

How to Become a Private Detective

Whenever someone asks me what I do for a living and I tell them I'm a private investigator I usually get the same response. "Oh how interesting. I've always wanted to be a private eye, how can I become a private detective."

It's not that easy to answer at a BBQ or cocktail party but in this series of articles I'm going to attempt to outline a step by step guide on "How to become a PI".

We will be focusing our attention on these basic areas.

1. State licensing requirements
2. Education and Training
3. Integrity investigations
4. Getting started tomorrow

First and most important is learning your state licensing requirements. Some states require a test, some don't. Some states require you work a certain number of hours under a licensed private Investigator until you can get licensed yourself but some do not. Some states require a degree in criminal justice, some do not. Most states will require some experience as an investigator before they will issue a license. This is why most private investigators are former police officers but many are not.

Almost every state will do a background investigation to determine if you have a criminal record or outstanding warrant, some states will even look into your credit history and ask for personal and professional references.

Today a licensed private investigator can have access to a variety of personal information such as social security numbers, criminal records checks, locating databases. If a person of suspect character had access to this type of information they could irresponsibly release it to a stalker or potential murderer, or at the very least an identity thief. So that's why it's important for private investigators to be regulated at the state level.

Each state is different and you can either use google to find online state by state licensing requirements for private investigators or contact your state's dept of licensing.

Second is education.

If your state requires a degree in criminal justice you'll need to find a good school or online college. Even if your state does not require a degree your potential employer may. So you'll want to get some kind of degree or certificate. There are many online schools that offer a Private Investigator certificate. This may not help with your state licensing board but a potential employer will be impressed that you are taking your new career choice seriously by getting some education under your belt.

Third is Integrity Investigations, sometimes also called mystery shopping. These companies will hire inexperienced private investigator trainees to visit local businesses in their area to conduct undercover visits and see if the employees are following the stores corporate policies. Sometimes you'll visit a major dept store and take covert video. Other times you'll dine for free at a restaurant and report back on the quality of food and service. It's very important that you carefully research the companies that are offering mystery shops and integrity investigations. You should NEVER have to pay an up front fee of any kind to a reputable company.

Last is getting started tomorrow. With a little bit of research you can find resources to lead you to reputable Mystery shopping companies. Apply and they can accept you train you and have you out doing investigations in days. Do some investigation and find out your state's licensing requirements. If no license is required you could be in business in no time. Especially if you have life experience in helping people and problem solving.

About the Author

Ed Opperman is a Private Investigator and Pres. Of Opperman Investigations Inc. He invites you to visit his blog for detailed step by step instructions, tips and warnings about how to get into the industry. <http://oppermaninvestigations.blogspot.com/>

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