

PART 1 – FINDING THE INVESTIGATOR

Introduction

A good private investigator can sometimes be the major difference between a successful and a dismal outcome to a given set of circumstances. As an experienced agency, we have prepared these guidelines to assist you in selecting a qualified and reliable company.

Obviously, we consider ourselves to be your number one choice, but we have to be realistic and appreciate that there are others out there who could provide you with an equally reliable service and achieve the same results.

First and foremost, let us shatter the myth that private investigators can usually be found hiding in bushes or hanging out in nightclubs or pubs; we are a million light years away from Sam Spade of Hollywood or Magnum PI of television. We usually “blend in with the crowd” and remain inconspicuous – dressing accordingly and using vehicles or props which help us to meld into our surroundings.

What we do

We can provide a vast array of services which are equally useful to private individuals and to organisations, and we have the latest equipment to assist us. We are routinely engaged in domestic cases, service of process, working undercover (such as in a corporate environment), statement taking, providing assistance in gathering evidence or proofing alibis for court trials, preparing photographs, video or sketch plans, tracing people and, of course, surveillance – where technologies such as GPS allow us not only to conduct surveillance, but also to determine the whereabouts of a specific vehicle at any given time.

We are seasoned in the art of surveillance and can secure video or still footage of any number of indiscretions. For example, we routinely conduct surveillance on insurance claimants or absentees from work to determine the validity of an illness or injury, or to ensure that a person is not supplementing their income whilst claiming benefits.

We are frequently called upon to assist employers in gathering evidence, usually through surveillance, in support of disciplinary proceedings against an employee; for this reason, we have prepared a comprehensive guide to the dismissal, disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Begin your search

Private investigators are trained in many different ways, and will soon need to be licensed, something which we are more than happy to embrace.

The vast majority of our staff are ex-Police or ex-Military and their skills, judgement and common-sense have all been honed through the years in their particular chosen

career; each member of staff is a considerable asset to our organisation. All operatives within the organisation continue to be trained in all facets of the business and training is ongoing as new technologies, equipment or ethics impact upon the business.

You may search through Yellow Pages or its web counterpart, www.yell.com, but if you want an investigator who is a member of an approved organisation, then you can search the directory of investigators at www.theabi.org.uk; this is the website of the Association of British Investigators - **"The leading professional team, trained, reliable and committed, to provide a best value quality service. The leading professional body, working with investigators."**

Qualifications

You may need an investigator with particular skills, so do not be afraid to ask about work experience, educational background, additional training received or, in fact, anything which you need to know to satisfy yourself that you have the right person for the job.

To some private investigators, achieving the result is their sole aim, and they can be extremely adept at the artful task of gathering information that is either unknown or unavailable; we will not push the boundaries of what is acceptable behaviour and will not perform any acts which are either illegal or morally or ethically unacceptable. Our ethical standards and reputation are extremely important and no circumstance can exist that would motivate us to jeopardise our standing in the legal community.

If necessary, conduct a formal interview with your proposed investigator to satisfy yourself that they are capable of fulfilling their obligations to you; it is practice in the USA for investigators to be asked point blank if they or anyone employed by them has ever been arrested for a crime and if their company or any of those same individuals have ever been a defendant in a civil case or complaint. Make sure that before you continue with the interview, the candidate answers your questions to your complete satisfaction. You can safely assume that an applicant who shows signs of uncertainty is not being candid and that you can then look elsewhere.

Affiliations and Certification

Private investigators are sometimes affiliated with one or more organisations; the Senior Partner of Dukeries ASI Group is a Member of the Association of British Investigators (ABI), a Member of the Institute of Professional Investigators (IPI) and a member of the World Association of Professional Investigators (WAPI).

The Association of British Investigators (ABI), is the only Investigation Association which is endorsed by the legal profession; the ABI also regulates its members.

Only choose an ABI member !

All of our retired Police Officers are members of the National Association of Retired Police Officers (NARPO), two are members of the Ex-Police in Industry and in Commerce (EPIC) and one of our operatives is a skilled computer programmer and is an Associate Member of the British Computer Society (AMBCS).

Compare like-with-like

Be aware that there are countless one-man operations in the industry and, whilst a number will give you a very good and professional service, there are also those who will use friends or relatives to cover a surveillance operation and the untrained can ruin a surveillance operation very easily. When looking for a Private Investigator, be sure that the level of service that you expect can be equally provided by all those on your list.

Referrals/Testimonials

Lastly, contact other companies and professionals who have used private investigators and get recommendations, or simply ask the proposed investigator for testimonials from previous contracts..

Costs and Fees

The costs for an investigator will vary greatly depending on the types of services required. Rates for surveillance and special investigative work will generally be greater than that for serving process or conducting research. Costs for conducting research will fluctuate depending on the type and number of databases that are accessed and the speed at which the information is needed. As we all know, most clients want the information "yesterday" which causes the agency to prioritise its list of jobs in order to accommodate their most demanding clients.

The main reason surveillance and investigative work may be more expensive lies in one word – manpower. When an individual investigator is "in the field," he is considered immobile; that is, he is unable to engage in any other activity other than the task at hand. On the other hand, an investigator who is conducting research may be able to complete several jobs at one location. Moreover, an investigator who possesses a specialised service or has completed expert training may command a higher rate. This is sometimes necessary to cover infrequent and costly expenses such as special insurance or the use of rare and sophisticated equipment.

Conclusion

Finding the right private investigator can be an exhaustive and frustrating task, which sometimes leaves clients discontented.

We believe that quality investigators are rare but, following a few simple guidelines, incorporating some common sense, and trusting your instincts, can make your search worthwhile.

On the following pages, we have provided a list of what we believe you should expect of an investigator and his organisation; not only can we satisfy every single one but, when comparing costings – something which usually comes into every “purchase” – we also believe that it is important to base any comparison on a “like-for-like” basis.

Obviously, we hope that you select our organisation to do business with, but in the meanwhile we also hope that our various notes and guides have been beneficial to you.

PART 2 – WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM AN INVESTIGATOR

	DASI	PI 1	PI 2
The Company			
Member of the Association of British Investigators (ABI). The only Investigation Association endorsed by the legal profession and also regulates its members.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Only choose an ABI Member!			
Over 35 years of experience	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional Indemnity Insurance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Liability Insurance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employee Liability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Membership of Professional Investigative bodies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Code of Ethics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health & Safety Policy to protect operatives	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equal Opportunities Policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality Statement – best value policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actively Markets itself by DVD's/website/emails and newsletters	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Awareness of current legislation affecting the industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Resources & Support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human resources sufficient to do the job	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Administrative and Intelligence support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Investigators and desk researchers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Video & photographic evidence processed on site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Undercover operatives	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialist business advisor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equipment			
Dedicated surveillance vehicles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Motorcycles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Two-way radios	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Still & video cameras – digital and film - with telephoto capability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trackers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Voice recorders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Experience			
Fully trained operatives with years of military or police experience	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge to reduce the risk of compromise	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have learned through thoroughly analysing each job which did not go to plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CROP (Covert Rural Observant Post) capabilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	DASI	PI 1	PI 2
The operation/investigation			
Agreement between the Company and the Client – to protect both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assist client in completing Risk Assessment and Impact Assessment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exercise duty of care to staff, client and subject of investigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assist client in maintaining secrecy within their own organisation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Process for receiving instruction and quickly organising investigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initial reconnaissance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Rights awareness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dynamic operation handling	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Full briefing and de-briefing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication with the client	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gathering intelligence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Log keeping	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence gathering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Integrity of all data and evidence gathered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Method statement for dealing with passive or aggressive compromise	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Protection of staff by length of day and hours of driving policies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Presenting the client with the evidence in the best possible way	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>