

INFORMATION NOTE

For Event Promoters and Organisers on Private Security Authority Licensing of the Event Security Sector

01

Introduction

The Private Security Authority (PSA), an agency of the Department of Justice, is responsible for the regulation of the private security industry in Ireland including the event security sector. Those regulated by the PSA must meet prescribed standards and training requirements. They are also vetted by the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána. Event security is among the sectors subject to licensing by the PSA.

Contractors providing event security services have required a licence since 2014. Since the 1st November 2022, licensing has been extended to those working at events. From that date, all event security personnel must hold a licence issued by the PSA.

The primary aim of PSA licensing is to ensure the security and safety of those attending events and the public at large.

It is an offence for a contractor or an employee to provide event security services without a PSA licence. It is also an offence for any event organiser, promoter or other person to engage an unlicensed contractor or employee.

Event promoters and organisers should familiarise themselves with the requirements of event security licensing. This information note aims to provide an overview of PSA licensing. Event promoters and organisers are directed towards Part 6 of the licensing standard, PSA 39:2014 (*Standard For The Licensing Of Door Supervisor (Event Security) And Security Guard (Event Security) Contractors*). This document is available on our website, www.psa-gov.ie.

02

PSA Licensing

Event security contractors must be licensed by the PSA. It is an offence under the Private Security Services Acts to provide an event security service without a licence or to engage an unlicensed event security provider. Our website contains a register of all licensed contractors.

Event promoters and organisers should when engaging event security services request contractors to provide details of their PSA licence number and the expiry date of the licence. These details should be checked against the register of licence holders on our website to ensure that they are current and valid. The licence should state that it is to provide Door Supervisor (Event Security) and/or Security Guard (Event Security) services.

If you engage a contractor that is not listed on the PSA register, you should be aware that a potential offence has been committed.

03

PSA Compliance

The PSA is obliged to take all legal means to ensure that unlicensed contractors or employees do not provide event security services. The PSA is also required to ensure that all the requirements of PSA licensing are met at an event.

PSA inspectors will visit events often without prior notice. It is an offence to obstruct a PSA inspector or prevent a PSA inspector from accessing an event. Where breaches of PSA licensing are found, this may cause serious disruption or even the cancellation of a planned event at short notice or a future similar event.

The assistance of event promoters and organisers in ensuring that compliance with event security licensing is being met will reduce the possibility of an event being cancelled or disrupted.

04

Event Security Numbers

All event security contractors are required to comply with PSA 39:2014 (*Standard For The Licensing Of Door Supervisor (Event Security) And Security Guard (Event Security) Contractors*).

Clause 6.2.2 of PSA 39:2014 sets out the minimum ratio of event security personnel per patrons as 1 security staff for 250 persons in permanent seats, stands or terraces and 1 security staff for 100 persons in all other areas. These numbers are mandatory and must be met.

Where the number of event security personnel is below the requirements specified in Clause 6.2.2 of PSA 39:2014, the event security contractor must be in possession of a risk assessment which identifies the rationale for the reduced numbers of personnel.

If an event promoter or organiser requires less event security personnel than mandated by the PSA standard, a risk assessment providing details of the mitigating factors which were considered when allocating a reduced number of event security personnel must be produced. The risk assessment must be made available to the event security contractor.

Event stewards may not be used to make up the number of event security personnel required under Clause 6.2.2 of PSA 39:2014.

05

Event Security and Event Stewards

Event security personnel and event stewards undertake different roles. Event stewards may not be used for event security roles and the insurance of licensed contractors does not permit this.

Event stewards are not licensed by the PSA and their role is defined under Clause 2.17 of PSA 39:2014. Tasks which may be undertaken by event stewards include:

- Checking tickets.
- Directing persons to seats, facilities or other areas of a venue during the normal course of an event.
- Providing safety advice and assistance.
- Ensuring all entrances, exits, passageways, stairway and other concourses are kept clear for health and safety purposes.
- Checking and reporting of any matter posing a risk to the health and safety of persons.
- Observation and reporting of crowd dynamics.
- Traffic management.

An Event Steward **may not** undertake any task of a security nature. Such tasks include but are not limited to:

- Preventing unauthorised entry to a venue or any part of a venue.
- Removal of persons from venue.
- Protection of property (inside or outside the venue).
- Protection of persons.
- Searching for and controlling of prohibited goods, items or other objects.

06

Uniform

Event security contractors are required to provide their staff with a uniform/bib in accordance with the provisions of section 4.5 of PSA 39:2014.

The uniform/bib of event security personnel should be readily distinguishable from patrons and other staff or venue employees, including stewards.

The format, colour and design of the uniform/bib should be universal for all event security personnel at an event. Where a number of event security contractors are engaged or where the primary contractor subcontracts to other event security contractors, the event promoter or organiser should mandate a single uniform/bib type for their event.

Where the event promoter or organiser provides its own uniform/bib it should:

- be distinguishable from the uniform/bib of civil protection services and other staff or venue employees, including stewards.
- contain a unique identity number on the front and back. The unique identity number shall be not less than 7 centimetres high and shall be clearly visible when the uniform/bib is worn in normal working environments.

If the uniform/bib of event security staff and event stewards are indistinguishable from each other, the PSA will deem both to be event security staff and subject to PSA licensing.

07

Our Experience

The PSA would also like to share with you some of the knowledge and experience we have gained since the licensing of contractors commenced in 2014.

- There is a limited pool of event security personnel available to contractors. Personnel are often shared among contractors and sub-contracting to other event security contractors is common practice.

At larger events, it wouldn't be unusual to have 4 or 5 event security contractors operating as sub-contractors. Each sub-contractor together with their employees must hold a PSA licence.

- Some event security contractors will commit to several events which are taking place at the same time sometimes with the knowledge that they do not have the staff to fulfil the requirements of these events.

Event promoters/organisers should seek details including PSA licence numbers for the staff they have contracted for. If their provider is sub-contracting to another provider you should obtain the PSA licence number of any sub-contractor and the PSA licence number of their employees.

- The provision of the required number of security personnel for events can be challenging. It has been the practice heretofore to use event stewards for security roles and to bring people with no event experience, often by bus from long distances to provide security services.

With the licensing of security personnel since the 1st November 2022, these options are no longer available to contractors.

- Multiple large events taking place on the same dates will put pressure on contractors to find sufficient numbers of security personnel. This can lead to the use of unlicensed, untrained and unvetted staff at events thereby posing a risk to the safety and welfare of patrons and the general public. Event promoters/organisers should take this into consideration when planning events.

Our mandate is to ensure that PSA licensing is enforced in accordance with legislation. Practices, like some of the above, that are not compatible with regulation and which were used in the past will no longer be acceptable.