

Security Guard interview questions

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What to expect

Security guard interviews check three things: that your licence and training are current, that you can stay calm and follow procedure when something goes wrong, and that you can deal with the public without escalating tension. Expect a mix of process questions, scenario-based judgement tests and a few behavioural questions about handling difficult people.

- **Process:** Questions about how you actually carry out routine duties like patrols, access checks and shift handovers.
- **Scenario/judgement:** Hypothetical incidents (alarms, medical events, aggressive visitors) testing what you'd do and in what order.
- **Behavioural:** Past examples of de-escalation, report writing or working with emergency services, usually assessed with STAR.
- **Client-facing:** How you handle members of the public, especially when you have to say no or restrict their movement.
- **Compliance/licensing:** Direct checks on your current security licence, first aid and any site-specific certifications.

Most interviews open with a check of your licence status and relevant certifications, move into two or three scenario questions to see how you reason through incidents, then cover behavioural examples from past roles. Site-specific or event roles may finish with questions about shift flexibility and physical requirements like standing for long periods or working outdoors.

1. Walk me through how you'd conduct a patrol of a large site at night.

Why they ask

This checks whether you actually understand patrol procedure rather than just claiming experience.

How to structure your answer

Give a clear step-by-step walkthrough: starting point, what you check at each stage (doors, windows, CCTV blind spots, fire exits), how you log the patrol, and what triggers you to stop and investigate further.

Example answer

"I'd start at the main entry point and work a fixed route so nothing gets missed, checking that doors and windows are secure and noting anything out of place. I'd check CCTV coverage against my physical route to pick up any blind spots, and log the patrol time and any observations as I go. If I noticed something unusual, like a door left unlocked that should be secured, I'd stop, investigate before continuing, and note it in the incident log regardless of whether it turned out to be nothing."

2. Tell me about a time you had to de-escalate a situation with an aggressive or upset person.

Why they ask

De-escalation without force is central to the role and comes up constantly with the public.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: describe the situation, your task, the specific actions you took to calm things down, and the result.

Example answer

"At an event I was working, a patron was refused entry because his ticket wasn't valid and he became loud and confrontational near the queue. My task was to resolve it without disrupting other patrons or letting it escalate. I moved him away from the main queue, lowered my tone, listened to his complaint and explained the ticketing issue clearly, then offered to walk him to the box office to sort it out directly. He calmed down once he felt heard and the situation resolved without needing further escalation."

3. You're patrolling and a fire alarm goes off in one section of the building but you can't see any smoke or flames. What do you do?

Why they ask

Tests judgement under uncertainty and whether you follow escalation procedure rather than guessing.

How to structure your answer

Walk through immediate priorities in order: safety first, verify without creating delay, communicate, escalate.

Example answer

"I'd treat it as real until proven otherwise. I'd radio it in immediately so the control room and other staff know, then move toward the alarm zone to check for visible signs of fire or smoke while starting evacuation procedures for that area if there's any doubt. I wouldn't wait to confirm smoke before acting, because the cost of a false alarm is much lower than delaying an evacuation. Once emergency services are notified or the alarm is confirmed false, I'd document the whole sequence in an incident report."

4. How do you decide when to call police rather than handling an incident yourself?

Why they ask

Checks whether you understand the limits of a security guard's authority, a common failure point for less experienced applicants.

How to structure your answer

Explain your decision framework: what factors push you toward escalation versus handling it directly.

Example answer

"My authority is to observe, report and act to protect people and property, not to make arrests or use force beyond what's reasonable for self-defence. If there's a weapon involved, clear violence, or someone refusing to leave after being asked, I call police straight away rather than trying to manage it alone. For lower-level issues, like a disagreement or a minor trespass I can resolve by asking someone to leave, I'll handle it directly but still document it in case it escalates later."

5. What's your experience with CCTV monitoring and incident reporting software?

Why they ask

These are the core tools listed for the role and interviewers want specifics, not just a yes.

How to structure your answer

Give concrete detail: which systems, what you actually did with them, any patterns you've picked up.

Example answer

"I've monitored multi-camera CCTV setups covering entry points and car parks, watching for movement patterns that don't fit the time of day, like activity near loading docks after hours. I've used incident reporting software to log everything from minor disturbances to full incident write-ups, making sure times, descriptions and any witness details are accurate enough to hold up if the report gets used later for an investigation or insurance claim."

6. A member of the public is upset because you've denied them entry to a restricted area. How do you handle it?

Why they ask

This is a client-facing scenario that tests whether you can hold a boundary without damaging the interaction.

How to structure your answer

Describe your approach to firm but respectful communication, including what you'd say and how you'd close it out.

Example answer

"I'd stay calm and explain clearly why the area is restricted, without getting drawn into an argument about the rule itself. If they push back, I'd repeat the boundary once more, offer an alternative if one exists, such as directing them to where they can get authorisation, and stay firm without raising my voice. If they became aggressive rather than just frustrated, I'd treat that as a separate issue and follow escalation procedure."