

# Private Investigators - Part IV

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In this article about private investigators we're going to discuss the training that's required as well as other qualifications.

Unlike most other jobs there are no formal requirements for education to get a job as a private investigator. In spite of this, many private investigators do have college degrees. Most private detectives and investigators do have some kind of related experience in another profession such as in law enforcement. Some may have worked for insurance companies, collection agencies, in private security or even as paralegals. Some may have served in some sort of government position such as a federal intelligence job with the FBI or the CIA. Many private investigators may have even served in the military where many skills are taught that come in quite handy when tackling the job of a detective.

What is very common is for people who work in the public sector, who are able to retire after 25 years of service, to become private investigators. These people are usually still relatively young, in their mid 40's, and find it hard to retire at that age. Those who have been exposed to jobs that would assist them in becoming investigators find it an easy transition to go from the one job to the other. For these people it is like starting life all over and many of them find it quite exciting and fulfilling. Some even go back to college to get additional training in order to be better prepared for an investigator's job.

In the United States, most states require private investigators to be licensed even though no formal training is required.

The requirements for licensing vary from state to state but seven states, Alabama, Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Mississippi, Missouri, and South Dakota, have no licensing requirements. Some states have very few requirements. Many states however, have very strict requirements and it is very difficult in those states to get a private investigator's license. A number of states now have mandatory training programs. For example, in California a person must be 18 years old, must be educated in criminal law, police science and justice, and have a minimum of 6,000 hours of investigation experience. Then on top of all of that they have to pass a criminal history background check by the California Department of Justice and the FBI. They then must take a 2 hour exam and pass with a minimum score. Then if they want to get a gun permit there are additional requirements for that as well.

Then to get hired, many firms look for people with certain characteristics such as ingenuity, persistence, and assertiveness. Job applicants can't be afraid of confrontation, should be able to communicate well and be able to think on their feet. They also need good interrogation and interviewing skills. A good investigator also must be able to present the facts in a detailed, organized manner as many times they will be called on to testify in court.

In our next article we'll cover where private investigators get their training, how they go about getting employment, what the job outlook is for new investigators and what investigators can expect to earn.

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Your Independent guide to Private Investigators  
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