

NUJ/IPSA

# GUIDELINES FOR ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN PRIVATE SECURITY OFFICERS AND JOURNALISTS



Generic terms as outlined below will be used in this document.

## GENERIC TERMS

**JOURNALISTS/NEWSGATHERERS** – including reporters, photographers, videographers, TV/Radio commentators, broadcast anchors and crew

**PRIVATE SECURITY OFFICERS (PSOS)** – engaged in such duties as: close protection personnel, door supervisors, public space surveillance (i.e. CCTV operators and overseers, cash and valuables in transit, vehicle immobilising and staff engaged in guarding, Security Officers)

**CIRCUMSTANCES** – Crime scenes, political events, demonstrations, public and private events generally, venue premises, health incidents and circumstances that may be of public interest

# Guidance for reporters, photographers and news crews (generically referred to as ‘journalists’) and Private Security Officers (PSOs) for engaging with one another in the course of their duties

This guidance is the start of an engagement between the NUJ (National Union of Journalists) and IPSA (International Professional Security Association). It is the first of its kind in the quest for a better understanding of how both journalists and PSOs conduct their work.

Both industries have regulators, independent and governmental. Both sectors consider themselves as professional in the conduct of their work. The professional ethics for journalists are expressed in the **NUJ Code of Conduct**. For PSOs professional ethics and guidance are expressed in the **IPSA Ethical Code of Conduct** and the **SIA draft Code of Conduct**.

This guidance aims to support journalists and PSOs to better understand each other’s roles and duties. We want a simple outcome: the facilitation of mutual respect and understanding when their work brings them into contact.

This is the start of a journey that will help foster good relationships and best practice for two sectors considered as key workers. The guide should be used in the context of diversity and equality in each of the two professions. The Equality Act became law in 2010. It covers everyone in Britain and protects people from discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to their ‘protected characteristic’: there are 9 categories under the Act to include their sex, race, disability, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.



### NUJ Code of Conduct

[www.nuj.org.uk/about-us/rules-and-guidance/code-of-conduct.html](http://www.nuj.org.uk/about-us/rules-and-guidance/code-of-conduct.html)



### IPSA Ethical Code of Conduct

[www.ipsa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/IPSA-Ethical-Code-of-Conduct-V2.pdf](http://www.ipsa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/IPSA-Ethical-Code-of-Conduct-V2.pdf)



### SIA draft Code of Conduct

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/951505/sia-draft-code-of-conduct.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/951505/sia-draft-code-of-conduct.pdf)

## JOURNALISTS

Journalists are the eyes and ears of the public. Their role is to report on matters of public interest. Freedom of the press is essential to democracy as this facilitates broad public knowledge and understanding and allows public bodies and those with power to be held to account, thus assisting in the protection of the rights of all citizens.

It is important that PSOs facilitate journalists to carry out their work, even when the circumstances are difficult.

Journalists educate the public about events and issues and how they affect their lives. Journalists often report on many of those incidents that front-line PSOs may have to deal with such as: demonstrations, accidents, major events, crime, and incidents and events more broadly.

Some journalists may be employed by publications or broadcasters but many are freelance (self-employed). There is no requirement for a journalist to explain for whom they are working, nor whether they are freelance or staff. How much information about their work a journalist shares is a matter of their own judgement. If proof of identification is needed, you can request to see their Press Card.

## SECURITY OFFICERS

PSOs can be employed directly by the client, they could be provided via a subcontractor or they could be self-employed, which is typically more common within the Night Time Economy (NTE) environment.

The role of the PSO is determined by each individual client and is documented within the 'Assignment Instructions' or 'Post Orders' which should mirror any contractual requirements put in place.

In general terms, the role of the PSO is to protect the environment from any threat or risk to the employees, contractors or visitors by ensuring Health & Safety protocols are followed and site rules are communicated and understood. It will also be the role of the PSOs to maintain access control and to ensure only legitimate persons enter the site. In many cases they also have a responsibility to ensure that the client's Intellectual Property and Reputation is maintained as instructed by the employer.

In many locations PSOs will also have responsibility for Medical Assistance and liaising with the emergency services.

The typical reporting structure of the PSOs is:

**Security Officer > Security Supervisor > Security Manager > End client point of contact**

Within the NTE it would typically follow as follows:

**Door Supervisor > Head Doorman > Venue Operator**

## THE GUIDANCE

The information here supports journalists and PSOs to understand each other's roles and responsibilities and how to engage when dealing with incidents, in a mutually respectful manner.

This guide encourages professional working relationships between journalists and PSOs that avoids confrontation, especially when working under pressure. In doing so, IPSA and the NUJ are promoting a constructive and calm approach that recognises that each has a job to do and that is in the interest of colleagues in both sectors to play a role in resolving any difficulties that might arise in a timely way.

## JOURNALISTS

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### This guide is a tool for constructive discussions with Private Security Officers

- | Know your rights and be prepared to have a constructive discussion if approached by a security officer
- | In no circumstances is it allowed for a PSO to seize equipment or memory/data cards. Enforcing a 'photography ban' on private premises is a civil matter. Confiscating equipment or images would be a criminal offence
- | Be aware that PSOs will be working under the instructions of an employer/engager and may need to refer to a supervisor if they feel that a request for access conflicts with their instructions
- | There is no requirement for a journalist to explain for whom they are working nor whether they are freelance or staff. Neither is there a requirement that journalists withhold such information. How much information about their work a journalist shares is a matter of their own judgement
- | A friendly chat explaining who you work for and what you are hoping to achieve often opens doors more easily
- | At the start of major incidents PSOs (Private Security Officers) will not always have the time to help you until a press officer arrives on the scene

### Identification

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- | If asked by PSOs (Private Security Officers) to identify yourself and be prepared to show your UKPCA Press Card or IFJ press card
- | Allow the PSO to see the checkline number on your card to verify it. Ensure that you know your PIN
- | It is the intention to work towards putting a similar process in place for PSOs although this isn't available at present. You can verify a licence through the SIA website
- | To attain the name and ID number of the PSO, check their SIA licence, which should be visible
- | If the PSO is not licensed (in-house) take details and report any concerns directly to the Company/Client

## PRIVATE SECURITY OFFICERS

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### This guide is a tool for constructive discussions with journalists

- | Be clear on what your role and remit is and any instructions you have been given by your employer or contractor
- | Ensure the site has an escalation process to enable you to contact a Supervisor/Press Officer or Manager if you are unsure of how to handle a situation or a request for access. If no escalation process is in place, ensure that your employer and contract holder are aware of the requirements to have one in place accessible and understood by all PSOs
- | If you feel that your employer is instructing you to obstruct journalists when they are within their rights to gain access, please report this to IPSA via the Incident Reporting function within the **IPSA App**
- | If you are operating in a contracting environment, always make sure you have informed your client if a journalist requests access
- | In no circumstances is it allowed for a PSO to seize equipment or memory/data cards. Enforcing a 'photography ban' on private premises is a civil matter. Confiscating equipment or images would be a criminal offence

## JOURNALISTS

## PRIVATE SECURITY OFFICERS

### Resolving disputes

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- | Be aware that the owner of private premises is entitled to forbid the taking of photographs, even where there is public access (such as shopping centres or developments such as London's Canary Wharf)
  - | If you feel you are being prevented from doing your job, show these PSO/journalist engagement guidelines to the Security Officer concerned
  - | If this fails to resolve the matter, ask to speak to a senior manager or press officer, if there is one on scene, and try to solve any problems that way.
  - | If this route is refused or is unavailable, take the SIA licence details of the Officer concerned so that this can be reported to the SIA
  - | With the above information reporters and photographers contact your news or picture desk or your member organisation's liaison officer and seek further help. You should also report the matter to the NUJ
- | Be aware that instructions given by your employer may not be accommodating of journalists' rights to do their job
  - | If you feel that journalists' requests are unreasonable, are in conflict with instructions or further intervention is needed, contact your line Supervisor and they will advise or escalate
  - | You should only call out the Police if you believe there is an immediate risk to life or that there is a risk of the law being broken and disorder taking place
  - | If you do seek the involvement of a supervisor, explain this to the journalist so there is complete transparency in the actions that you are taking
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**THE INFORMATION BELOW PROVIDES GENERAL POINTERS ONLY AND DOES NOT CONSTITUTE LEGAL ADVICE. WE ADVISE JOURNALISTS TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE.**

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**Access on public and private property**

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- | Accurate, balanced reporting is a fundamental role of journalists and they do not need a permit to film or photograph in public places
  - | Journalists can photograph or film incidents that occur on private land from public property
  - | PSOs have no power or moral responsibility to stop the filming or photographing of incidents or seize equipment, delete images/footage or demand copies
  - | Be aware that there are some privately owned spaces that allow full public access. It may not be clear to members of the public or journalists that these are not public places and may be subject to restrictions, e.g. shopping centres, public walkways, Royal Parks
  - | The Press Card does not give or deny permission to journalists to enter private premises
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**Restrictions**

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- | Even if accompanying police, recorded permission should be sought to access and record on private property. In some circumstances, separate consent to broadcast may need to be obtained
  - | Recording without prior permission may be justified on private property where the public has general access or is otherwise justified in the public interest (see resources for definition)
  - | Journalists should be aware of the law of trespass when accessing private property without consent which can constitute a civil wrong, even if accompanying the police
  - | Be aware where bylaws may exist that prohibit photography (e.g. Ministry of Defence land)
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**Harassment, privacy and data protection**

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- | Privacy and data protection laws and guidance in the UK continue to change, although there are exemptions for journalistic purposes
  - | Avoid conduct that could amount to harassment and be aware that laws differ across the UK
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## THE UK PRESS CARD AUTHORITY (UKPCA)

The UK Press Card scheme is managed through 19 gatekeepers who represent all the organisations which employ or represent Britain's newsgatherers. The NUJ is one of the gatekeepers. Each gatekeeper can issue the UK Press Card to its members in line with clear eligibility criteria. A list of designated gatekeepers is available on [www.ukpresscardauthority.co.uk](http://www.ukpresscardauthority.co.uk) or through the Press Bureau at New Scotland Yard.

The card is formally recognised by all police forces in the UK, by the Ministry of Justice, and de facto by other public bodies.

At the core of the scheme is a unique photo card and hotline system managed jointly by the gatekeepers. To help you identify genuine journalists, they carry a press card, which they will produce to you on request. Below is a guide for PSOs to help identify the rights of the bearer of a legitimate UK Press Card.

## UK PRESS CARD

All the UK's professional reporters, photographers, and broadcast crews rely on swift public and official help to bring the news to Britain's homes and business. Every one of them can get a genuine UK Press Card. It has a number of security features and is recognised by the National Police Chiefs Councils (NPCC), which brings police forces in the UK together to help policing coordinate operations.

- | Each UK Press Card has a unique serial number. Each cardholder has a separate personal identification number or word
- | By using the hotline – **0870 8376477** – anybody can verify that the card is genuine, and that the holder is a bona fide newsgatherer
- | The card also has several secret security features in addition to the verification hotline. They are only revealed to the police or similar authorities
- | The card is produced using similar technology to the photo driving licence, with the photograph and design integrated into the structure of the card
- | Every card carries the logo of the issuing organisation or the holder's employer together with the holder's name and the card serial number
- | No card is valid for more than two years, ensuring a periodic review of the holder's right to have it
- | Some journalists may use the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) press card which is broadly internationally recognised





www.ukpresscardauthority.co.uk

recognised by the



UK Press Card (English Wording)

UK Press Card (Welsh/English Wording)

This is the only UK-wide press card recognised by all broadcasting and written news media and the police service. It is only carried by professional newsgatherers such as reporters, photographers, TV camera operatives, sound recordists and by direct support staff such as dispatch riders, engineers and drivers. Foreign journalists based in the UK can also carry the card.

The copyright design is owned by the UK Press Card Authority Ltd. Most cards carry one of the logos shown but some use the logo of the holder's publication or broadcaster.

The card is made the same way as a photocard driving licence and has several security features. There is a UK Press Card Authority hologram next to the word PRESS. All cards also have a graphic on the reverse showing it is Smart Card enabled. Every card has a serial number matched by a PIN or password known to the holder. Verify the match by telephoning 0870 8376 477 and check the expiry date - no card is valid for more than two years.

## SIA LICENCE HOLDERS

The Security Industry Authority (SIA) is the public body that regulates the private security industry in the United Kingdom. The Private Security Industry Act 2001 ("the Act") established the SIA and sets out how regulation of the private security industry works. Section 3 of the Act makes it a criminal offence for individuals to engage in licensable conduct unless they have a licence. The SIA is responsible for granting, renewing, and revoking this licence.

**Not all PSOs will have a SIA (Security Industry Authority) licence. Below are some of the examples of when the card is used and not. Journalists can check for and take the details of the card just as the PSOs can request to see the UK Press Card.**

### THE SIA CARD

- | The SIA Card has the valid URN (Unique Reference Number) of the Holder and the date This also acts as a picture ID with the bearer's name
- | On the rear of the card an OCR code and Bar Code contains all relevant information for confirming the card holder

### TRAINING REQUIREMENT

Before a prospective licence holder can apply for an SIA Card they need to train for a 'licence-linked' qualification. This is to ensure relevant skills and knowledge is evident in order to hold a licence.

Once the prospective licence holder has successfully secured the qualification they need for a front-line licence, the awarding organisation will inform the SIA. The SIA must get this notification before they can submit the licence application.

All training must be from an approved training provider. These are providers that have been approved by awarding organisations that offer SIA-licence-linked qualifications.

**The SIA is independent from training and does not give training themselves. The SIA do not get any money from training providers' course fees.**

**PSOs (Private Security Officers) require a SIA licence if the work they do is part of a 'contract for services' and involves a 'licensable activity'.**

A '**contract for services**' is when the employer has a contract to supply your services to another organisation. For example:

- | The employer is a Private Security Company that places Officers in a shop and then charges that shop a fee for the PSOs services
- | The PSO is self-employed and their business is contracted to provide close protection services to a person visiting the UK

A '**licensable activity**' is a job that requires a PSO to hold a licence before they can do it. (Read more about licensable activities at the link below).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/security-industry-authority>

The SIA licence allows the licence holder to legally practice in the industry. Working without a valid SIA Licence is a criminal offence, which means you could be fined and even put in prison.

### IF A PRIVATE SECURITY OFFICER WILL BE WORKING 'IN-HOUSE'

If a PSO is working 'In-House' they do not usually need an SIA licence. This is when the PSOs are employed directly by the company that uses their services.

For example, the employer is a supermarket chain where the PSO works directly in one of the organisation's shops.





This card is the property of the SIA  
If found please return to: The SIA, PO Box 74957,  
London, E14 IUG  
Visit us at [www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk)  
The conditions of your licence can be found at:  
[www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk/conditions](http://www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk/conditions)



# IPSA – THE SECURITY INDUSTRY AUTHORITY LICENCE EXPLAINED

This is the only UK-wide identity card recognised by all security personnel, where security is being provided by a contractor.

It is only carried by professional security personnel such as Security, CCTV, CVIT, Vehicle immobilisers, Close protection officers and Door supervisors. The copyright design is owned by the SIA and has several security features which includes - silver holographic overlay, expiry date engraved onto the photo, UV, micro text and engraving

The licence validity can be verified by visiting [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) and enter the Licence Number and Surname, where you will see the current status of the licence.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of security officers, you can report it at [sia.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://sia.homeoffice.gov.uk).

## JOURNALISM LINKS

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### The National Union of Journalists (NUJ)

[www.nuj.org.uk](http://www.nuj.org.uk)

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### NUJ Code of Conduct

[www.nuj.org.uk/about-us/rules-and-guidance/code-of-conduct.html](http://www.nuj.org.uk/about-us/rules-and-guidance/code-of-conduct.html)

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### The Press Card Authority

[www.ukpresscardauthority.co.uk](http://www.ukpresscardauthority.co.uk)

UK Press Card Verification Hotline: 0870 837 6477

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### Met Police Advice – Photography Advice

[www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/ph/photography-advice/](http://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/ph/photography-advice/)



### The Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO)

[www.ipso.co.uk](http://www.ipso.co.uk)

The independent regulator for the newspaper and magazine industry in the UK. IPSO holds newspapers and magazines to account for their actions, protect individual rights, uphold high standards of journalism, and help to maintain freedom of expression for the press.

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### IPSO – Journalists’ Code of Ethics

[www.ipso.co.uk/editors-code-of-practice/](http://www.ipso.co.uk/editors-code-of-practice/)

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### IPSO – Editors’ Code of Practice – The Public Interest



### Overview of Trespass law

[www.inbrief.co.uk/media-law/aggravated-trespass/](http://www.inbrief.co.uk/media-law/aggravated-trespass/)

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## PRIVATE SECURITY LINKS

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### SIA – Security Industry Authority

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/security-industry-authority](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/security-industry-authority)

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### IPSA – International Professional Security Association

[www.ipso.org.uk](http://www.ipso.org.uk)

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