

SIA Practice Questions and Answers

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Unit 1: principles of working in the private security industry

1. What is hostile reconnaissance?

- A. A routine inspection carried out by the fire service
- B. Gathering information about a target in order to plan an attack (correct)**
- C. A police patrol through a busy town centre
- D. A customer survey carried out by a venue

Attackers often study a site beforehand to find weaknesses. Alert security staff can spot and disrupt this planning stage.

2. A colleague seems withdrawn and shaken weeks after a serious assault at work. What should you do?

- A. Tell them to toughen up and get on with it
- B. Avoid them until they feel better
- C. Report them to the SIA for being unfit
- D. Encourage them to speak to a manager or a support service (correct)**

Ongoing distress after an incident is common. Encourage the colleague to seek help and let a manager know so support can be arranged.

3. You have made a citizen's arrest. What must you do next?

- A. Call the police and hand the person over as soon as possible (correct)**
- B. Drive the person to the nearest police station yourself
- C. Question the person until they admit the offence
- D. Keep the person in the office until the end of your shift

After a citizen's arrest the person must be handed to the police as soon as practicable. Holding or questioning them for longer than necessary could be unlawful.

4. Which of these is an example of a local partnership scheme that security staff might take part in?

- A. A trade union that represents security staff
- B. A town centre radio link between shops, venues and the police (correct)**
- C. A private pension scheme for door supervisors
- D. A national register of security training providers

Radio link schemes, Pubwatch and business crime reduction partnerships let venues, shops and the police share warnings about offenders and incidents in real time.

5. A man collapses in the foyer. He is not breathing normally. You have called 999. What should you do next?

- A. Start chest compressions (correct)**
- B. Place him in the recovery position
- C. Give him a sip of water
- D. Wait for a first aider before touching him

If a casualty is unresponsive and not breathing normally, start CPR straight away. Early chest compressions greatly improve the chance of survival.

6. Which of these is one of the reasons that can make a citizen's arrest necessary under PACE?

- A. To find out the person's full name and address
- B. To teach the person a lesson they will remember
- C. To prevent the person causing physical injury to themselves or someone else (correct)**
- D. To search the person for stolen property

The arrest must be necessary to prevent injury, prevent loss or damage to property, or stop the person making off before a constable can take over.

7. A company places staff on a building site at night to stop theft and trespass. Which sector of the private security industry is this?

- A. Close protection
- B. Public space surveillance

C. Security guarding (correct)

D. Key holding only

Guarding premises against unauthorised access, theft and damage is security guarding. Close protection is about guarding individuals and public space surveillance is CCTV work.

8. In the Run, Hide, Tell advice, what does Tell mean?

A. Tell the attackers to stop what they are doing

B. Post a warning on social media

C. Call 999 when it is safe and give the police information about the attackers (correct)

D. Tell your manager before doing anything else

Once you are safe, call the police on 999 and tell them where the attackers are, what they look like and what weapons they have.

9. Which number is the confidential anti terrorist hotline?

A. 0800 111 999

B. 0800 789 321 (correct)

C. 0300 123 2040

D. 0800 555 222

The confidential anti terrorist hotline is 0800 789 321. Suspicious activity can also be reported online through the ACT website.

10. When should you call 999 rather than the anti terrorist hotline?

A. When there is an immediate threat to life (correct)

B. Only after your manager has agreed

C. Only when you have photographic evidence

D. Never, the hotline should be used in every case

Call 999 whenever there is an immediate danger. The hotline is for suspicions and concerns that are not an emergency.

Door Supervisor: licensing law, searching and drugs

1. Inside a club you suspect a customer is carrying drugs. You ask to search him and he refuses. What are your options?

A. You can search him because your suspicion gives you a power to do so

B. You can detain him until the police arrive and let them search him

C. You cannot search him by force, but you can ask him to leave under the conditions of entry and report your suspicion (correct)

D. You can search his bag but not his pockets without consent

Suspicion does not create a power of search. Refusing a search inside the venue is normally a breach of the conditions of entry, so the person can be asked to leave. Pass what you saw to the manager and the police if appropriate.

2. How can a hand held metal detecting wand help with entry searches?

A. It detects drugs hidden in clothing and bags

B. It removes the need for the customer's consent

C. It finds metal items such as knives without the Door Supervisor having to touch the customer (correct)

D. It records a video of the search for later use

A wand lets staff check for metal weapons quickly and with little physical contact, which is less intrusive for the customer. It does not detect drugs, and the customer's consent is still needed.

3. You are about to switch on your body worn camera as a situation with a customer starts to escalate. What should you do?

A. Tell the customer clearly that you are now recording (correct)

B. Keep the recording secret so he behaves naturally

C. Ask the customer for written permission to record

D. Record only if a colleague is present as a witness

Being open about recording is required by data protection guidance and often calms the situation. Announce it, keep recording until the incident is over and make sure the camera's light or sign is visible.

4. A customer in the queue tells you he has a lock knife in his pocket that he uses at work. He asks to bring it in. What should you do?

A. Refuse to let it in, because a lock knife is not a folding pocket knife and he has no good reason to carry it on a night out (correct)

B. Allow it, because a work tool is always a good reason

- C. Allow it if the blade is shorter than three inches
- D. Allow it if he agrees to keep it in his pocket all night

The small folding pocket knife exemption does not cover knives whose blade locks. Carrying a lock knife in public needs a good reason, and a night out is not one. Follow the venue policy and consider informing the police.

5. A manager asks you to wedge a fire exit shut because people are sneaking in through it. What should you do?

- A. Do as asked, because the manager is responsible for the premises
- B. Do as asked, but only until the venue reaches capacity
- C. Do as asked, provided you note it in the incident book

D. Refuse, explain that exits must open freely while people are inside, and suggest a member of staff guards the door instead (correct)

Fire exits must never be locked, wedged or obstructed while people are on the premises. Blocking an exit breaks fire safety law and could cost lives. Offer a safe alternative and record what you were asked to do.

6. A customer agrees to a search at the door, then changes his mind halfway through and says he wants to leave. What should you do?

- A. Finish the search quickly since he consented at the start
- B. Hold him until a colleague can complete the search
- C. Stop the search at once and let him leave (correct)**
- D. Finish the search but let him in without further checks

Consent can be withdrawn at any point. If it is, the search must stop. Continuing without consent would be an assault. He can be refused entry, and his behaviour may be worth recording.

7. A young man produces a photograph of his passport on his friend's phone to prove his age. What should you do?

- A. Accept it if the photo is clear and shows a date of birth
- B. Refuse to accept it, because a photo on a phone can be altered and is not an original document (correct)**
- C. Accept it as long as his friend confirms that it is genuine
- D. Accept it but write his name in the incident book

Acceptable proof of age is an original document such as a passport, a photo driving licence, or a PASS hologram card. Images on a phone cannot be checked properly and should not be accepted.

8. Why do Door Supervisors use counters, often called clickers, on the door?

- A. To record how many customers were refused entry
- B. To count the number of searches carried out in the shift
- C. To keep an accurate running total of how many people are inside, counting people in and out (correct)**
- D. To log the number of ID checks for the licensing authority

A venue must know how many people are inside at all times so it never goes over capacity and so the fire service can be told the number in an emergency. Count people out as carefully as you count them in.

Security Guard: patrolling, access control and reporting

1. What is the safest way to check what is in a person's pockets during a consent search?

- A. Press the pockets firmly until you can feel every object
- B. Ask them to remove their clothing in the search room
- C. Ask them to empty their pockets and show you the items (correct)**
- D. Reach into each pocket quickly while they stand still

Asking the person to empty their own pockets keeps your hands out of their clothing, which protects you from sharps and from accusations.

2. What is the purpose of a perimeter intruder detection system?

- A. To control the lighting in the staff car park
- B. To stop vehicles parking on the pavement outside
- C. To give early warning when someone crosses the site boundary (correct)**
- D. To record staff arrival times for the payroll department

Perimeter detection gives the earliest warning that someone is entering the site, before they reach buildings.

3. What is the purpose of access control on a site?

- A. To stop everyone entering the site at all times
- B. To record staff arrival times for the payroll department
- C. To remove the need for CCTV on the site
- D. To let in only people and vehicles with a right to be there (correct)**

Access control makes sure only authorised people, vehicles and goods enter or leave. It protects people, property and information.

4. Why should a search of a person be carried out by a Security Guard of the same sex where possible?

- A. Because women cannot be searched on private sites
- B. To make the search quicker to complete
- C. To protect the dignity of the person and the searcher (correct)**
- D. Because any other search is a criminal offence

Same-sex searching protects the dignity of the person and reduces the risk of complaints against the searcher.

5. Why is good lighting important to site security?

- A. It removes the need for patrols altogether
- B. It is a condition of every SIA licence
- C. It stops alarms from activating at night
- D. It deters intruders and helps CCTV and officers to see clearly (correct)**

Lighting removes hiding places, improves camera images and makes it safer for officers to patrol.

6. Why is a Security Guard expected to be a reliable witness?

- A. The client can sack any guard who refuses to give evidence
- B. An accurate account can help the police and the courts (correct)**
- C. Security staff are paid extra for each court appearance
- D. Only licensed security staff may give evidence about theft

Security staff often see incidents first. Clear, factual observations and notes can be vital evidence later.

7. What is the main purpose of a security patrol?

- A. To check the site is secure and to detect and deter problems (correct)**
- B. To give the Security Guard some exercise during the shift
- C. To collect the internal post from each department
- D. To check that staff are working hard enough

Patrols deter crime, find hazards and insecure areas, and show a visible presence on the site.

8. A set of keys goes missing part way through your shift. What is the correct response?

- A. Report it immediately so the risk to the locks can be assessed (correct)**
- B. Wait until the end of the week in case the keys turn up
- C. Borrow a colleague's set quietly and say nothing
- D. Leave the affected doors unlocked until the keys are found

Lost keys may mean the locks need changing. Delay gives anyone who finds them time to use them.

CCTV Operator: the law and the control room

1. For how long should a scheme keep its routine recordings?

- A. Indefinitely, in case the footage is ever wanted
- B. For exactly twelve months, as the law fixes that period
- C. Until the hard drives are full and then start again
- D. No longer than its stated purpose needs, as set in its retention policy (correct)**

Personal data must not be kept longer than necessary. The scheme sets a retention period that matches its purpose and deletes routine footage after it.

2. A man keeps looking over his shoulder, lingers beside parked cars and turns away whenever he faces a camera. What should this suggest to an operator?

- A. That he is certainly guilty and must be arrested at once
- B. That his behaviour merits closer observation and possibly a report (correct)**
- C. That there is nothing of interest and the camera should move on
- D. That he is lost and someone should be sent to help him

Behaviour like this is a reason to watch more closely and gather facts. It is not proof of an offence, and the operator does not decide guilt.

3. Which Act places a general duty on employers to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees so far as is reasonably practicable?

- A. The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (correct)**
- B. The Data Protection Act 2018
- C. The Private Security Industry Act 2001
- D. The Equality Act 2010

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 sets the general duties on employers and employees. The other Acts

deal with data, licensing and discrimination.

4. Who is responsible for setting the aims of a CCTV scheme and deciding how personal data from it is used?

- A. The engineer who maintains the cameras
- B. The scheme owner acting as data controller (correct)**
- C. Whoever is on shift in the control room
- D. The local police communications centre

The organisation that owns the scheme is the data controller. It decides the purposes of the system and is accountable for how images are used.

5. A police officer phones and asks you to follow a named man every time he appears over the next fortnight and log where he goes. What should you ask for before you begin?

- A. The man's own written consent to being tracked
- B. A copy of the man's previous convictions
- C. An agreement on how the police will pay for the work
- D. Confirmation that a RIPA authorisation is in place (correct)**

Planned covert monitoring of a named person is directed surveillance and needs proper authorisation. The control room should see or record that authorisation before acting.

6. Under UK data protection law, how are recorded images of people who can be identified classed?

- A. As public property owned by the council
- B. As personal data about those people (correct)**
- C. As anonymous statistical information
- D. As material exempt from all regulation

Images from which a living person can be identified are personal data. The scheme must handle them in line with the data protection principles.

Conflict management

1. Why is it useful to know your own personal triggers before you start work?

- A. So you can report them to your employer every week
- B. Because they must be listed on your SIA licence application
- C. So you know which customers to avoid speaking to
- D. So you can stay in control and avoid reacting badly (correct)**

Everyone has things that wind them up. Knowing yours means you can notice when you are being provoked and choose a calm, professional response instead of reacting.

2. A man insists a promoter you have never heard of promised him free entry. There is nothing on the guest list. What is a sensible problem solving approach?

- A. Refuse him entry and tell him firmly that he is lying
- B. Explain what you know, offer to check with the manager and give him options (correct)**
- C. Let him in for free to avoid any kind of scene
- D. Tell him to come back another night with the promoter

Explaining the position, offering to check and giving the man choices treats him with respect and keeps the decision with the right person, without calling him a liar or giving in.

3. A regular customer is turned away for wearing trainers, which were allowed last week. He loses his temper. Which cause of conflict does this show best?

- A. Drink and drugs affecting his judgement
- B. Rules being applied inconsistently (correct)**
- C. An underlying medical condition
- D. Peer pressure from the friends with him

People expect to be treated the same way each time. When rules change without warning or are applied unevenly, they feel unfairly treated and conflict is more likely.

4. A dynamic risk assessment is best described as which of these?

- A. A written assessment completed by the manager each year
- B. An ongoing judgement of risk that changes as the situation changes (correct)**
- C. A list of banned customers kept at the front door
- D. A check of the fire exits before the venue opens

Dynamic risk assessment is done in your head, in real time, and is updated constantly as the people, place and circumstances change in front of you.

5. Which of these is a barrier to good communication?

A. Loud music and poor lighting near the entrance (correct)

- B. Open body language and a relaxed stance
- C. Using plain words and short sentences
- D. Checking that the person has understood you

Noise, poor lighting, language differences, alcohol and strong emotions all get in the way of a message. Where you can, move to somewhere quieter and better lit.

Physical intervention

1. A woman has grabbed your wrist and will not let go. What is the first thing to try?

- A. Strike her arm hard to break the grip
- B. Tell her clearly to let go, then use a taught release technique if she does not (correct)**
- C. Twist her fingers back until she lets go
- D. Wait for a colleague to pull her off

Disengagement starts with a clear verbal command. If that fails, a trained release technique that uses the weak point of the grip is used with the minimum force needed. Striking or bending fingers risks injury and is hard to justify.

2. Which of the following is NOT generally regarded as a risk factor for harm during restraint?

- A. A heart condition or asthma
- B. Pregnancy
- C. A head injury received during the incident

D. Wearing glasses (correct)

Medical conditions, pregnancy and head injuries all raise the risk of serious harm during restraint and should change how, or whether, a hold is used. Wearing glasses is not a risk factor in itself.

3. Which of these is a non-physical option that should normally be tried before any physical intervention?

A. Asking the person to leave and giving them time to do so (correct)

- B. Guiding the person out by the elbow straight away
- C. Blocking the exit so they cannot walk off before the police arrive
- D. Removing their drink from their hand without warning

Clear verbal requests, giving time to comply, calling for support and withdrawing are all alternatives to force. Physical intervention should only follow when these have failed or are not safe to try.

4. Which of these is a warning sign that a person being restrained may be in serious trouble?

A. Going quiet or limp, or blue lips and gurgling noises (correct)

- B. Swearing loudly at staff
- C. Asking for a drink of water
- D. Sweating after a struggle

A sudden change from struggling to stillness, blue or grey lips, gurgling, vomiting or loss of consciousness are emergency signs. Stop the restraint, check breathing and call an ambulance.

5. A customer is injured during a restraint that goes well beyond what the situation needed. Who, apart from the individual Door Supervisor, may also face legal action?

- A. Nobody else, because responsibility always rests with one person
- B. The customer, for provoking the incident
- C. The police, for not arriving sooner

D. The employer and the venue, who may be held liable (correct)

Employers and venues can be held liable for the actions of their staff, including through civil claims and licensing reviews. The individual remains responsible for their own actions too.

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