

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2657

As Reported by House Committee On:
Commerce & Labor

Title: An act relating to security guards.

Brief Description: Modifying training requirements for security guards.

Sponsors: Representatives Morrell and McDonald.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Commerce & Labor: 1/28/04, 2/5/04 [DPS].

<p>Brief Summary of Substitute Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Increases training requirements for security guards.

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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Conway, Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; McMorris, Ranking Minority Member; Condotta, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Crouse, Holmquist, Hudgins, Kenney and McCoy.

Staff: Susan Kavanaugh (786-7106).

Background:

There are about 7,000 security guards licensed to work in Washington. They are employed by 150 security guard businesses, large and small.

Since 1991, when licensing requirements for security guards were first established, security guards have been required to complete four hours of training before beginning independent work. The Department of Licensing (Department) has, by rule, set content requirements for this training. Among the areas that must be covered are:

- Basic security, including the role of a security officer;
- Legal powers and limitations, including use of force;
- Emergency response;
- Preparing reports; and
- Public relations, including skills for communication and avoiding confrontation.

The Department has authority, but no requirement, to establish requirements for continuing education for security guards. The Department has not adopted rules mandating continuing education.

The Department has authority to permit security guards licensed in other states where requirements meet or exceed those of Washington to work in Washington.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Pre-Service Training Increased. Beginning July 1, 2005, the volume of training that security guards must complete prior to beginning independent work is increased from four to eight hours. At least four of these hours must be classroom instruction, as opposed to on-the-job training.

Training During the First Year Added. In addition, beginning July 1, 2005, security guards must complete eight hours of training after they begin working independently. It may take place in a classroom, in the field, or both. The Department is to set topic areas to be covered in this training.

Four of these hours must be completed within the first six months of becoming licensed and the remaining four must be completed within the following six months. Security guards who are already licensed when the bill goes into effect are exempt from pre-licensing training but must complete four hours of continuing education by December 31, 2005 and the remaining four hours by June 30, 2006.

The number of hours of continuing education increases by one hour each year until 2012, with these additional hours required to be completed within 18 months of licensure. By 2012, a total of 23 hours of training will be required for security guards, eight hours pre-service, and 15 hours once the guard is working independently.

Trainers certified by the Department must report the pre-service training to the Department. Training completed after the security guard is working does not have to be reported to the Department, but the security guard company must keep training records on file and available for inspection.

Reciprocity. The Department is given the authority to negotiate reciprocity agreements allowing guards licensed in Washington to work in other states.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The date on which the additional training requirements go into effect is delayed until July 1, 2005. The period during which training requirements increase by one hour each January first is pushed back one year. The time period within which the additional hours of training must be completed is specified. It is clarified that the required eight hours of continuing education applies to security guards who are already licensed, and specified that they have twelve

months after the requirements go into effect to complete the training. Other technical and clarifying changes are made

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: We have increased our reliance on private security guards since the September 11 attacks. The security guard industry and Department of Licensing have been working together to increase requirements for security guards. Some training needs to be specific to the work site and done on-the-job. The public will benefit from this bill by having better trained people watching reservoirs and other key locations. The industry also benefits, as the public has more faith in them. Regarding concern about out-of-state security guards, this bill will help address problems, in that only states with similar or higher levels of training will be eligible for reciprocity. The bill needs to specify when the additional hours of training must be completed; within 18 months of starting work is recommended.

(Response to questions) Current law allows out-of-state security guards to work in Washington on a temporary basis. With formal reciprocity, Washington will have more leverage to ask another state to take disciplinary action against a bad-actor security guard. Department of Licensing is facilitating a work group looking at a variety of possibly security guard regulatory changes. There is not currently any prohibition on security guards wearing military-style uniforms

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Morrell, prime sponsor; Michael Transue, Pierce County Security; and Jeff Kirby, Washington State Security Council.

(Response to questions) Pat Brown and Mary Hagland, Department of Licensing.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.