



By Jack Kohane

You may not be aware of this, but Canada's private security industry is undergoing unprecedented public scrutiny, primarily due to the enactment of new legislation that is governing the methods security firms provide, maintain and administer their security-related services.

Over the past few years, a raft of revised regulations, such as Ontario's Bill 159, the Private Security and Investigative Services Act (PSISA), have aimed at upgrading licensing, training, standards and qualifications of security practitioners. There will also be mandatory training under PSISA for other licensed personnel, including retail loss-prevention officers, bouncers, bodyguards and in-house private investigators.

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CANADIAN BUSINESSES THAT EMPLOY SECURITY GUARDS TO PROTECT BOTH PROPERTY AND STAFF ARE IN A BETTER POSITION TO IMPROVE THEIR RESPECTIVE SECURITY POSTURE NOW THAT MORE AND MORE PROVINCES ARE MANDATING SECURITY PRACTITIONERS POSSESS A MINIMUM LEVEL OF TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

dustry and for business owners who rely on security companies to protect their staff and property," insists Jean Taillon, the president and chief executive officer of G4S Security Services (Canada), a leading global security solutions firm and one of Canada's largest private security providers. Referring to the recent passing by the Ontario government of Bill 159, Taillon says he is pleased to see a code of conduct being established for licensees in the province.

"Until now," he adds, "a mom-and-pop shop could run a security guard service on

the kitchen table. Thankfully, Bill 159 will raise the bar for the whole security industry in this province."

Pointing out that G4S's specially trained personnel are assigned to commercial operations ranging from office buildings, shopping centres and warehouses, Taillon emphasizes his security officers are educated about potential workplace hazards and know how to prevent the loss of property through theft or sabotage in any kind of environment. "We've been doing for years much of what

Bill 159 sets out. Our brand and reputation depend on it.”

Outside of Ontario, most provinces have had some form of security guard and private investigator legislation in place for more than 40 years. What has changed now is that legislation is, or will be, updated to encompass both in-house security (not previously regulated), as well as contract security guard companies.

Key factors driving provinces to review and alter their respective legislation include the need for public safeguards and accountability mechanisms when security personnel have control over the movement of citizens in publicly accessible private spaces; apprehending subjects committing offenses such as shoplifting, causing disturbances or trespassing; and the need to protect the health and safety of security practitioners.

Updated legislation, such as Manitoba’s Private Investigators and Security Guards Act, Quebec’s Private Security Act, and British Columbia’s Security Services Act, also include mandatory training, regulations for uniforms, vehicles and carrying equipment such as handcuffs and batons, and using guard dogs. Some provinces, though not all, have expanded the scope of the legislation to encompass locksmiths and security consultants. A background check with no criminal record is a must nowadays. Businesses need to be familiar with the legislation in their respective province to know which of their job positions are affected by the legislation.

“Higher level security officer functions have become more sophisticated and include a broader range of life safety and security services that include fire safety, emergency response, as well as advanced security systems,” explains Ted Carroll, founder and president of Mississauga, Ont.-based Policing & Security Management Services, specializing in security management consulting services. “As a best practice, these positions require higher standards in the areas of hiring, training and supervisory monitoring.”

Responding to the question of how all these changes will impact Canadian businesses secured by private guard companies, Carroll says that for some businesses that employ contract security, there will be minimal impact with regulatory compliance since this is the primary responsi-

bility of the contract guard company.

“In some cases, corporations that previously employed in-house security personnel have decided to contract out these services for this reason,” he suggests. “More vigilant companies wisely take a risk-based approach when managing security guard contracts to ensure that service agreements, the work environment and associated risks, job descriptions, policies and procedures, and statutory regulations are all consistent and congruent. Even though services are contracted out, there is still a due diligence requirement for corporations to ensure that contractors are competent in properly carrying out their work on behalf of the property owner.”

Rob Bingham with HMV, one of Canada’s largest music and movie retailers, believes the introduction of Bill 159 represents a positive direction for the industry and end users of security services.

“It will create a consistent base of training and application of the laws as it relates to security services carried out in the field,” states the director of security and loss prevention from his office in Toronto, adding most of HMV’s guard services are now being outsourced to private agencies. “HMV has only a small in-house team so we are just keeping up to speed on compliance to licensing and training, but the impact is negligible for us from an operations perspective.”

As director of security and life safety for western Canada for property management giant, Brookfield Properties, Glen Kitteringham oversees about 100 security staff protecting more than eight million square feet of high-end commercial high-rise real estate. From his perspective all new security rules and regulations help create more highly skilled guards who can multi-task.

“Our security staff,” he says, “not only conduct investigations and monitor CCTV systems, they also make announcements of a fire alarm over public announcement systems, administer first aid/CPR, and deal with everyone from the president of the company to undesirables with the same level of professionalism.”

Asked if this deluge of legislation will translate into increased costs to Canadian businesses, Kitteringham replies that higher salaries, benefits for staff, employee

retention programs will all cost money. “As organizations look at increased costs [of security,] they will demand more and more from their security departments, whether contract or in-house. Security managers will need to show the value that they provide to their clients.”

Characterizing the current relationship between private security and public policing, Kitteringham says it’s essentially based on building personal relationships between individuals in both sectors. The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police has a Private Sector Liaison Committee and most senior police management officials in Canada see the vital role played by private security.

“We understand each other’s issues, which are often the same issues,” he observes. “There is cross training going on all the time where security people are training law enforcement, and law enforcement people are training security people. We conduct joint initiatives, intelligence sharing, and are developing joint emergency response protocols. Where people work together, things are great.”

With more provincial legislation governing the security sector becoming the law of the land across many jurisdictions, most industry experts agree this will bring a plethora of positive outcomes.

“There are a number of training companies in existence who do really care about the industry and provide high quality training, and customers in increasing numbers are willing to pay for acquiring the very best security staff,” Kitteringham comments.

Carroll agrees, remarking that this changing security landscape will usher in higher standards for the industry, intended to better serve both customers and security guard practitioners. “And it’s about time!” he declares. ■

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SOURCES

- G4S Security Services (Canada)** • www.g4s.ca
- Garda** • www.garda.ca
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