

PROFILES OF SUCCESS ▶ MADONNA & THE BUSINESS OF BEING A SUPERSTAR

Working World

OCTOBER 29 – NOVEMBER 19, 2012

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“Those who wish to sing always find a song.”

— Swedish Proverb

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TRAIN FOR A NEW CAREER

by Dan Jacobs

Homeland Security

Protecting the public by securing borders, airports and facilities

Picture yourself as a security officer working the night shift in a high-profile office building in the financial district. One of your many duties is to watch the closed circuit television (CCTV) monitors to make sure the building is safe at all entry points.

The Backpack Dilemma

Late at night, while looking at a monitor that scans the parking garage, you notice a torn and ratty backpack with what looks like a wire coming out of it. It could be nothing — or it could be something. Your homeland security training has prepared you to decide whether to personally inspect the bag, immediately call the police or conclude that the suspicious bag is nothing and to just ignore it.

A decision has to be made quickly. If you leave your office to check the

backpack, then that means no one is working the monitors and someone could trespass undetected. If you call the authorities, then you risk making a

To work in homeland security, you must be a law-abiding, respectful citizen who is concerned for the overall safety of others.

big deal out of a possible false alarm and you could draw negative media attention to the situation. However, if you decide the backpack does not pose a security threat and are wrong, then you'll have endangered the lives of hundreds of workers in the building you were tasked to protect.

The call is yours and you have only three seconds to make it. What would you do in this situation?

The above scenario, which could

occur anywhere in the country, requires that a swift and tough decision be made. However, the training that homeland security professionals

receive gives them the knowledge and confidence needed to make the right choice when potentially dangerous situations arise.

Job Descriptions

As a homeland security professional, you may be qualified to work in a variety of areas that include: airports, harbors, homes, businesses, casinos, sports arenas and more. Wherever your passions lie, there is a good chance that individuals are needed to provide security.

✓ SECURITY GUARD AND GAMING SURVEILLANCE OFFICER

Security guards patrol and protect their assigned properties from fire, theft, vandalism, terrorism and other illegal activity. Guards monitor people and designated areas in an effort to prevent crime.

Professionals in the gaming security field work in casinos or at off-site locations, using audio and video surveillance equipment to safeguard against theft and cheating. Their duties may also call for them to work the casino floor.

These positions require guards to monitor CCTV systems, conduct



checks over specified areas, write reports and detain people thought to be in violation of the law.

✓ **IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS INSPECTOR**

Immigration and customs inspectors play a vital role in helping to protect our nation's borders through a variety of strategies, including reviewing passports, visas and other travel documents. Inspectors may detain anyone caught trying to bring in dangerous objects, contraband or other banned materials. Inspectors may also be required to explain and interpret laws, as well as testifying in court.

✓ **TRANSPORTATION SECURITY SCREENER**

Screeners work hard to keep airports, aircraft and airline passengers out of harm's way. Tasks include using advanced X-ray and scanning equip-

ment to ensure that explosives, banned chemicals and other prohibited objects do not make their way onto planes. Additional duties may include controlling entry and exit points, as well as conducting bag checks.

✓ **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY TECHNICIAN**

Health and safety technicians are responsible for testing workplaces for biological hazards, such as dangerous chemicals or excessive noise levels. They must often ensure the availability and proper use of safety equipment, ranging from hearing protectors to respirators. They may also be asked to keep all environmental records and documentation for job sites.

Technicians also plan emergency response drills and implement tools to collect and analyze biological samples, and, if necessary, implement corrective measures.

Education and Training

A background in homeland security can open up many doors for people with an interest in security, protection, disaster response, the law and other areas where safety is a big priority.

The classes students take depend on the type of program in which they enroll. One option is to take individual courses, such as through a community college or through extension classes offered by a university.

However, for students looking to enroll in a formal, comprehensive program, ICDC College offers certificates, fast-track diplomas and associate degrees. Typical homeland security classes in the ICDC College program include:

- Cyber Security and Security Technology
- Weapons of Mass Destruction/Hazardous Materials
- Emergency Management

Continued on page 22

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Homeland Security

- Border, Port and Coastal Security
- Global Terrorism and Psychology of Terrorism
- Intelligence Analysis
- Chemical Agents, Baton and Firearms Training.

The Ideal Candidate

To have a satisfying career in a homeland security field, "a student needs to be a law-abiding and respectful citizen, for starters," says ICDC College's Homeland Security program director. He additionally notes that aspiring students "need to be up for physical challenges and to have the desire to help. They should have integrity, dependability, leadership and a genuine concern for the overall safety of others."

Candidates may need to obtain security clearances and additional licenses or training.

Salaries

The world is constantly evolving, and as new technologies and trends emerge in the security field, qualified professionals who know how to use those tools will become more valuable in the eyes of their employers.


The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the following average salaries:

- Transportation security screeners (federal level): \$18.63/hour
- Security guards: \$13.36/hour
- Gaming surveillance officers: \$19.41/hour.

Salaries vary based on individual candidates' levels of education and prior experience. Many professionals have higher salaries than those listed.

"The Job You Feel Good About Doing"

Whether you're a nurse who helps save lives or a legal professional who fights for justice, it is important to enjoy what you do. According to ICDC College's program director, this feeling translates to the security field: "It's the type of job you feel good about doing while being out and working with the community."

One benefit to becoming in the homeland security industry is that whether you like working alone or in a big team, there is likely a job title that matches your skillset and desires. As long as you have a passion for the work, your dream career is out there waiting for you! 

Resources:

- Department of Homeland Security: www.dhs.gov
- Transportation Security Administration: www.tsa.gov
- Homeland Security training programs at ICDC College: <http://icdcollege.edu> or 800-395-8177.

Certain legal restrictions may apply. For more information about ICDC College's graduation rates, the median debt of students who completed the program, and other important information, please visit: <http://icdcollege.edu/programs/associates-degree/homeland-security-associates-degree/>.



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