Case Study: Security Guard - Samantha

What do you do?

Security guards patrol property, ensure security and write reports on any activity. We defuse any criminal activity and escort trespassers away from the property.

Some buildings have access control, which means only certain people are allowed in particular areas of a building. Some security guards do crowd control at large concerts and other gatherings.

I drive a car similar to a police vehicle and conduct spot checks on properties. If someone's alarm goes off, I am the first person on the scene.

What is your background?

I heard about the security field through a friend who really liked the job. I had nothing to lose, so I began sending out my CV once I finished school.

Soon after, I was employed by a security firm. I like the prestige of wearing a uniform for my job every day.

What characteristics do you need to be successful in your job?

In my position, organisation is the key to a good working environment, considering that my office is a car.

In some cases, when a person becomes verbally or even physically abusive, you need to be able to defend yourself. You need a ‘take charge’ attitude.

What other jobs could you do using the skills from this job?

Security officers could work as customs, immigration or police officers, if they get the right training.

What changes will there be in the future?

I believe the demand for security officers will increase, as there is a greater need for privately employed security, including security officers and alarm systems.

What are the biggest challenges in your job?

The most challenging aspect of my job is simply staying awake when working the night shift. The other challenge is staying calm when in tricky situations, such as an argument with a trespasser.

Are there many opportunities to enter this career?

There are always opportunities for security officers due to high employee turnover. Many security officers only stay in their jobs for two or three years.

What do you like about your job?

I like the sense of accomplishment I get from doing my job well. It feels good knowing that people can depend on me to ensure the security of their property, by managing their alarm systems and keeping watch for suspicious people.

It is also rewarding to know that I play a role in keeping society safe, by arresting or assisting in the arrest of criminals.

Another thing I like is being able to succeed in a career that is not traditionally considered a job for females. It feels
good to have proven myself as a security guard and to have earned the respect of the male guards, who didn't think I
would be able to do the work.

And finally, I like the profile I have in the community as a security guard. I like the fact that people trust me and feel
comfortable coming to me if they are in trouble and in need of help.

What do you dislike about your job?

The thing I dislike most about being a security guard is having to work nights. I work four nights in a row and then get
four days off.

While I am working, I don't see much daylight, especially in the winter. And on the days off, my body just starts getting
used to getting up during the day, when it is time to start working nights again.

Another thing I don't like is the stress of knowing that the potential for violence exists. I try to avoid confrontations
whenever possible, but when you are in the business of protecting property, it is inevitable that you will end up in
some potentially dangerous situations.

The potential for violence is always in the back of my mind when I am patrolling dark areas in the middle of the night.

Finally, I dislike being stuck in traffic when an alarm is going off at one of the buildings that I look after.

What advice would you give to someone interested in your career?

Learn about the different types of security, such as event security, corporate security, etc. Then decide which type
you find most interesting and suits your personality.

Also, you should be level-headed, treat people with respect and try to avoid confrontations when possible.

A day in the life

5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Arrive at work. Get information from the officers on the day shift. Read reports from the day of any incidents and
consult with colleagues.

6:00 pm - 3:00 am

Start shift. Conduct mobile spot checks. Drive around and make sure the houses and buildings are secure, that no
one is trespassing and that no suspicious characters are about.

3:00 am - 4:00 am

Write reports indicating that there were no incidents or suspicious activity during my shift.

4:00 am - 5:00 am

Drive back to the security office. Give report to the next shift's security officers.