

Private security and public policing

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In recent years, both the number of police officers in Canada and the crime rate have been declining. However, the rates for many workplace or white-collar crimes, such as computer crimes, employee theft, and fraud, are increasing. Public police do not always have the resources to handle these “internal” crimes. In some cases, for example, a fraud of at least \$100,000 must be committed for public police to give it priority (Gerden, 1998). With cutbacks to police budgets occurring just as the public’s demand for security seems to be growing, the use of private security has been increasing.

Police officers differ considerably from private security personnel in the work they perform, the basic job requirements and training. Both police and private security play a role in society; however, the line between the two security professions is becoming less clearly defined. Police officers who walk the beat in front of commercial properties may now meet up with private security guards hired by shopkeepers to patrol their storefronts as a deterrent to theft and break and enters. In general,

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this type of private security does not require a police presence nor does there exist a potential for danger. Some police forces have formed partnerships with private security in areas such as secure storage of property and evidence, monitoring of alarm centres, guarding of prisoners while in lock-up or in transit, and video- and audio-taping of suspects being interviewed (Stewart, 1997).

This article compares public and private security (see *Data source and definitions*) and includes information on roles and responsibilities and minimum requirements and training.

Roles and responsibilities

Police

Legislation in each province stipulates the duties of a police officer. A typical example is the *Police Services Act* in Ontario, which outlines the duties as follows:

- preserving the peace;
- preventing crimes and other offences;
- assisting victims of crime;
- apprehending criminals;
- laying charges, prosecuting and participating in prosecutions;
- executing warrants;
- performing the lawful duties assigned by the chief of police; and
- completing the required training.

Police officers, whose salaries are paid by tax dollars, are responsible for serving and protecting the public. Their jurisdiction includes areas in the public domain. Police officers have powers of search, arrest and detention and they are held accountable for their actions. In 1996, policing costs totalled \$5.9 billion or \$195 per Canadian (Swol, 1997).

Private security

Private security differs from the public police in a number of ways. Private security personnel work for clients who pay for the protection of person and/or property. The interests of the client determine their duties. Private security personnel have the same powers of arrest, search and detention as an ordinary citizen (as stipulated in section 494 of the *Criminal Code of Canada*).

The two main types of private security are security guards and private investigators. The most recognizable difference between the two groups is that security guards must wear uniforms, whereas private investigators must not. Security guards may be authorized to carry firearms under special circumstances (for example, armoured car personnel), while private investigators are not permitted to do so.

Data source and definitions

Every five years, the census collects data on every person in Canada based on place of residence. Two types of questionnaire are used: a short form and a long form. The long form goes to one in every five households in Canada, while the remaining households receive the short form.

With the exception of salaries, the data are for the “employed labour force,” which includes “persons 15 years of age and over, excluding institutional residents, who, during the week (Sunday to Saturday) prior to Census Day: a) did any work at all for pay or in self-employment; or b) were absent from their job or business for the entire week because of vacation, illness, a labour dispute at their place of work or other reasons.” The data on salaries cover persons aged 15 years and older with employment income who worked full year full time in 1995.

In this article private security personnel include private investigators and security guards as defined in Statistics Canada’s *Standard Occupational Classification*. Excluded are persons who work in the manufacturing of alarm systems or other security devices or equipment, as well as those who work for companies that monitor alarm systems.

In the 1991 *Standard Occupational Classification*, **private investigators** (G625 Other Protective Services) include occupations such as alarm investigator, corporate security officer, private detective, private investigator, retail loss prevention officer, detective agency supervisor, fire prevention officer (except firefighter), floorwalker and store detective (retail). This group conducts investigations to locate missing persons, obtains information for use in civil and criminal litigation matters or other purposes, investigates unlawful acts of employees or patrons of the business, prevents shoplifting, and so on.

Security guards (G631 Security Guards and Related Occupations) include occupations such as armoured car

driver, bodyguard, plant guard, school-crossing guard, automatic teller machine guard, bouncer, commissioner (security), night watchman/woman, patrolman/woman (guard), hand-luggage inspector, airport security guard and vault custodian. Security guards control access to buildings, patrol assigned areas, enforce security regulations of a business, perform security checks of passengers and luggage at airports, drive and guard armoured trucks containing money or valuables, or supervise and co-ordinate activities of other security guards.

Visible minorities “are persons (other than Aboriginal persons), who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour... (Chinese, South Asian, Black, Arab/West Asian, Filipino, South East Asian, Latin American, Japanese and Korean).”

Aboriginal persons refer to those “who reported identifying with at least one Aboriginal Group, that is, North American Indian, Métis or Inuit (Eskimo) and/or those who reported being a Treaty Indian or a Registered Indian as defined by the *Indian Act* of Canada and/or who were members of an Indian Band or First Nation.”

Counts for private investigators and security guards shown in this report may differ from those using other data sources. For example, provincial or territorial registrars have data showing the number of licences issued to private investigators and security guards. These data were not used because of methodological limitations such as a discrepancy between the licence count and the person count, the lack of requirement for a licence if the person works “in house,” and the possession of licences by persons not necessarily employed in the private security field.

Counts for police officers in this study differ from counts in the *Police Administration Annual Survey* (Statistics Canada), because of the inclusion here of part-time police officers.

The work of security guards is more visible, as they often control public passageways, perform security checks, patrol inside and outside corporate buildings and secure the transportation of valuables. Private investigators, on the other hand, are involved in more covert operations and behind-the-scenes action and, therefore, have less contact with the public. Their work varies from making telephone calls in the office, to following and recording the movements of indi-

viduals, detecting theft and fraud, gathering evidence, and making court appearances.

Minimum requirements and training

Police

The minimum requirements for most police departments are age 18 or older, Grade 12 education or equivalency,¹ Canadian citizenship, a valid driver’s licence with good

standing, medical and physical fitness, fluency in English or French, good vision and hearing, and no criminal record. Although the minimum education requirement is Grade 12 for most police forces, preference is usually given to those with college or university degrees.

The selection process also generally involves a series of tests that may include aptitude, written communication, medical, psychological, physical and driving tests.

Once the candidates meet all the requirements, they may be hired as recruits/cadets and must go to a police college or other police training facility for a period of three to six months. After successful completion of the academic training, they may be sworn in as constables and probably go through a further six months to a year of field training with the police service.

Private security

Private investigators and security guards working for an agency must be licensed by the province or territory. Each jurisdiction, with the exception of the Northwest Territories, has its own Act dealing with private investigators and security guards, which stipulates regulations and licensing requirements. The basic requirements for a licence are age 18 or older (may vary slightly in some provinces), no criminal record for the past five years, and Canadian citizenship. British Columbia and Newfoundland also have minimum training require-

ments. Licences must be renewed annually and can be revoked if the person does not comply with the requirements of the Act or with the regulations for a licence.

No licence is required if the private investigator or security guard is hired "in house," which means that he or she is an employee of, for example, an insurance company, court house, law firm, or store. The only exception to this is the use of private security personnel by permanent commercial casinos (such as in Montréal, Hull, Niagara Falls or Windsor). They must be licensed by a provincial gaming control commission (Gerden, 1998).

Training for private investigators and security guards is generally the responsibility of the employer. Some colleges in Canada do offer courses in law enforcement and security, and a few schools also offer specialized training for private investigators. Topics covered at these schools may include surveil-

lance, background investigations, domestic and child custody investigations, evidence gathering and presentation, lie detection, court appearance and testimony, missing persons, undercover operations and report writing.

Compared with police officers, private security in Canada is characterized by the following: lower wages, minimum or no recruitment standards, higher percentage of part-time work, higher turnover rate, lower levels of education, and minimum or no training (Marin, 1997).

How many work in these occupations?

In both 1991 and 1996, private security personnel outnumbered police officers: in the latter year, 82,010 to 59,090. Some 12,230 were private investigators and 69,780, security guards (Table 1). Private security personnel increased by 1% between 1991 and 1996, compared with a 4% drop in

Table 1: Police officers, private investigators and security guards

	Police officers			Private investigators			Security guards		
	1991	1996	Change	1991	1996	Change	1991	1996	Change
	%			%			%		
Canada	61,280	59,090	-3.6	8,215	12,230	48.9	72,880	69,780	-4.3
Newfoundland	995	880	-11.6	85	70	-17.6	1,250	1,220	-2.4
Prince Edward Island	205	210	2.4	*	*	...	315	305	-3.2
Nova Scotia	1,675	1,595	-4.8	235	150	-36.2	2,970	2,705	-8.9
New Brunswick	1,475	1,480	0.3	145	140	-3.4	1,940	2,145	10.6
Quebec	16,415	16,315	-0.6	2,055	4,715	129.4	22,310	16,445	-26.3
Ontario	23,590	21,975	-6.8	3,335	4,455	33.6	27,920	28,845	3.3
Manitoba	2,275	2,540	11.6	340	250	-26.5	2,405	2,540	5.6
Saskatchewan	2,500	2,055	-17.8	220	205	-6.8	1,725	1,695	-1.7
Alberta	4,955	4,840	-2.3	775	825	6.5	5,305	5,990	12.9
British Columbia	6,830	6,810	-0.3	1,010	1,390	37.6	6,540	7,665	17.2
Yukon	105	120	14.3	-	15	...	70	70	-
Northwest Territories	255	280	9.8	*	*	...	135	155	14.8

Source: Census of Canada, 1991 and 1996

Note: Figures may not add to totals because of random rounding to 5.

* Too few cases to be meaningful.

police officers. Security guards declined 4% from 1991, whereas private investigators increased 49% over the same period.

Private security personnel tend to have higher proportions of part-time workers than police officers. In 1996, 19% of private investigators and 33% of security guards worked part time, compared with only 7% of police officers. Unemployment rates also differed. Police officers had an unemployment rate of 2%, compared with 5% for private investigators and 9% for security guards.

Some police services in Canada also have security guards as part of their civilian personnel. Between 1986 and 1996, the number of security guards employed by police services increased 86%, from 398 to 745.

Saskatchewan showed the largest drop in the number of police

officers (18%) since 1991, followed by Newfoundland (12%), Ontario (7%) and Nova Scotia (5%). Increases were noted in Yukon (14%), Manitoba (12%) and the Northwest Territories (10%).

In the case of private investigators, Quebec had the largest increase (129%), followed by British Columbia (38%) and Ontario (34%). Three provinces had notable decreases: Nova Scotia (36%), Manitoba (27%) and Newfoundland (18%).

The number of security guards also showed large increases in some jurisdictions since 1991: British Columbia (17%), the Northwest Territories (15%), Alberta (13%), and New Brunswick (11%). Despite these increases, the large drop in the number of security guards in Quebec (26%) led to the overall decrease at the national level. This drop, along with the large increase in the number of pri-

private investigators in that province (129%), may have been due in part to some labour disputes among security guards during this period, as well as to the changing nature of security requirements, such as investigations for fraud, electronic surveillance, and alarm systems.

Among the provinces, Manitoba and Quebec had the most police officers per capita in 1996 (Table 2). Because Quebec uses more "temporary" police officers than other jurisdictions, that province's number per 100,000 population was 12% higher than the national average. If temporary officers are excluded, Quebec's rate was only 5% above the average.

Conversely, both Manitoba and Quebec showed a slightly lower-than-average rate of security guards per capita. Security guards were most prevalent in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and least prevalent in Saskatchewan.

Table 2: Police officers, private investigators and security guards, showing rates per 100,000

	Population	Total		Police officers		Private investigators		Security guards	
		Number	Rate per 100,000	Number	Rate per 100,000	Number	Rate per 100,000	Number	Rate per 100,000
Canada	29,959,458	141,100	471	59,090	197	12,230	41	69,780	233
Newfoundland	569,563	2,170	381	880	155	70	12	1,220	214
Prince Edward Island	136,634	515	377	210	154	*	...	305	223
Nova Scotia	941,598	4,450	473	1,595	169	150	16	2,705	287
New Brunswick	760,780	3,765	495	1,480	195	140	18	2,145	282
Quebec	7,396,727	37,475	507	16,315	221	4,715	64	16,445	222
Ontario	11,271,834	55,275	490	21,975	195	4,455	40	28,845	256
Manitoba	1,137,297	5,330	469	2,540	223	250	22	2,540	223
Saskatchewan	1,017,452	3,955	389	2,055	202	205	20	1,695	167
Alberta	2,785,755	11,655	418	4,840	174	825	30	5,990	215
British Columbia	3,843,647	15,865	413	6,810	177	1,390	36	7,665	199
Yukon	31,400	205	653	120	382	15	48	70	223
Northwest Territories	66,771	435	651	280	419	*	...	155	232

Source: Census of Canada, 1996

Note: Figures may not add to totals because of random rounding to 5.

* Too few cases to be meaningful.

Table 3: Police officers, private investigators and security guards by sex

	Police officers				Private investigators				Security guards			
	Both sexes	Men	Women	% women	Both sexes	Men	Women	% women	Both sexes	Men	Women	% women
Canada	59,090	51,600	7,490	13	12,230	9,680	2,550	21	69,780	55,715	14,065	20
Newfoundland	880	800	80	9	70	65	10	14	1,220	1,080	140	11
Prince Edward Island	210	195	15	7	*	*	-	-	305	265	35	11
Nova Scotia	1,595	1,450	145	9	150	120	30	20	2,705	2,195	505	19
New Brunswick	1,480	1,385	95	6	140	110	30	21	2,145	1,810	330	15
Quebec	16,315	14,720	1,595	10	4,715	4,065	645	14	16,445	12,540	3,905	24
Ontario	21,975	18,685	3,285	15	4,455	3,370	1,085	24	28,845	22,630	6,215	22
Manitoba	2,540	2,160	375	15	250	220	25	10	2,540	2,210	325	13
Saskatchewan	2,055	1,760	295	14	205	145	55	27	1,695	1,440	260	15
Alberta	4,840	4,325	520	11	825	590	230	28	5,990	4,910	1,080	18
British Columbia	6,810	5,780	1,035	15	1,390	965	430	31	7,665	6,450	1,220	16
Yukon	120	100	20	17	15	15	-	-	70	55	15	21
Northwest Territories	280	240	35	13	*	*	-	-	155	125	30	19

Source: Census of Canada, 1996
 Note: Figures may not add to totals because of random rounding to 5.
 * Too few cases to be meaningful.

Quebec had the most private investigators per 100,000 population, while the Atlantic provinces showed generally lower rates. Overall, Quebec, New Brunswick and Ontario had the highest rates per capita for public and private security combined, while Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Saskatchewan had the lowest.

More women in private security

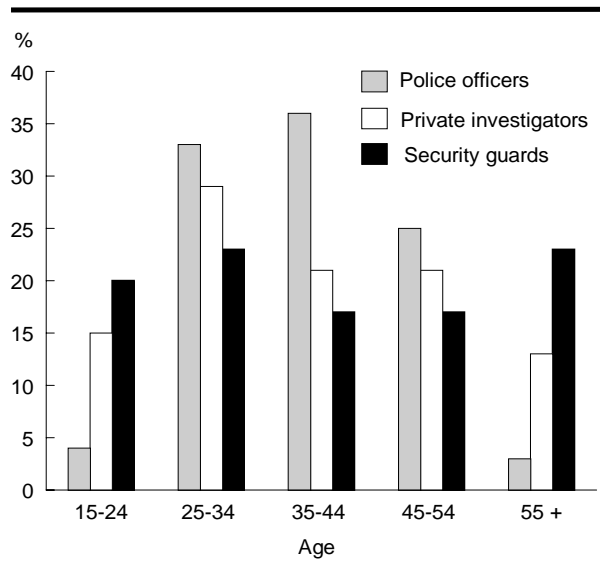
Women had a higher representation in private security than in public policing in 1996 (Table 3). They made up 21% of private investigators and 20% of security guards, compared with 13% of police officers. However, the proportion of female police officers has been increasing steadily since the mid-1970s, when it was less than 1%.

Ontario generally had the highest representation of women in both policing and private security, while the Atlantic provinces tended to have lower representations.

Age profile

A much higher percentage of private security personnel were under 25 and over 54 (Chart A). Police officers were more likely to retire by the time they reached 55, which explains the low percentages in that

Chart A: Private security personnel are more evenly distributed by age.



Source: Census of Canada, 1996

age group. By contrast, private security work does not have an upper age limit and the work can accommodate older persons. Furthermore, a number of retired police officers and military personnel have taken

Table 4: Police officers, private investigators and security guards by age and sex

	All ages		15 to 24		25 to 34		35 to 44		45 to 54		55 and over	
		%		%		%		%		%		%
Police officers	59,090	100	2,335	4	19,215	33	21,065	36	14,805	25	1,665	3
Men	51,600	100	1,520	3	14,935	29	19,220	37	14,320	28	1,615	3
Women	7,495	100	825	11	4,280	57	1,845	25	490	7	55	1
Private investigators	12,230	100	1,850	15	3,600	29	2,620	21	2,550	21	1,615	13
Men	9,680	100	1,410	15	2,735	28	1,900	20	2,160	22	1,475	15
Women	2,550	100	435	17	865	34	720	28	395	15	140	5
Security guards	69,780	100	13,625	20	16,165	23	11,645	17	12,135	17	16,205	23
Men	55,715	100	11,160	20	13,035	23	8,345	15	9,050	16	14,120	25
Women	14,065	100	2,465	18	3,130	22	3,300	23	3,085	22	2,085	15

Source: Census of Canada, 1996

Note: Figures may not add to totals because of random rounding to 5.

up work in private security. The large number of persons under 25 working in private security may be explained by the lower level of education and training in that field.

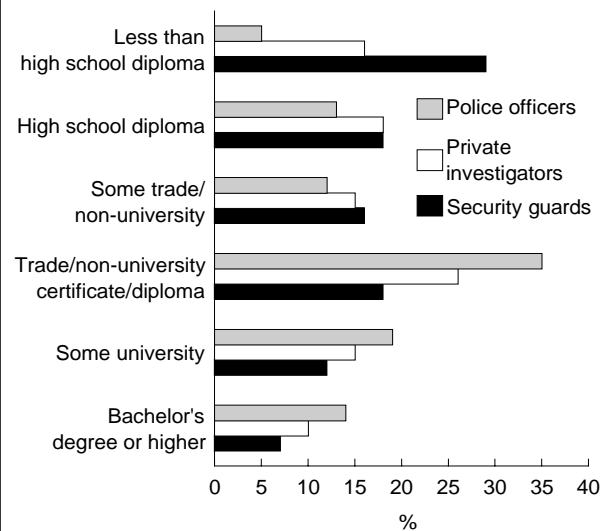
Female police officers tend to be younger than male officers (Table 4). In 1996, over two-thirds (68%) of women were below 35, compared with only 32% of men – not surprising, given the recent efforts to recruit more women. Among private investigators and security guards, the most noticeable difference was among those 55 and older. For both occupations, the percentage of men was much higher than that of women.

Police officers have higher education levels

Because police officers must meet minimum education requirements, their higher education levels are not unexpected. In 1996, 81% of police officers had more than a high school diploma, compared with 66% of private investigators and 53% of security guards (Chart B). Furthermore, 14% of police officers had university degrees, compared with 10% of private investigators and 7% of security guards.

Education levels differ by sex. In 1996, among police officers, women generally had higher levels of education and were nearly twice as likely as men to be university graduates (Table 5). This could be related to the increasing numbers of women who have come into policing in recent years, coinciding roughly with

Chart B: Police officers have higher education levels.



Source: Census of Canada, 1996

the emphasis on hiring applicants with university degrees. However, even after controlling for age differences, women still had higher levels of education. Among private investigators, too, women tended to have higher levels of education than their male counterparts. The reverse was true for security guards.

Table 5: Highest level of education for police officers, private investigators and security guards

	Police officers			Private investigators			Security guards		
	Both sexes	Men	Women	Both sexes	Men	Women	Both sexes	Men	Women
	%								
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Less than high school diploma	5	6	4	16	17	14	29	28	32
High school diploma	13	14	8	18	18	17	18	17	19
Some trade or non-university	12	13	8	15	15	13	16	17	14
Trade or non-university with certificate/diploma	35	35	33	26	26	27	18	18	20
Some university	19	19	22	15	15	17	12	13	9
University with bachelor's degree or higher	14	13	25	10	10	12	7	8	6

Source: Census of Canada, 1996
 Note: Figures may not add to totals because of random rounding to 5.

Visible minorities have higher representation in private security

While some programs have been established to encourage visible minorities to apply for police officer positions, police services have experienced difficulty in recruiting such candidates. Visible minorities accounted for 3% of police officers, 6% of private investigators and 11% of security guards in 1996 (Table 6). Not including Aboriginal persons, they made up 10% of the employed labour force.

Aboriginal persons well represented in both domains

Aboriginal persons made up 1.7% of all employed in 1996 (Table 6). The percentage of Aboriginal police officers (3.0%) and security guards (2.9%) exceeded the national average, while that of

Table 6: Minority group representation in security occupations

	Total		Visible minorities		Aboriginal persons	
		%		%		%
Population 15 and over	22,628,925	100	2,419,140	10.7	518,585	2.3
Men	11,022,455	100	1,166,790	10.6	247,385	2.2
Women	11,606,470	100	1,252,350	10.8	271,210	2.3
All occupations	13,318,740	100	1,320,865	9.9	229,810	1.7
Men	7,191,125	100	709,995	9.9	118,700	1.7
Women	6,127,615	100	610,880	10.0	111,110	1.8
Police officers	59,090	100	1,725	2.9	1,780	3.0
Men	51,600	100	1,435	2.8	1,430	2.8
Women	7,490	100	295	3.9	355	4.7
Private investigators	12,230	100	765	6.3	160	1.3
Men	9,680	100	665	6.9	115	1.2
Women	2,550	100	95	3.7	50	2.0
Security guards	69,780	100	7,815	11.2	2,010	2.9
Men	55,715	100	6,805	12.2	1,645	3.0
Women	14,065	100	1,010	7.2	365	2.6

Source: Census of Canada, 1996
 Note: Figures may not add to totals because of random rounding to 5.

Aboriginal private investigators (1.3%) fell below. Part of the reason for the high representation among police officers is the recent trend toward self-administered First Nations Police Services (Aboriginal police officers policing in their own communities).

Police have significantly higher earnings

Average employment income for police officers in 1995 was considerably higher than for private security officers (Table 7). Police officers averaged \$53,795, nearly \$20,000 more than private investigators and more than double the

average income of security guards. Several factors contribute to the differences. Not only are the education and training requirements for the private security field lower, but competition in the marketplace forces agencies to contain costs.

Police officers in the Territories reported the highest average earnings in the country, followed by British Columbia and Ontario. Salaries in the Far North were most likely related to the high cost of living in the area. Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia had the lowest average employment incomes for police officers.

Private investigators in Saskatchewan reported the highest average earnings, followed by Alberta. Nova Scotia and Quebec had relatively low averages. Security guards earned the most in Ontario and Quebec, the least in Manitoba.

For all three groups, wage gaps existed between the sexes. Women police officers made, on average, 19% less than men, probably because a greater proportion were young and thus had less seniority and experience. In 1996, over 90% of female officers were at the constable level, the lowest paid rank (Swol, 1997). Private security showed a smaller wage gap between men and women. Female private investigators earned, on average, 13% less than their male counterparts. Among security guards, women earned 11% less.

Summary

Private security personnel differ from police officers in a number of ways. Private security personnel work for clients who pay them for services rendered, while police officers are responsible for serving and protecting the public.

Table 7: Average annual employment income for police officers, private investigators and security guards, 1995

	All occupations			Police officers		
	Both sexes	Men	Women	Both sexes	Men	Women
	\$					
Canada	37,556	42,488	30,130	53,795	54,946	44,734
Newfoundland	34,142	40,064	26,353	50,743	51,067	47,144
Prince Edward Island	30,039	33,741	25,129	47,112	47,573	*
Nova Scotia	32,824	37,398	26,093	48,810	49,410	41,657
New Brunswick	32,865	37,811	25,461	51,927	52,295	44,463
Quebec	35,021	39,340	28,449	53,806	54,549	45,688
Ontario	40,281	45,477	32,645	54,098	55,470	45,462
Manitoba	32,564	36,630	26,260	50,580	52,585	38,004
Saskatchewan	31,402	35,289	25,227	53,272	54,575	41,829
Alberta	37,097	42,725	28,091	53,531	54,794	41,787
British Columbia	39,414	44,784	31,218	55,971	57,520	45,805
Yukon	42,786	47,050	37,715	62,761	63,869	*
Northwest Territories	47,108	52,144	40,037	65,321	67,421	*
				\$		
	Private investigators			Security guards		
Canada	34,193	35,047	30,382	25,223	25,573	22,829
Newfoundland	*	*	*	25,104	26,358	15,004
Prince Edward Island	*	*	-	21,014	21,144	*
Nova Scotia	27,048	26,790	*	21,994	22,165	20,541
New Brunswick	36,478	37,390	*	22,322	22,318	22,369
Quebec	30,227	30,955	24,967	26,092	26,461	23,009
Ontario	36,516	37,459	32,823	26,403	26,807	23,976
Manitoba	31,823	31,848	*	20,714	20,742	20,408
Saskatchewan	38,709	44,084	29,053	22,944	23,329	20,260
Alberta	37,902	41,324	26,957	22,134	22,523	20,270
British Columbia	35,690	36,463	33,718	25,563	25,795	23,888
Yukon	*	*	-	*	*	*
Northwest Territories	*	*	-	30,963	31,364	*

Source: Census of Canada, 1996

Note: Figures may not add to totals because of random rounding to 5.

* Too few cases to be meaningful.

Minimum requirements and training are considerably less for private security than for police officers.

Private security personnel outnumbered police officers in both 1991 and 1996. Their numbers increased slightly over the period, while police officer counts dropped. Women had greater representation in private security than in policing. Visible minorities, too, had higher percentages among private security personnel, while Aboriginal persons were well represented in both domains.

Education levels were higher among police officers, which was not unexpected, given the mini-

imum educational requirements for the job. Employment income was considerably higher for police officers than for private security personnel.

Perspectives

■ **Note**

1 Equivalency refers to successful results on a test administered by an accredited educational institution to represent the equivalent of Grade 12 education.

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Are you moving?

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