

“CANINE PROTECTION”

Dogs and Dog Handlers in the South African Private Security Industry

A Summary of Research Findings

This brief presents a summary of research findings for Dogs and Dog handlers in the Private Security Industry. This research topic was considered as high priority area in the financial year 2014/15, and was commissioned by the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA) in order to offer the decision makers within PSIRA a better understanding of the Dogs and Dog handlers in the Private Security Industry. This is aimed at enabling PSIRA to begin to respond to the industrys needs and challenges. The researcher from the Research and Development Unit, Ms Margaret Gichanga, was responsible for the research including the drafting of the research report. She was supported by Ms Sibongile Dlamini, a research intern within the same unit.

Summary

The commissioned research was undertaken during the 2014/2015 financial year. The private security industry in South Africa plays a critical role in the provision of security in South Africa particularly as a contributor to crime prevention. The focus of the commissioned research is on the salient features of Dogs and Dogs Handlers in the private security industry. The research objectives for this research were as follows:-

- ✚ To uncover the undercurrent that informs various factors associated with the dog-handling sector of the private security industry with the overarching aim of promoting high standards in the training of security providers and prospective service providers in South Africa.
- ✚ To examine how this sector is managed, to what extent persons involved in the dog handling

business and prospective service providers adhere to laws relating to such training.

- ✚ To uncover the dynamics around non-compliance to the Private Security Industry Regulation Act 56 of 2001 and determine how this sector and the general regulation of the industry can be addressed to foster greater compliance.
- ✚ To better understand the dynamics that underpin the dog handling aspect of the private security industry and ultimately ascertain the degree to which this sector contributes to the safety and security of South Africans.

Research Methodology

The research began with an exhaustive literature review and an attempt to understand the broader discourse of the dogs and dog handling sector. The review considered the supply and demand dynamic of the “security service” in the dog handling sector.

Using a random sampling research method, the project identified seven PSCs that provided these services, four end-users and interviewed 8 of the 9 registered training centres in South Africa. Field research was carried out in Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg, Pretoria and Port Elizabeth.

A research questionnaire was developed and used as a guide to conduct the field research.

Research Findings

The research revealed some of the following findings:

- ✚ Dogs are susceptible to abuse by security guards in the private security industry. Primarily dogs are there to act as a deterrent that stayed next to the handler; some dog handlers chain their dogs to one spot while they went and sat elsewhere. This is due to lack of incentives, being coerced into the role of a dog handler, the common practice of dogs living on site and poor monitoring by their supervisors.
- ✚ There are prominent dog suppliers operating in the sector and are not compliant. However, PSIRA inspectors are not familiar with the requirements for ensuring animal welfare, due to the fact that the emphasis of their inspections is to conduct a paper function that is, payslips, UIF etc. This leads to regulations, regarding the services rendered not being implemented.
- ✚ Disputes exist regarding the working hours for dogs, the importance of bonding between the dog and the handler, the need to increase the size of kennels used and the need for an allowance to be paid to dog handlers.
- ✚ The training environment for this sector is considered vulnerable to the emergence of illegal training centres, as a result of the moratorium on training centres. Furthermore, there is debate regarding whether training standards need to be changed as proposed in the relatively recent transition from PSIRA grades to SASSETA skills programmes.
- ✚ That nature of private security industry is profit driven and keen on cutting costs. Particularly, this refers to employers in the sector who are not interested in investing in training and incentives. Clients are also complicit in this issue.
- ✚ Service providers in this sector highlight that SASSETA training is too costly and takes too long. They also lament that the short training duration in line with PSIRA grades is compounded by the rapid change over of dog handlers, by the employer and the client.
- ✚ The management at the Ports stated that animals could not be transported without proper vehicles, and that the vehicles used by the PSCs conducting stowaway searches, were not designed to transport dogs.

✚ The research revealed two schools of thought, one being that the old PSIRA grades were sufficient and transition to SASSETA skills programme is unnecessary, has no market, and does not lead to the development of dog handlers.

✚ The second view, maintains that improving training through SASSETA is essential to ensure that dog handlers and dogs are more reliable, but concerns regarding cost and duration remain.

✚ Allegations of fly-by-nights operating in the sector with low standards and no checks and balances, was a common view expressed.

✚ The Performing Animals Protection Act 24 of 1935 (PAPA) license takes a long time to be issued it should be made valid for a full year, despite what month it is applied for.

✚ Some in the members in this sector considers the requirement to have a PAPA license as redundant, due to the requirements from the PSIRA Act, and highlight that the PSIRA Act gives no provision to have the PAPA license for those operating in the sector.

✚ SASSETA is supposed to be part of the development of the sector, but its training programmes were solely focused on people and excluded the training and development of the actual dogs. SASSETA

accreditation only covered training for the handler, while PSIRA accreditation covered both the handler and the dog.

✚ It was conceded that the private security industry was a very corrupt one, and it was unfortunately very common that brown envelopes were passed around in order for contracts and tenders to be awarded.

Recommendations

As informed by the research findings, the following recommendations are made:-

Working hours and size of the kennels

➤ PSIRA must articulate and give a clear definition of what a working animal is and particularly as this pertains to dogs in the private security industry, this should entail what the appropriate working hours and conditions of work should be. The appropriate size of a kennel should be no smaller than 2x2 metres and 1.8 metres height.

➤ An allowance should be paid to dog handlers.

Partnership

➤ PSIRA should engage the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) regarding their presumed and at times premature role in interfering with the conditions of dogs in the private security industry. The SPCA's focus on ensuring animal welfare must be

adhered to but cognisant of the requirements for dogs working in the private security industry.

Registration

The moratorium on registering new training centres in general and those that specialize in the training of dogs must be lifted, even if this is only gradually applied, in favour of a regulatory measure that gives room for effective and professional training centres to be established.

Failure to do address this only perpetuates non-compliance within the sector as prospective service providers ultimately use the services of training centres that are not accredited by PSIRA nor-regulated by the Authority.

Training

- Greater clarity regarding the current transition from PSIRA grades to SASSETA skills programmes is required particular for this sector of the private security industry.

PSIRA Inspectors

- PSIRA needs inspectors that are able to verify the quality of the services being provided, and not just carrying out paper functions.
- There should be measures in place so that if a dog handler is found abusing a dog he/she must be blacklisted from working with animals.

Future Research

The use of working animals within the private security industry in South Africa

In terms of Clause 35 21 A (o) of the Bill, the Minister is entrusted with the responsibility of developing regulations relating to training, registration, transportation and general care for working animals by security service providers and other persons who employ security officers, in connection with rendering a security service, as well as the registration of training centres.

This research could commence as soon as the Amendment Act comes into force.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a security dog can effectively replace up to three static security officers, the argument is that dogs are not only more of a deterrent but cost effective too.

Dogs have an incredible sense of hearing and a powerful sense of smell which enables them to detect disturbances from a far distance, well before any person or high tech alarm system.

There is a need to determine key measures for promoting and fostering greater compliance of the private security industry to the Private Security Industry Regulation Act 56 of 2001 and other complementary legislation, related to the regulation of the dog handling sector of the private security industry.

For more information on the full report, *Canine Protection: Dogs and Dog Handlers in the South African Private Security Industry*, contact the Research and Development Unit, PSIRA.

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