

Professionalizing security training

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*Some security companies provide in-house training to their security professionals. Former employees have varying opinions on these courses. An extreme example is a client who wanted all security professionals to have a communication course. The company gave each security professional a completion certificate for the course, and told them to take the course when they had time. **This is not in anyone's interest!***

Executive summary

Across Canada, security professionals are increasingly assigned to high-risk roles that were historically the responsibility of the police. Current training does not prepare security professionals for the increasingly challenging, dangerous, and litigious situations they are expected to engage in. This is exemplified by the sudden increase in on-duty deaths: one from 2000 to 2019, and seven from 2020 to 2025. (CASP is currently collecting data on injuries.)

In-house training by security employers is hindered by competing interests: quality training vs low-cost security services. To be viable, the priority must be low-cost security services, resulting in short, superficial, and/or outdated courses. Substandard training gives clients a false sense of protection, and results in security professionals' getting injured and killed. Legally, providing substandard training may constitute negligence and fraud. Security companies also strive to keep their courses private, preventing independent review of the content and instructional strategies.

CASP is an independent organization focused on professionalizing the security industry. CASP is positioned to bring together the security industry, security trainers, and curriculum developers to develop training and accreditation standards to professionalize the security industry for the betterment of everyone involved.

The current security industry

In most Canadian jurisdictions, security professionals require a one-time 32 to 54 hour basic security training (BST) course to obtain a security license. This BST course is completely conceptual. In other jurisdictions, *zero* training is required.

Since approximately 2020, security professionals are being assigned to increasingly dangerous posts — posts that were once the responsibility 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 greater overt hostility and more brazen and violent criminals. Despite this, many security professionals receive *zero* additional training, yet they are expected to engage in these increasingly challenging, dangerous, and litigious situations.

From 2000 to 2019, *one* security professional was killed while on duty. From 2020 to 2025, *seven* security professionals have been killed. **CA[★]SP** is currently collecting data on security professional injuries — preliminary findings indicate a similar increase in workplace injuries.

Clients are increasingly expressing frustration with the status quo. “Observe and report” security professionals do not stop crime, and the criminals know it. Clients want security professionals who can safely and effectively engage in situations. Stop assaults. Stop thefts. Stop vandalism. Protect people. Arrest perpetrators. Current training fails to prepare security professionals for the challenging, dangerous, and litigious situations they are expected to engage in.

To address the lack of training, some security companies developed in-house training programs. This is excellent in spirit, but several issues have arisen:

- there is little to no transparency on the instructional material
- there is no independent quality control on the instructional material
- there is no independent quality control on the instructional strategies
- there is potential to falsify training records

Conflicting interests

The introduction to this document exemplifies the last bullet: a security professional reported to **CA[★]SP** that they were given a certificate for the in-house communication course, were told to tell the client that they have a certificate in effective communications (technically true), and were told to take the course on their own time. Nothing about this is honest or ethical. This is an extreme story, but not the only one that describes questionable training.

A security company that also provides training has conflicting interests: quality training vs low-cost security services. As contracts usually go to the lowest bidder, even respectable security companies must sacrifice training to survive. Training is treated as a cost that must be minimized, instead of an investment in quality services and safety. Minimizing cost takes several forms:

- short and superficial courses
- outdated courses
- low assessment standards

Substandard training gives clients a false sense of protection, and results in security professionals getting injured and killed. Legally, providing substandard training may constitute negligence and fraud.

Security companies also protect their courses behind firewalls, limited release of course material, and have learners sign confidentiality agreements. Ostensibly, this is to protect their intellectual property. It also prevents independent review of the course material and instructional practices.

Professionalizing the security industry

Advanced quality training is critical to professionalizing the security industry, and critical to ensuring the safety and effectiveness of security professionals.

In established professions, education and training are governed by independent oversight bodies of members, instead of employers. The government mandates membership and continuing education, and the professional body sets training standards, accredits trainers and training, and often organizes training. Examples include the societies and associations of lawyers, engineers, teachers, accountants, physicians, and police.

Empowering an independent body to organize and manage security training addresses the issues identified previously. This would allow for

- national training and accreditation standards developed with stakeholder input
- curriculum and instructional transparency
- regular review and revision
- accreditation of training providers
- independent verification of a specific learner's training
- labor mobility across jurisdictions

If the security industry is to professionalize, training must be standardized and managed by an oversight body.

CA[★]SP is an independent organization, established with the mandate to professionalize the security industry through training and advocacy.

CA[★]SP brings together subject-matter experts and instructional designers to create interesting, engaging, and learner-centered courses.

In consultation with industry, CA[★]SP has published several documents proposing changes that improve training and professionalize the security industry:

- *National Basic Security Training Standards*
- *Accreditation of security training*
- *Efficacy of instructional modalities*
- *Best practices in course development*

CA[★]SP supports a training system that prioritizes safety, competence, and accountability. Effective training provides knowledge and/or skill so that a security professional is more capable in their post, making them safer and more effective. This benefits everyone.