuts downtime, and keeps platforms reliable.

Analytical Patrol Skills

Routine patrols should never be about walking the route without thought, they must serve a clear purpose. For example, in car parks, the objective is to identify overstays, detect suspicious patterns, and prevent misuse, and not simply perform a physical walk-through. When staff understand the reasons behind these tasks, such as reducing revenue loss, improving safety, and deterring crime, they approach their work with greater focus and judgment.

Communication & Customer Service Skills

Effective customer service is a key part of security training, ensuring personnel can interact professionally and courteously with residents, visitors, and staff. Training emphasises clear and respectful communication to create a positive experience and build trust. Problem-solving skills are also essential, enabling staff to address questions or concerns quickly and efficiently. Beyond security duties, many roles require concierge-style support, such as giving directions, assisting with general inquiries, and providing helpful guidance. These skills are especially important in environments like hotels, residential complexes, and office buildings, where security and hospitality often go hand in hand. By combining vigilance with approachable service, security personnel help maintain safety while enhancing the overall customer experience.

Cyber Hygiene Skills

Cybersecurity is no longer solely an IT responsibility; it is now an essential part of every security role. Training should focus on practical habits that help keep systems and data secure. Security personnel, particularly Type D licensed personnel, need to understand the importance of keeping security systems separated from office networks. They should also be trained to recognise suspicious emails or messages and report them immediately, as timely action can prevent serious incidents. For staff who manage system access, training should cover the fundamentals of protecting sensitive information and following proper access protocols. These practices help build client trust by demonstrating a strong commitment to data protection.

Legal and Ethical Awareness Skills

Security personnel require training that helps them understand and comply with key legal and ethical responsibilities. This includes knowledge of privacy regulations, property rights, limits on the use of force, and proper incident-reporting procedures. Training should also reinforce the importance of integrity and confidentiality, particularly when handling sensitive information or interacting with the public. The objective is to ensure that frontline personnel make sound decisions, operate within legal boundaries, and uphold professional standards, strengthening trust with clients and the wider community.

Entry Standards and Specialist Pathway Skills

Certain security roles require training that goes beyond the basic industry requirements. Positions in environments such as data centres, critical infrastructure sites, or high-security transport operations demand advanced procedural knowledge, stronger technical competency, and strict adherence to audit and compliance protocols. To meet these needs, companies should establish specialist training pathways supported by targeted certifications.

Disciplined Services Sector

The training provided across Hong Kong's disciplined services reflects the breadth and complexity of their operational responsibilities. The following summary of training offered by various disciplined services departments is compiled from fact sheets and official websites of the respective departments.

For the Hong Kong Police Force, training focuses on equipping officers with both foundational policing skills and advanced capabilities to meet modern challenges. New recruits undergo structured foundation training that covers law enforcement principles, integrity, and tactical skills, while specialised programmes address areas such as detective work, traffic enforcement, cybercrime investigation, and counter-terrorism. With the rise of technology-driven policing, officers also require digital literacy and cyber security expertise, supported by accredited programs under the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework and partnerships with universities for leadership development.

The Fire Services Department emphasises operational readiness through rigorous firefighting and rescue training, complemented by advanced paramedic courses and hazardous materials handling. Scenario-based drills and technology integration, such as mobilizing systems and firefighting robots, are essential to prepare personnel for high-risk environments and complex emergencies.

For the Immigration Department, training needs center on immigration control procedures, document verification, and fraud detection, alongside customer service skills to manage high passenger volumes. Officers must also master biometric systems, e-Channels, and other automated clearance technologies, while staying updated on compliance requirements under nationality and visa

regulations.

The Customs and Excise Department requires a blend of enforcement and regulatory expertise. Officers need training in anti-smuggling operations, narcotics detection, and cargo inspection, as well as proficiency in advanced scanning technologies and forensic tools. Regulatory knowledge in anti-money laundering, consumer protection, and intellectual property rights is critical, supported by continuous refreshers to address evolving trade compliance and technology-enabled crimes.

The Correctional Services Department faces unique challenges, balancing custodial security with rehabilitation. Training programmes cover tactical skills, crisis intervention, and Smart Prison technologies, alongside counseling techniques and vocational training for offender reintegration. Accredited courses in correctional governance and leadership ensure professional standards, while continuous learning platforms promote knowledge sharing and lifelong development.

Finally, the Government Flying Service demands highly specialised training for flight operations and aircraft maintenance under stringent aviation standards. Personnel must also be prepared for emergency missions such as search and rescue, air ambulance services, and firefighting, requiring cross-sector collaboration and medical training for onboard trauma care.

Future Manpower Demand

Even as technology becomes more widespread, people will remain essential in security roles. In high-rise housing estates, residents still expect to see someone at the lobby who can greet visitors, verify identities, and handle disputes. Robots, automation, and smart systems can assist with routine tasks, but they cannot replace the reassurance and judgment that a human presence provides. Most estates are likely to adopt hybrid models, using technology to reduce repetitive work while retaining staff for customer interaction and problem-solving. Full automation is unlikely in the near future, especially in older properties where committees remain cautious about privacy and reliability.

Beyond housing, demand is growing in logistics and e-commerce. The number of high-value warehouses and fulfilment centres has been growing rapidly in Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area. These sites require continuous coverage day and night to protect large inventories, along with staff trained in access control, camera monitoring, and quick incident response. Data centres add another layer of complexity, requiring highly vetted personnel who can follow strict onboarding procedures, maintain clear communication, and meet global compliance standards. The industry has suggested introducing specialist certifications for these roles to create new career paths and raise professionalism.

Public transport systems such as airports and cargo screening facilities also remain manpower-intensive. Automated baggage checks and biometric gates reduce some manual steps, but human oversight is still essential for handling exceptions and emergencies. Cargo screening rules, which require full compliance, add further demand for trained staff in warehouse environments.

Compliance and high-security services will create specialist roles as Hong Kong expands vault capacity and explores custody for digital assets. These jobs require guards who understand anti-money laundering checks and can work alongside cyber teams to protect both physical and digital assets. This combination of responsibilities, document control, identity verification, and technology handling, will keep manpower needs high even as automation grows.

In short, the coming years will bring more technology, but also more demand for skilled people, especially in roles that combine judgment, compliance, and customer care. Security work is evolving and remains in strong demand.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To build a resilient, future-ready security services ecosystem, government, educators, and employers each have a clear role. The priorities should be credible career pathways, practical training, stable manpower supply, and modern, trusted use of technology.

The Government

Accelerating Workforce Access for Security Services

A simplified, digitalised system, with real-time status updates and clear service-level targets, will help companies fill critical roles faster and maintain operational continuity. Greater efficiency will also enable the industry to meet rising demand across residential estates, logistics hubs, and high-security facilities while safeguarding service quality.

Elevate Public Trust and Professional Standing in Security Services

Hong Kong can strengthen its security services sector by improving public understanding of security work and raise its image as a modern, skilled profession. The government should highlight the real contributions of security personnel, protecting people, supporting daily operations, handling incidents, and using technology effectively.

Practical steps include public campaigns, real examples from housing estates and transport hubs, and recognition programmes that showcase strong performance. Presenting security roles as professional and essential will attract more talent, lift industry standards, and build public trust.

Strengthening the Framework for Robotics and AI in Security

As robotics and AI become standard in security operations, the government can establish a clear framework to govern their safe and responsible use. Core elements should include system registration, operator qualification requirements, limits on physical interaction, and rules for handling data and privacy. The framework should also define accountability for maintaining training standards and updating procedures as technologies and site needs evolve. Clear guidelines will support innovation while protecting public trust and ensuring consistent

compliance across the industry.

Updating Entry-Level Training

The government can review entry level training for security personnel to ensure it aligns with the realities of modern security work. Current basic training remains largely theoretical and does not equip new entrants with the practical, scenario based, and technology driven skills now required.

While the core SPP training course must remain concise, the industry has proposed a tiered training structure to close the skills gap:

Tier 1: Updated SPP training with practical sessions (28 hours)

Tier 2: Technical operator training for camera systems and control room operations (32 hours)

Tier 3: Cybersecurity and systems administration, including network basics and incident response (40 hours)

Tier 4: Drone and robot operations with practical certification (40 hours)

This framework will provide a clear pathway for upskilling, ensure new personnel are better prepared for today's operational demands, and support a more capable and professional security workforce.

Relaxing the Restrictions on Category B SPPs

Currently, security personnel who perform guarding duties that do not require carrying arms must hold either a Category A or Category B SPP. The upper age limit for Category B SPP holders is 70, as this category covers various types of premises and a wider range of job duties. Individuals aged 71 or above may therefore only apply for a Category A SPP, which limits them to guarding single private residential buildings. It is suggested that the Government relax this age-related restriction, citing manpower shortages, an ageing population, and improved health among the elderly, so that individuals aged 71 or above may also be permitted to apply for Category B SPPs."

Enhancing Career Pathways for Imported Security Personnel

Imported security personnel are engaged primarily as supplementary labour to fill lower-level positions where local recruitment has long been difficult. While their roles are intended to support the local workforce, many imported guards have already served in Hong Kong for several years. Employers commonly observe that these staff members tend to be younger, physically capable, and willing to take up demanding shifts. Over time, many have demonstrated strong discipline, positive attitudes, and reliable work performance, earning the respect of supervisors and local colleagues.

Despite this, current policies classify imported guards strictly as supplementary labour, meaning they are not allowed to advance beyond their entry-level positions, even when they have proven their capability or have taken on responsibilities comparable to local staff. Industry stakeholders therefore suggest that the Government consider moderately relaxing the relevant restrictions to allow limited promotion opportunities for long-serving, well-performing imported personnel, while ensuring that such adjustments do not displace local workers or undermine local career prospects.

Education Institutions

Integrate Communication and Service Excellence into Security Training

Modern security roles require strong communication and customer-service skills. Training should prepare personnel to act as confident first points of contact, handling inquiries, giving assistance, and maintaining a calm, professional presence.

Key areas include clear communication, active listening, and conflict resolution, along with the ability to explain procedures and reassure the public. These skills are especially important in residential, office, and hospitality settings where security and customer service overlap.

Embedding these competencies into training programmes will help produce security professionals who both safeguard premises and deliver a positive experience for residents, visitors, and clients.

Integrate Technology Skills into Security Training

As security work becomes more technology-driven, training programmes must equip personnel to operate modern systems. Institutions should include practical instruction on surveillance platforms, access control systems, and emerging tools such as AI-enabled monitoring and robotics. Hands-on practice with real or simulated equipment is essential so graduates can apply these skills confidently in the field. Strengthening technological competence will help build a workforce ready for a rapidly evolving industry.

Strengthening Industry Links to Create Real Career Pathways

Educational institutions should complement classroom learning with direct industry engagement. Strong partnerships with security employers can provide structured internships and on-site training, giving students practical exposure to real operations. These collaborations also help institutions align their programmes with current industry needs. Offering career guidance and job-matching support further enables students to transition smoothly into the workforce. Strengthening these links will build a reliable pipeline of well-prepared security professionals.

Industry Insights and Career Pathways for Security Professionals

Educational institutions should bring industry exposure into the classroom through regular briefings and career talks. Inviting practitioners, such as control room leads, site supervisors, compliance managers, and technology specialists, helps students understand real work environments, emerging tools, and required skills. These sessions should also outline clear career pathways, from entry-level roles to specialist positions in data centres, logistics hubs, and high-security transport.

Institutions can further improve programme relevance by aligning content with the Specification of Competency Standards, ensuring students develop practical skills in communication, incident response, technology operation, documentation, and basic legal awareness. Together, industry engagement and competency-based curricula strengthen employability and provide a clearer route from training to long-term careers in modern security.

Employers

Ensure Robust Entry Training for High-Value Asset Security Roles

Security personnel assigned to critical sites, such as data centres, financial institutions, and other high-value facilities—need structured onboarding that goes beyond basic protocols. Training should cover advanced technical requirements, regulatory compliance, and site-specific risk management. In the aviation sector, for example, one organisation requires a 12-day onboarding programme supported by ongoing refresher training, demonstrating the value of rigorous preparation. Adopting similar standards would strengthen professionalism, reduce errors, and ensure personnel are ready for complex, high-stakes environments.

Align Pay with Role Demands to Attract and Retain Talent

Employers should review and upgrade pay and benefits across all security grades to reflect job demands, irregular hours, public-facing duties, and incident response responsibilities. Competitive compensation, covering base salary, allowances, fair overtime, and meaningful benefits, helps attract talent, improve retention, and reduce the recurring costs of turnover and retraining, while signalling that security work is a valued profession.

Strengthen Career Pathways to Improve Retention

To reduce turnover and build workforce stability, the industry needs clear career development pathways. Employers should introduce tiered roles, such as basic security officer and advanced technology specialist, to reflect different career ambitions and skill levels. This approach supports staff in developing transferable skills like problem-solving, communication, and customer service, while preparing them for future growth. Transparent progression frameworks are essential for retaining experienced personnel and building a sustainable talent pipeline.

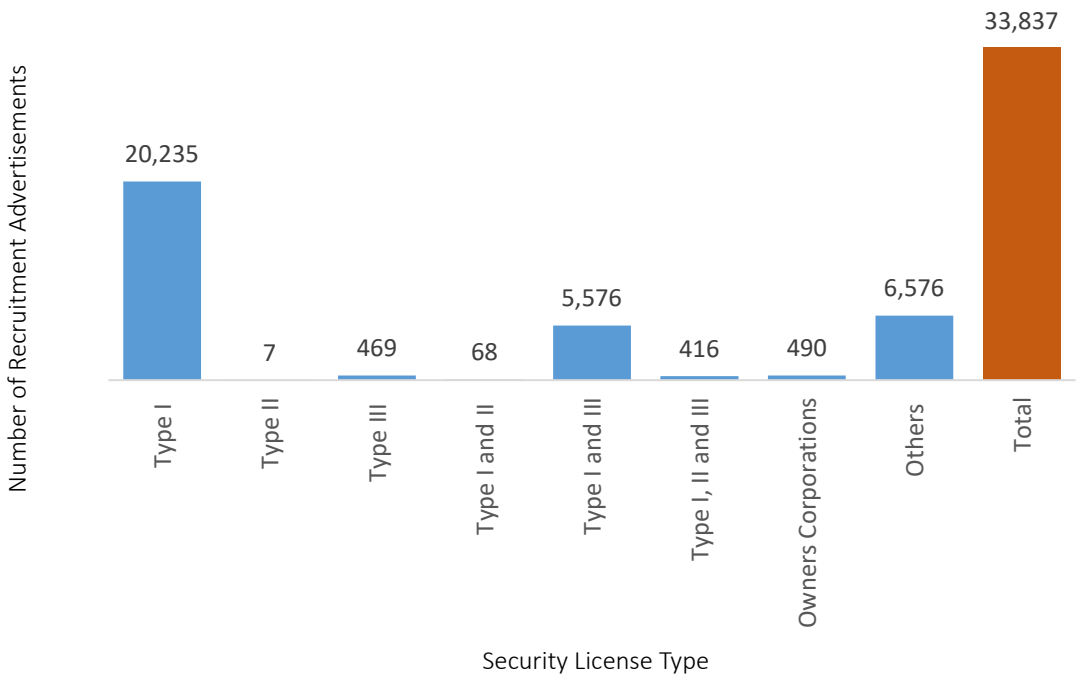
Drive Engagement Through Skill-Based Rewards

To strengthen retention and raise industry standards, employers should implement incentive programmes that recognise continuous learning and exceptional performance. Offering benefits such as performance bonuses, extra paid leave, or exclusive perks for completing advanced training or handling complex assignments can motivate security personnel to invest in their professional growth. These reward systems not only encourage skill development but also create a culture of excellence, ensuring that top talent remains committed to the organisation

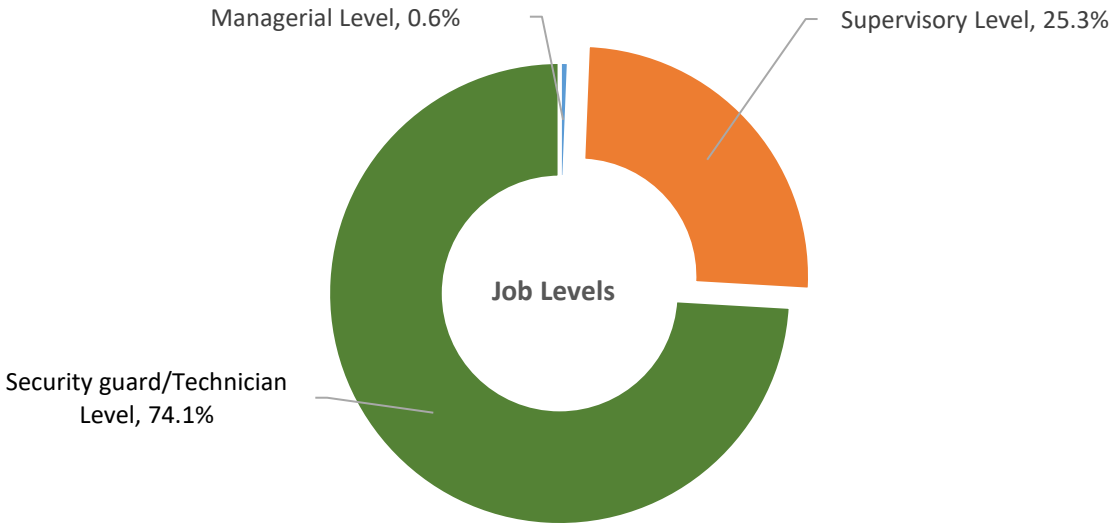
Statistics of Desk Research

The following data presents the number of security services–related recruitment advertisements by license type, the percentage distribution of job levels, the proportion of full-time and part-time security guard positions, the monthly salary ranges of security personnel in recruitment advertisements, the percentage distribution of security guard advertisements by shift system, and the regional distribution of security guard posts, as captured by the desk research conducted between August 2024 and July 2025:

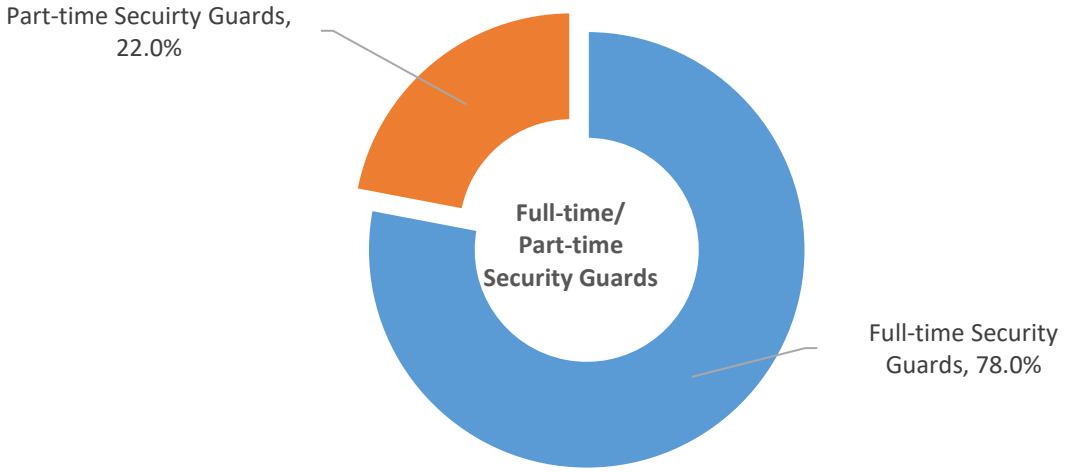
The Number of Security Services-related Recruitment Advertisements Captured by License Type



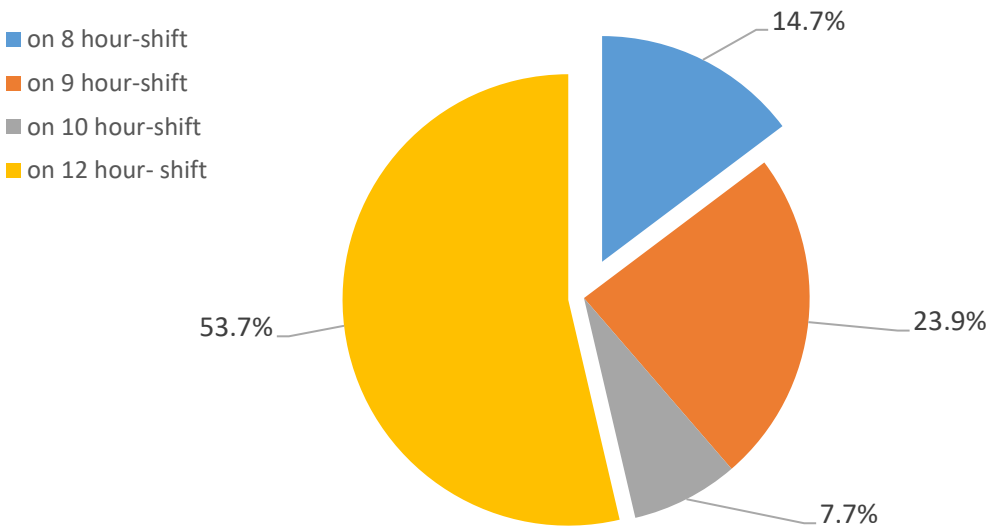
Distribution of Recruitment Advertisements Across Job Levels



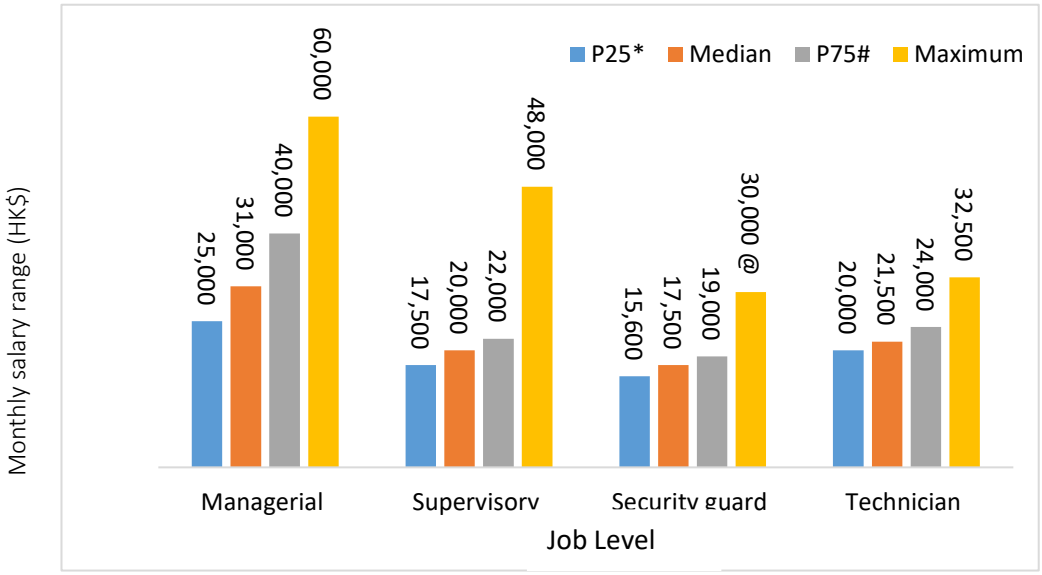
Distribution of Recruitment Advertisements for Full-Time and Part-Time Security Guard Roles



Percentage of Security Guard Recruitment Advertisements by Shift System



Monthly Salary Ranges for Security Personnel in Recruitment Advertisements by Job Level

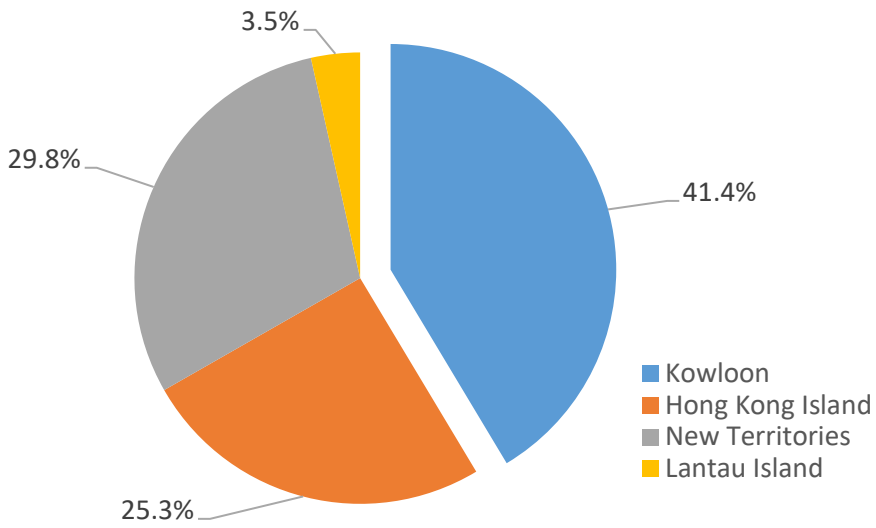


*P25 = the salary level where 25% of salaries are lower, and 75% are higher.

#75 = the salary level where 75% of salaries are lower, and 25% are higher.

@ security guards received this salary should fulfill special requirements such as proficiency in English and a presentable appearance, particularly for positions in high-end residential developments.

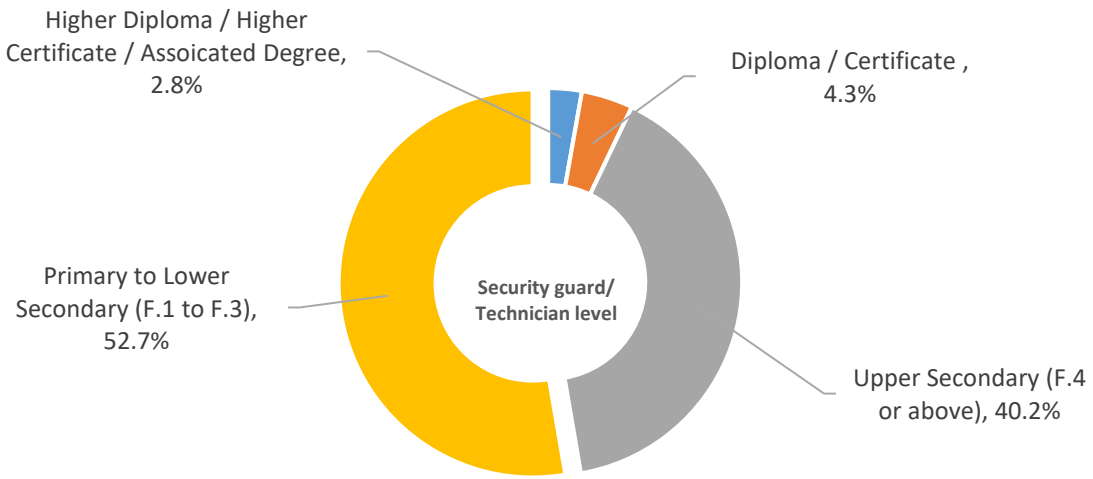
Percentage Distribution of Security Guard Posts by Region in Recruitment Advertisements

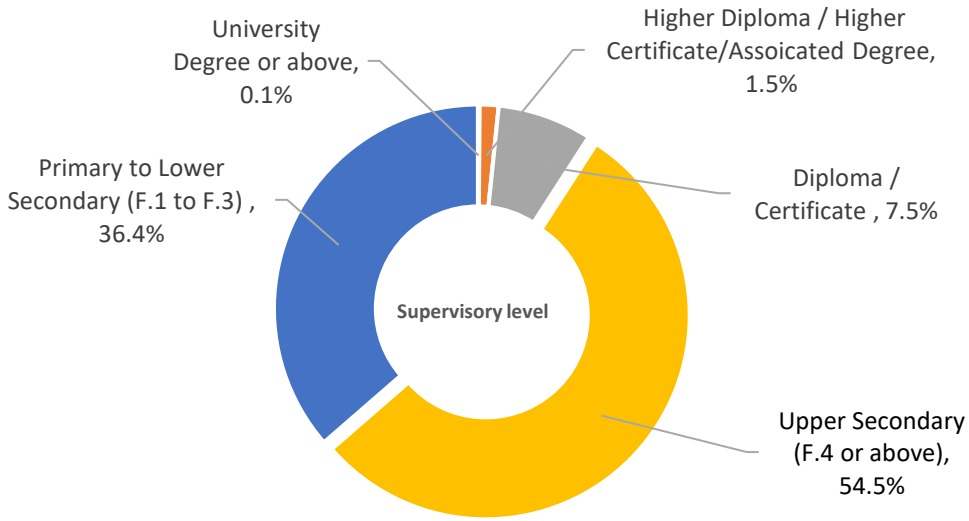


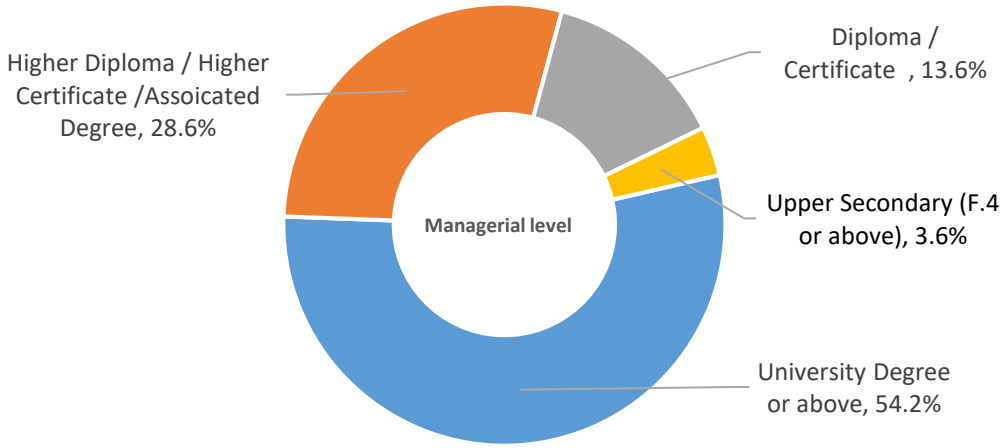
Required Qualifications and Work Experience

The Desk research retrieved 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 August 2024 to July 2025 are summarised below:

The Qualification Requirements Outlined in Recruitment Advertisements for Security Services Personnel by job level







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