

# BUREAU OF SECURITY AND INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES

2420 Del Paso Rd., Suite 270, Sacramento, CA 95834  
(916) 322-4000 or (800) 952-5210 | [www.bsis.ca.gov](http://www.bsis.ca.gov)



STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
BUSINESS, CONSUMER SERVICES, AND HOUSING AGENCY  
GOVERNOR EDMUND G. BROWN JR.

## PRIVATE SECURITY INDUSTRIES – WHO MUST BE LICENSED

The Bureau regulates “security” personnel through two practice acts in the Business and Professions Code (BPC): the Private Security Services Act (PSS Act) and the Proprietary Security Services Act (Proprietary Act).

### Private Security Services Act Private Patrol Operator (PPO)

1. Person/Business that employs security guard(s) (SG) and contracts them out to another person/business must hold PPO license
2. Person licensed as PPO may perform SG duties without holding SG registration
3. SG must be employee on PPO payroll; independent contractor (i.e. “1099”) not permitted
4. PPO may employ unarmed or armed SG (firearm or baton)
5. PPO **cannot** employ Proprietary Private Security Officer (PSO) and contract that PSO out to another person/business
6. **UNLICENSED ACTIVITY:** BPC 7582.3 mandates licensure. Misdemeanor pursuant to BPC 7582.3 (b) and misdemeanor pursuant to BPC 16240.

### Proprietary Act Proprietary Security Employer (PSE)

1. Person/Business that employs proprietary private security officer (PSO) must hold PSE registration if PSO wears distinctive uniform identifying them as “security” **and** PSO interacts with public when performing private security duties
2. Person with PSE registration may not perform PSO duties unless they also hold a PSO registration
3. PSO must be employee on PSE payroll; independent contractor (i.e. “1099”) not permitted
4. **PSE cannot employ armed PSO or armed SG** (firearm or baton)
5. PSE cannot contract out PSO to another person/business
6. **UNLICENSED ACTIVITY:** BPC 7574.12 mandates licensure. Misdemeanor pursuant to BPC 16240.

## EXEMPTIONS TO BUREAU LICENSURE/ REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

1. An unarmed individual providing security services only for, and directly to, a private business or person **and** who is not in a distinctive uniform identifying them as security is exempt from licensure. For example, an unarmed bouncer, loss prevention employee, or bodyguard not in a distinctive uniform identifying them as providing security services.
2. An armed or unarmed individual providing security services and employed by a federal, state, or local agency or a political subdivision of the state.

A licensee shall present his/her Bureau-issued identification card to any peace officer or Bureau representative upon demand. (CCR: Title 16, Div. 7, § 608.3)

*E-mail the Bureau at  
[bsis.incidentreports@dca.ca.gov](mailto:bsis.incidentreports@dca.ca.gov)  
regarding any violent incident you encounter  
involving a SG, PSO, PPO or PSE.*

## Private Security Services Act Security Guard (SG)

1. Person employed by PPO to provide security services to another person/business must hold SG registration
2. Armed SG may only be employed by PPO(s)
3. Armed SG must possess BSIS Firearms Permit and only carry firearm of caliber listed on permit
4. Armed SG (baton or firearm) must be in a uniform with shoulder patch and badge approved by Bureau (BPC 7582.27)
5. SG may not contract themselves out for security services unless they also hold a PPO license
6. SG carrying concealed firearm while on duty must possess CCW Permit and a BSIS Firearms Permit
7. **UNLICENSED ACTIVITY:** BPC 7583.9 mandates licensure. Misdemeanor pursuant to BPC 16240.

### NOTE

1. SG or PSO may work pending receipt of registration card with a printout of his/her current registration from the Bureau's website and valid photo identification.

## Proprietary Act Proprietary Security Officer (PSO)

1. Person employed by PSE who wears distinctive uniform identifying them as "security officer" and who interacts with the public while performing private security services must hold PSO registration
2. PSO must be employed by PSE and only provide security services to PSE
3. PSO may not contract out security services
4. PSO may not work for a PPO
5. **PSO may not carry/use a firearm or baton**
6. **UNLICENSED ACTIVITY:** Infraction citation with minimum fine of \$250 and maximum of \$1,000 pursuant to BPC 7574.32 and misdemeanor pursuant to BPC 16240.

2. SG may work armed pending receipt of his/her BSIS Firearms Permit with a printout of his/her current Firearms Permit from Bureau's website and valid photo identification.