The Growth of Private Security in Alberta and Beyond: Opportunities and Considerations

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Security industry sectors

1. Guarding and protection of people and property (static and mobile)
2. Surveillance, intelligence and undercover work (inc. loss prevention)
3. Investigation and detection
4. Containment and control in the criminal justice system
5. VIP Protection
6. Consulting services
7. Emergency management and response
8. Specialized fraud investigation
9. Cash-in-transit
What do guards do?

Functions – what they do
- Housekeeping/compliance, enforcement agent
- Customer care – management rep
- Enforce rules
- Prevent and deter crime and anti-social behaviour
- Respond to emergencies
- Gather and share information

Duties – how they do it
- Control access
- Conduct basic investigations
- Write reports
- Conduct inspections
- Alarm response
- Undertake physical and electronic patrols/surveillance
- Special assignments – transporting valuables, act as reception, manage lost and found, educate employees and testify in court
Approximately 23,351 licensed guards in 2018 in Alberta

Fueling this trend: relatively low cost, government load shedding and contracting out services, recognition of the value of private security (comfort), growth in critical infrastructure and private property, increased consumer demands and increased focus on employee safety and asset protection.

Differing mandates – police versus security
- Police – Focus on public safety, including emergency response, investigation of crimes and offences (federal, criminal code, provincial and municipal)
- Security – Focus on asset protection and risk management
- Crime Prevention is a shared and collaborative process involving police, private security, industry, commerce, social profit sectors, community groups and more
- Recognition that society has grown too complex for any one institution to manage issues.
Growing sophistication of security management skill sets, growth in technology, and the shrinking of governments.

Lalonde estimates that there are now more people employed in private security (348 per 100,000) than law enforcement (318 per 100,000) with a world wide market value of $165 Billion US and an annual growth rate of 8%.

Simply put, the world is growing richer and people want to protect their assets.

Security is estimated to have more than 20 million employees worldwide.
While the rate of both police officers and private security personnel per 100,000 population increased between 2001 and 2006, private security grew much faster, up 15% compared to 3% for police officers. The increase in private security personnel was due to the growth in the number of security guards.

**Chart 1**
Large increase in private security between 2001 and 2006

number of persons employed

![Bar chart showing the increase in private security personnel between 1991 and 2006.](chart)

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Census of Population.

Manitoba and Saskatchewan, which had the nation's highest crime rates, employed the most police per capita in 2006. Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador, provinces with crime rates well below the national average, had the fewest number of police per capita (Table 2).

Quebec reported the most security guards per capita among the provinces, while Alberta and Ontario had the most private investigators per capita.
70,000 police officers & 140,000 guards in 2013
Global spending on private security compared to global aid budget to end poverty and national GDPs, $bn

Guardian graphic | Source: Freedonia 2017; OECD 2017; World Bank 2017
Evolution of the Alberta security industry

- Original legislation: 1964 – focused on contract guards only, no training.
- Alberta established a focus group in early 2000s to evaluate industry.
- 2011, Alberta Basic Security Training program mandated.
- All new licensed guards mandated to 40 hours of training.
Security guard training in Canada

1. British Columbia: 40 hours
2. Alberta: 40 hours
3. Saskatchewan: 40 hours
4. Manitoba: 40 hours
5. Ontario: 40 hours
6. Quebec: 70 hours
7. Canadian Federal Government: 54 hours
8. Atlantic Provinces: 0 hours
9. Territories: 0 hours
Security and police partnership stages

Stage 1: denial, police refuse to acknowledge that private security are a legitimate topic of discussion.

Stage 2: grudging recognition: police accept the role of security but that role is diminished and minimized.

Stage 3: competition and open hostility: security is seen as a threat to police supposed monopoly on public safety. Also recognized as a source of post retirement income and assisting with police with stretched budgets.

Stage 4: calls for greater control of the industry and either viewed as a necessary evil or legitimate component of policing.

Stage 5: active partnership between the two.

Stage 6: equal partnership between the two.
Public/Private Stats

- 150,000 in the UK in 1996
- 333,600 in the UK in 2007
Guards, technology, security risk and CPTED assessments, cannabis outlets, drone monitoring, greater collaboration with police, urban and rural municipalities, social profits and communities. Some current examples:

- Eg. Wood Buffalo Security Group – initiated in 2013 by Mark Kay of Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo to support collaboration among police, security and public safety stakeholders to:
  - Protect our region’s assets, communities and events
  - Support crime prevention and partnerships
  - Increase perceptions of safety and security

- TAPPS (Toronto) (https://www.tapps.org/)
  - TAPPS will provide active support to our municipal, provincial, and federal law enforcement officers, and members of the safety and security community in order to establish for our clients and citizens a high quality of life and safety in the Greater Toronto Area.
Emerging security opportunities

- Emergency Response and Recovery
  - 2016 Fort McMurray Wildfire
  - 260 security guards across five companies at its peak in June 2016 – access control and protective patrols – 24/7 checkpoints at entrances to three Restricted Areas – protective and preventative patrols of Restricted areas.
  - Direct collaboration with RCMP
  - Oversight by Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo – Regional Emergency Operations Centre (REOC), and Recovery Task Force

- Project Griffin (United Kingdom)
  - Originally set up to assist business in protecting against terrorism
  - Provides education on explosives, threat identification, crimes scene preservation, bomb threat management, CBRN management, conflict resolution, reconnaissance, cordon management, crime reduction strategy and legal matters
  - Has spread to Canada, Australia, United States, Singapore and South Africa
Some police headlines

- Police officer per Canadian at a 13 year low -

- Time for a Fresh Look at the Canadian Police Services Model: the authors of "The Economics of Canadian Policing: Five Years into the Great Recession," are even projecting an increase in policing costs in Canada of 61% per capita between 2011 and 2025. Labour costs are skyrocketing and can account for up to 90% of police budgets.

- There were 69,027 police officers in Canada on May 15, 2017, 168 more than the previous year. This represents a rate of police strength of 188 officers per 100,000 population and a decline of 1% from the previous year. It also marks the sixth consecutive year of decline in the rate of police strength.
Some security headlines


The future

1. Increased training – tiered guard levels
2. Increased responsibilities within the private sector
3. Increased competition for human resources (security, police and military) – migration between all three will continue
4. Higher profile: both good and bad
5. Need for active partnership with police
The future

6. Potential for more conflict with police

7. Firearms for security

8. Smaller police budgets and less police

9. Continued police off-loading leading to more security

10. Shared services models – ie. pooling of resources of business, community or resident associations
Questions?
References