

Security guards and related occupations

General competency framework · Frontline / operational level · 5 competencies · approx. 75 minutes

How to use this guide

- Focus on these 5 competencies — the behaviours that matter most for this role — not a chronological career history.
- Ask every candidate the same core questions, then probe. Allow around 15 minutes per competency.
- Ask for real examples and use STAR — the Situation, the Task, the Action they took, and the Result.
- Stay neutral, capture what they say, and judge later. Gather evidence on one competency at a time.
- Rate each competency 1–5 against the positive and negative indicators, and note the evidence.

5 Outstanding 4 Good 3 Acceptable 2 Marginal 1 Poor

1. Dependability

Conscientious and thorough in their approach to work, delivering what they promise to the necessary standard. Behaves in line with the organisation's values and ethical principles.

Why this matters for Security guards and related occupations: SIA Specifications for Learning & Qualifications and the supporting NOS for Security Operations require trust-based, often unsupervised compliance with detailed procedures (logging, patrolling, access control). The role is trust-based at its core. Being where you said, doing what you said, maintaining standards without supervision.

Tell me about a time you had a lot to get done on a shift. How did you make sure it was all done properly?

- How did you keep the standard up?
- What did you do if you were running short of time?

Describe a time you turned up and found things hadn't been done properly by someone before you. What did you do?

- How did you handle it?
- What was the result?

How do you make sure your work is always done to the right standard, even when no one's checking? Give an example.

- Have you ever been tempted to cut a corner? What did you do?

NEGATIVE INDICATORS	1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5	POSITIVE INDICATORS
Cuts corners to get done quicker		Does the job properly, to the right standard
Unreliable; doesn't do what they said		Reliable — does what they say they will
Sloppy or careless in their work		Careful and thorough
Standard drops when no one is checking		Keeps standards up even when unsupervised
Bends the rules when it suits them		Sticks to the rules and does the right thing

Summary of evidence: _____ Rating (1–5): _____

2. Resilience

Remains calm and maintains a positive attitude when faced with difficult circumstances. Thrives under pressure, remaining focused despite distractions. Quickly recovers from setbacks.

Why this matters for Security guards and related occupations: Long shifts, night work, alertness through quiet periods punctuated by incident — sustained focus is the craft. Maintaining attention and a positive outlook across a shift, particularly in solo or remote-site working, is what separates the reliable security officer from the one who drifts.

Tell me about a really busy or stressful time at work. How did you cope?

- What made it hard?
- How did you keep going?

Describe a time something didn't go your way at work. How did you pick yourself back up?

- How did you feel?
- What did you do?

How do you keep calm when things get difficult or busy? Give me an example.

- What helps you stay level-headed?

NEGATIVE INDICATORS	1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5	POSITIVE INDICATORS
Loses their cool when it gets busy		Stays calm and in control when busy or stressed
Lets setbacks knock them off course		Bounces back from setbacks
Gets negative when things go wrong		Keeps a positive attitude
Easily distracted under pressure		Stays focused under pressure
Struggles to keep going when it's hard		Keeps going when the going gets tough

Summary of evidence: _____ **Rating (1–5):** _____

3. Decision Making

Understands critical success factors and assesses a range of possible options before making a decision. Steps back and seeks alternative perspectives when faced with unfamiliar scenarios. Willing to make decisions without access to all the information. Considers the implications of their decisions beyond the immediate issue.

Why this matters for Security guards and related occupations: SIA training covers incident management, when to intervene, escalate, or record. NOS Security Operations covers responding to incidents and procedural compliance. These calls have real consequences (false detention, missed incidents, evidence inadmissibility).

Tell me about a decision you had to make on your own at work.

- What were your choices?
- How did you decide?
- What happened?

Describe a time you had to make a quick decision without much time to think.

- What did you do?
- How did it turn out?

Tell me about a time you weren't sure what to do. How did you handle it?

- What did you do?

- Did you ask anyone for help?

NEGATIVE INDICATORS	1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5	POSITIVE INDICATORS
Freezes when a decision is needed		Makes a decision when one's needed
Decides without thinking it through		Weighs up the options before deciding
Panics under time pressure		Makes sensible quick decisions when needed
Never checks with anyone when unsure		Knows when to check with someone
Doesn't think about the knock-on effects		Thinks about what their decision affects

Summary of evidence: _____ Rating (1–5): _____

4. Customer Focus

Builds effective customer relationships to ensure needs and expectations are understood. Understands the importance of the customer to the business, seeking regular feedback whilst being prepared to say no when needed.

Why this matters for Security guards and related occupations: The SIA Behaviour module covers customer service, communication and conflict management with the public. Whether the 'customer' is the site, the staff, or the public, professional, calm service is what generates the repeat contract.

Tell me about a time you went out of your way to help a customer or member of the public.

- What did they need?
- What did you do?
- How did they react?

Describe a time a customer was unhappy or difficult. How did you handle it?

- What was the problem?
- What did you do?
- What was the outcome?

How do you know when you've done a good job for a customer? Give me an example.

- What do you look or listen for?
- Tell me about a time you got it right.

NEGATIVE INDICATORS	1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5	POSITIVE INDICATORS
Treats customers as a nuisance; unhelpful		Friendly, helpful and professional with customers
Doesn't take responsibility for a customer's problem		Takes ownership of sorting out customer issues
Doesn't really listen to what the customer needs		Listens and checks what the customer actually needs
Promises things that can't be delivered		Only promises what can be done; honest with customers
Doesn't see why the customer matters		Understands the customer keeps the business going

Summary of evidence: _____ Rating (1–5): _____

5. Operating in Change

Sees change as a normal part of their working life, readily taking on changing priorities and adapting their way of operating to meet changing demands. Able to operate within ambiguity, without clear guidelines or parameters.

Why this matters for Security guards and related occupations: Site variation, incident-driven changes to routine, and the high prevalence of agency/contract working across multiple sites all require flexibility. Routines get disrupted, incidents change the shift, sites vary. Operating in Change captures this without drama.

Tell me about a time things changed suddenly at work — a change of plan, task or shift.

- How did you react?
- What did you do?

Describe a time you had to do something new or unfamiliar.

- How did you cope with it?
- How did it go?

How do you deal with it when your usual routine gets disrupted? Give an example.

- What do you do to adjust?

NEGATIVE INDICATORS	1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5	POSITIVE INDICATORS
Thrown by changes to the plan or shift		Takes changes in their stride
Resists doing things a new way		Adapts to new ways of working
Needs everything spelled out		Copes when things aren't fully clear
Complains when the routine is disrupted		Stays positive when things change
Slow to adjust		Adjusts quickly

Summary of evidence: _____ **Rating (1–5):** _____