

Standardizing the rank and pay of security professionals

The expectations on security professionals are increasing.

Security professionals are increasingly being assigned roles that were previously the purview of the police: patrolling high-risk areas, walking beats, enforcing bylaws, issuing parking and transit tickets, trespassing individuals, responding to alarms, etc. Additionally, there is anecdotal evidence that society is becoming less tolerant, and quicker to violence.

Security professionals are increasingly expected to engage in challenging, dangerous, and litigious situations to keep the peace and minimize harm to their client. Critically, they are neither trained nor compensated for these responsibilities.

- Police recruits train for between eight and twelve months, plus have post-specific, continuing education, and recertification requirements.
- In most provinces, prospective security professionals complete a 32 to 54 hour conceptual basic security training course (all theory; no practical) to obtain a security license. There are no post-specific, continuing education, or recertification requirements.
- In four provinces and the territories, security professionals require zero training.

Security professionals and security employers identify the lack of training and high turnover as the biggest impediments to effective security services.

For many posts and in some companies, security professionals are treated as interchangeable.

The lack of training and lack of recognition (status and compensation) results in an industry with a demoralized workforce, reduced work ethic, high turnover, and poor service to the client and society. These are antithetical to a professional association.

This paper proposes rank and pay structures so that security professionals are trained and recognized for their capabilities. To benefit the security worker, security employer, their client, and society, advancement is tied to training.

CA*SP acknowledges that some people are temporary and may not want to advance in the security industry. This proposal allows a security professional to stay at level 1 indefinitely, with no additional training beyond the mandatory basic security training (BST).

Standardized rank

Many professions have a formalized rank structure: the military and university professoriate, for example. Other professions have a natural and accepted hierarchy: engineering, physicians, business executives, administrators, etc. Advancement in rank or moving up the hierarchy results in greater responsibility, greater recognition, and increased pay.

The Canadian security industry has no formalized rank structure. Some security companies treat all security professionals the same, until they become a supervisor. Same pay. Same responsibilities. Interchangeable at posts. Other security companies have adopted a rank structure. These companies often take their ranks from the military or police.

It is not possible for **CA⁺SP** to propose named ranks, because some Canadian jurisdictions prevent the use of terminology that might confuse the public. These jurisdictions prohibit the use of terms including “officer”, “detective”, and military ranks.

As such, **CA⁺SP** proposes generic terms for the levels a security professional could attain with years of service and continuing education. Individual security companies can assign ranks to these levels using terms permitted in their jurisdiction.

The table below presents three levels of security professional, and the roles and responsibilities that each level can accept.

<u>level</u>	<u>service</u>	<u>responsibilities</u>
Security Management	5 years	company and account management
Security Professional 3	5 years	can qualify for <i>advanced</i> roles
Security Professional 2	2 years	can qualify for <i>intermediate</i> roles
Security Professional 1	initial	front-line security professional

<u>Intermediate roles</u> • field training officer • K9 handler • tactical security • ...	<u>Advanced roles</u> • security trainer • security supervisor • security consultant • executive protection • client liaison • ...	<i>all roles require training and employer approval</i>
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The statement, “all roles require training and employer approval” is important. In all companies, management is responsible for assigning roles. Security professionals should work with their company management to ensure that their training interests and the company’s needs align.

Continuing education

CA⁺SP’s surveys show that a lack of quality training is the biggest barrier to effective performance as a security professional. As such, it makes sense to link advancement in rank with training. To advance to a level, and to retain that level, a security professional must complete the stated minimum term at the lower rank, plus 30 hours of training annually (calculated on a three-year rolling average).

Rank/level is directly tied to continuing education training.

In consultation with the security industry, CA⁺SP identified numerous topics for advanced training, and is working with subject-matter experts to develop courses that cover these topics. The growing repertoire of courses is available at training.CASP.ca

CA⁺SP calculates that adding 1 \$/hr more to an employment contract would pay for at least 30 hours of training, and pay the security professional to take the training.

As stated previously, some people are temporary and may not want to advance in the security industry. Nothing prevents a security professional from staying at level 1 indefinitely.

Benefits

Adopting a standard rank/level structure is part of professionalizing the security industry, and has significant benefits for security professionals, security employers, their clients, and society.

Security professionals will be better trained, safer, more comfortable, and more confident in their roles. They can focus their learning into a specific area of the security industry, and have credentials to show their progression. Security professionals will be recognized for their experience, and can be assigned roles and responsibilities based on their experience and training. All this will result in better service to the client and a safer environment for workers and the public. Over time, this will translate into greater respect from clients and workers.

Security employers will have quantitative metrics on their security employees, so can better assign them to client posts. Security employers can assess the growing capabilities and limitations of their employees through their success in continuing education. Giving employees the opportunity to advance through continuing education, and assigning them to posts that align with their training, benefits the client, thereby strengthening that relationship. It also shows respect for employees, which will be reciprocated as employee retention and greater willingness of employees to contribute to client and company longevity.

To ensure commitment to training from their security employees, an employer could choose to pay for a given course once, or to only reimburse an employee after they pass the course.

Clients will better understand the potential capabilities of the security professionals, and understand the contract pricing. They will be able to select the number of level 1, 2, and 3 security professionals for their worksite, and dictate the required training of these security professionals. The increased cost of level 2 and 3 security professionals is offset by their knowledge, experience, and training, which creates a safer environment. The client can assign posts by level. Similarly, insurance providers may reduce premiums knowing that the security professionals have advanced training.

Clients can request confirmation of training to confirm required training.

Society is safer and receives better service. Over time, the reputation of security professionals increases.

Responsibilities and internal checks

To ensure capable and competent security services,

- *security professionals* are responsible for identifying and requesting training
- *security employers* are responsible for providing them with time to complete the training
- *clients* are responsible for confirming training

Current pay range

A common belief amongst security professionals is that they are poorly paid. The table at right shows the distribution of security professional wages at the 10th (low), 50th (median), and 90th (high) percentile.

The closeness of the low and median wages indicates a large number of low wages.

The low end is close to the minimum wage for that jurisdiction. Most deem the low end to be inappropriately low, given the roles and responsibilities.

However, there is an average 71 % increase from the low to high ends of the wage range. This range is consistent with other professions.

	low	median	high
BC	17.40	21.00	31.25
Alberta	15.00	20.00	36.06
Saskatchewan	15.00	19.00	27.00
Manitoba	15.80	16.44	25.88
Ontario	17.20	19.00	31.45
Quebec	18.00	20.49	30.00
New Brunswick	15.65	17.00	22.50
Nova Scotia	15.70	16.40	23.00
Prince Edward Island	16.00	17.00	23.85
Newfoundland & Labrador	16.00	18.00	27.00
Yukon	—	—	—
Nunavut	19.00	23.62	34.00
Northwest Territories	18.00	21.00	28.00
Canada	16.56	19.08	28.33

Source: Government of Canada wage report, December 2024.

Standardized pay

A standardized pay scale ensures fair compensation of security professionals. Quebec is already doing this, in their *Decree respecting security guards*.

CA[★]SP proposes that a security professional's wage be tied to their level and responsibilities.

CA[★]SP has adapted the Quebec *Decree* to create the following premium-based wage scale, and created a structured wage calculation. There is still flexibility in the structure for considerations not listed, to be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

The sample wage assumes a minimum wage of 16 \$/hr, which was the Canadian average in 2024.

Base wage		new	FTO	tactical	supervisor	
Security Professional 3	min. + 8.00				•	
Security Professional 2	min. + 4.00		•	•		
Security Professional 1	min. + 2.00	•				
Additional responsibilities*		premium				
first-aid response team	0.50			•	•	
fire or hazmat response team	0.50			•	•	
required to wear civilian clothes	0.50					
authorized to physically intervene	2.00			•	•	
working in an <i>intermediate</i> role (SP2 or SP3)	2.00		•	•		
working in an <i>advanced</i> role (SP3 only)	4.00				•	
required to use their personal vehicle (plus 70 ¢/km)	2.00					
law enforcement liaison; video retrieval	0.50			•	•	
authorized to issue bylaw citations	3.00					
required bilingual	0.50					
required to carry firearm	6.00					
evening shift (1800 to 2359)	2.50					
night shift (0000 to 0800)	5.00					
location premium (remote, expensive, travel, etc.)	varies					
other considerations (danger, duration, profile, etc.)	varies					
*. Training and recertification paid by employer.		Hourly wage:	18.00	22.00	25.50	31.50
Source: adapted from the Quebec <i>Decree respecting security guards</i> .						

Source: adapted from the Quebec *Decree respecting security guards*.

Also shown on the wage scale are examples of a security professional who is new, working as a field-training officer, working as a tactical security professional, and working as a supervisor. These wages are minimum for the positions. For example, the new security professional could be the site first-aid attendant. The FTO will very likely have other responsibilities. For example, any of these security professionals could be authorized to issue bylaw citations, or they could be working an evening or night shift. All of these increase their wage.

The evening and night shift premiums integrate the increased risk associated with working with fewer people around and working at night.

Comparing the wage scale to the current distribution of security professional wages, the wage scale starts slightly higher because the proposed level 1 wage is above the provincial minimum wage. On the high end, the wage scale is higher than most current jurisdictions. Security professionals earning the higher wages will have significantly more experience, training, and regular recertification.

Summary of benefits

Adopting a standard for rank and pay is part of professionalizing the security industry, and has significant benefits for security professionals, security employers, their clients, and society.

Security professionals will be better trained, safer, more comfortable, and more confident in their roles. Security professionals will be recognized for their experience, and can be assigned roles and responsibilities based on their experience and training. Regular increases in rank and pay, plus recognition, will result in greater job satisfaction and increased retention.

Security employers who give employees the opportunity to advance through continuing education, and assign them to posts that align with their training, will provide the client with better security services and build a respectful employee-employer relationship.

Clients better understand the capabilities of level 1, 2, and 3 security professionals, are able to select the number of level 1, 2, and 3 security professionals for their worksite, and can dictate the required training of these security professionals.

Society is safer and receives better service. Over time, the reputation of security professionals and the security industry increases.