

PROTOCOL 9

SIA QUALIFICATIONS CONSULTATION 2026

Independent Response Guide for Licence Holders
and Security Industry Stakeholders

**HIGH STANDARDS. FAIR ASSESSMENT.
RECOGNITION OF EXPERIENCE.**

Mandatory competence? Yes.
Mandatory repetition? No.

Prepared by Protocol 9

Consultation deadline: 11:59pm, 23 October 2026

The SIA states that responses will inform the final qualification specifications, planned for implementation in 2027.

About this guide

The Security Industry Authority (SIA) is consulting on proposed changes to licence-linked qualification standards and requirements. The consultation covers entry-level specifications, Physical Intervention, first aid, functional English, Close Protection integration, trainer requirements, top-up training and refresher training.

Protocol 9 supports higher professional standards. Our concern is proportionality: the system should distinguish between new entrants who need to acquire competence, experienced operatives who can already demonstrate it, and licence holders who genuinely need updating or refresher training.

**A course can teach a procedure.
Experience teaches you when, why and whether to use it.**

This guide is not an answer sheet. It explains the issues and gives example wording that respondents can adapt. Do not copy answers simply because they appear here. Answer according to your own licences, work, qualifications and operational experience.

Where you have no experience of a sector, 'Not applicable' may be the most appropriate response. Personal and demographic questions should always be answered personally.

Official consultation: GOV.UK / Security Industry Authority - Consultation on proposed changes to standards and requirements for SIA licence-linked qualifications.

Online questionnaire: www.smartsurvey.co.uk/t/SIAQualsReview

Protocol 9's four principles

- 1. Competence, not attendance. Course attendance is a means of developing competence, not the definition of competence.
- 2. Train for the risk - not simply the badge. Deployment-specific risk should determine additional specialist training.
- 3. Recognise the qualification. Test the competence. Don't duplicate the training.
- 4. Where a genuine competence gap exists, train it. Recognition of experience must never become an excuse for allowing safety-critical skills to deteriorate.

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Questions 1-10

About you and the proposed specifications

Question 1-6 - About you

Protocol 9 suggested position: Answer truthfully

These questions establish who is responding, which licences you hold, the sectors in which you have worked and your length of experience. There is no preferred Protocol 9 answer.

If you are an experienced licence holder, make sure your actual experience is recorded accurately. The SIA consultation is expressly seeking views from frontline licence holders as well as employers, trainers and other stakeholders.

Question 7 - Agreement with the proposed specification changes

Protocol 9 suggested position: Consider 'Partially agree' if you support modernisation but have concerns about implementation

There are sensible modernisations in the draft specifications. A respondent can support updated safety-critical content while still questioning whether every subsequent change should trigger compulsory top-up training for experienced licence holders.

Adaptable wording

I broadly support updating the specifications where there is a demonstrated operational or public-safety requirement. However, adding prescribed content does not in itself create greater operational competence. A distinction should be maintained between entry-level learning and the continuing competence of experienced licence holders. Relevant qualifications, operational experience and meaningful CPD should be recognised wherever competence can be demonstrated.

Question 8 - Are the updated specifications fit for purpose?

Protocol 9 suggested position: Partially satisfied may be appropriate

The SIA uses 'fit for purpose' in the sense of being proportionate and providing the knowledge and skills needed to protect the public. A specification can provide a sound entry-level baseline without being the complete measure of an experienced operative's competence.

Adaptable wording

The specifications provide a reasonable baseline, but completing a specification should not be confused with demonstrating full operational competence. The system should distinguish between entry-level knowledge, safety-critical skills that require periodic updating, and competence that can be demonstrated through current qualifications, assessment, CPD and operational experience.

Question 9 - Do the specifications cover the core knowledge and skills?

Protocol 9 suggested position: Answer by sector

If you believe the right subjects are present, answer Yes for the sectors you know. Supporting the content does not prevent you challenging a later proposal about how existing licence holders must demonstrate that knowledge.

Question 10 - Has unnecessary content been included?

Protocol 9 suggested position: Answer by sector

This asks whether subjects in the specification itself are unnecessary. It is not the place to object to refresher training. If the subjects legitimately belong in an entry-level qualification, No is a valid response.

The content can be right while the method of imposing it on existing licence holders can still be disproportionate.

Questions 11-20

Missing content, personal safety, Physical Intervention and common knowledge

Question 11 - Has anything important been left out?

Protocol 9 suggested position: Answer from your own sector experience

If something genuinely important is missing, identify it and explain the operational reason. Do not invent an omission merely to fill the comment box.

Question 12 - Is Security Guard personal-safety knowledge sufficient?

Protocol 9 suggested position: Protocol 9 leans No

Adaptable wording

Security Guards increasingly work in environments where they may encounter aggression, violence and unpredictable behaviour. Personal-safety training should include situational awareness, positioning, maintaining escape options, communication, disengagement and de-escalation. The objective should be to help an operative avoid unnecessary physical confrontation wherever possible.

Question 13 - Physical Intervention in Security Guarding

Protocol 9 suggested position: Available where deployment and risk justify it

The consultation itself recognises that not every Security Guard role requires PI and that universal mandatory PI would increase training time, cost and accessibility barriers.

Adaptable wording

Physical Intervention training should be available to Security Guards where the deployment and risk assessment indicate it is required. Training should emphasise avoidance, de-escalation, disengagement, personal safety and lawful use of force. Existing relevant PI qualifications should also be recognised so competent operatives are not automatically required to repurchase substantially the same training.

Question 14 - Proposed Conflict Management changes

Protocol 9 suggested position: Yes

Protocol 9 supports stronger, more realistic conflict-management training and assessment that reflects actual situations operatives encounter.

Question 15 - Realistic practical scenarios

Protocol 9 suggested position: Yes

Adaptable wording

Conflict management is an applied skill. Assessment should test whether an operative can communicate, recognise developing risk, make appropriate decisions and de-escalate realistic situations rather than simply recall theoretical information.

Question 16 - Advanced/restrictive Physical Intervention

Protocol 9 suggested position: Yes - voluntary and deployment-specific

Adaptable wording

I support a recognised advanced Physical Intervention standard provided it remains deployment and risk driven rather than becoming a universal licence requirement. More restrictive techniques carry greater risks and should only be taught where an identified operational requirement justifies them.

Question 17 - How often have you used PI stair escort?

Protocol 9 suggested position: Answer from your own experience

Select Never, Rarely, Occasionally or Frequently according to your actual work. This is exactly where genuine frontline evidence matters.

Question 18 - Remove stair escort from standard DS PI?

Protocol 9 suggested position: Yes

If the technique is uncommon and carries additional risk, there is a reasonable case for removing it from everybody's standard training.

Question 19 - Include stair escort in an advanced voluntary specification?

Protocol 9 suggested position: Yes

A specialist technique can remain available to deployments that genuinely require it without being imposed universally.

Question 20 - Expanded Common Security Industry Knowledge

Protocol 9 suggested position: Yes to relevant common subjects

Protocol 9 supports a stronger common baseline covering matters such as protection systems, incident reporting, crime-scene preservation and spiking where those subjects have relevance across multiple frontline roles.

TRAIN FOR THE RISK - NOT SIMPLY THE BADGE.

Questions 21-30

Common knowledge, welfare, counter-terrorism, first aid and Functional English

Question 21 - Law, Martyn's Law awareness and emergency procedures

Protocol 9 suggested position: Support

Adaptable wording

I support a consistent baseline of knowledge across frontline sectors where the subject is relevant to public and operative safety. Emergency procedures and protective-security awareness should form part of that baseline. Awareness training should not, however, imply that an individual operative carries responsibilities that properly belong to an employer, venue operator or responsible person.

Question 22 - Equality and people requiring additional support

Protocol 9 suggested position: No - knowledge alone is not sufficient to create confidence

Adaptable wording

Knowledge of equality legislation is important, but legislation alone does not necessarily give an operative confidence or competence when dealing with people with different needs. Confidence develops through realistic scenarios, communication skills, practical application and experience.

Question 23 - Searching vulnerable or disabled people

Protocol 9 suggested position: Yes, with practical application

Adaptable wording

The proposed content provides an appropriate baseline provided training emphasises dignity, communication, reasonable adjustment and the practical needs of the individual rather than treating the subject simply as a theoretical exercise.

Question 24 - Operative welfare

Protocol 9 suggested position: Yes

Adaptable wording

Operative welfare is relevant to maintaining a professional and effective workforce, particularly following serious or traumatic incidents. Training should also make clear the responsibilities of employers to support staff welfare rather than placing responsibility entirely upon the individual operative.

Question 25 - Streamlined counter-terrorism e-learning

Protocol 9 suggested position: Yes

Adaptable wording

I support combining counter-terrorism e-learning into a single targeted package, provided the required safety-critical learning outcomes and formal assessment are maintained. Removing unnecessary duplication while maintaining competence is a positive approach.

Question 26 - First-aid situations encountered

Protocol 9 suggested position: Answer from experience

Examples may include slips, trips and falls; bleeding; injuries following violence; intoxication or drug-related incidents; unconscious casualties; cardiac arrest; chest pain; breathing difficulties; seizures; diabetic emergencies; head injuries and choking. Include only what reflects your own experience.

Question 27 - HSE first-aid system or security-specific qualification?

Protocol 9 suggested position: Continue recognised HSE-based routes

Adaptable wording

I support continuing to recognise appropriate first-aid qualifications under the existing HSE framework. Security-specific scenarios can be incorporated into relevant training and assessment without necessarily creating an additional security-only qualification. The objective should be genuine first-aid competence and reliable certification, not additional certification where an existing recognised qualification already demonstrates the required skills.

Question 28 - Check new learners' first-aid knowledge?

Protocol 9 suggested position: Yes - proportionately

Adaptable wording

A proportionate check of safety-critical first-aid knowledge is reasonable. Where a learner holds a valid recognised qualification, the check should verify competence rather than unnecessarily duplicate the qualification they have already completed.

Question 29 - Current first-aid certificate throughout the three-year licence?

Protocol 9 suggested position: Yes, with safeguards

Adaptable wording

I support maintaining a valid recognised first-aid qualification throughout the licence period where first aid is a licensing requirement. Any system making this a licence condition should provide clear expiry information, reasonable reminders and a straightforward mechanism for recording renewal. An administrative oversight should not unnecessarily result in an otherwise competent operative unknowingly working unlawfully.

Question 30 - Is B2 Functional English the right level?

Protocol 9 suggested position: Yes

Adaptable wording

Effective communication is a safety-critical security skill. An operative must be able to understand instructions, communicate clearly with the public and colleagues, provide accurate information to emergency services and complete meaningful incident records.

**RECOGNISE THE QUALIFICATION. TEST THE COMPETENCE.
DON'T DUPLICATE THE TRAINING.**

Questions 31-39

English assurance, Close Protection, trainers, top-up and refresher training

Question 31 - Are current Functional English checks sufficient?

Protocol 9 suggested position: No

Adaptable wording

A functional English requirement is only effective if it is applied consistently. Where assessment methods vary significantly between providers, there is a risk that learners can enter the industry without the communication skills necessary to perform safety-critical duties.

Question 32 - Greater consistency in English checks?

Protocol 9 suggested position: Yes

Adaptable wording

Greater consistency protects the integrity of the qualification and public safety while ensuring learners are assessed against the same standard regardless of where they undertake training.

Question 33 - Independent third-party spoken-English assessment?

Protocol 9 suggested position: Yes - once, not as a recurring renewal burden

The consultation proposes an independent speaking/listening assessment, estimated at around £40, and states that it would be required once rather than as part of every refresher.

Adaptable wording

I support an objective independent functional English assessment for people entering the licensed security industry. Once an individual has demonstrated the required standard, it should not become another recurring renewal requirement unless there is a specific reason to reassess competence.

Question 34 - Keep Close Protection licence integration?

Protocol 9 suggested position: Yes, if you have a view on CP

Current integration gives CP licence holders flexibility to undertake certain Door Supervision, Security Guarding and CCTV activities. If you have no CP experience, Not applicable may be more appropriate.

Question 35 - Common knowledge for Close Protection if integration continues?

Protocol 9 suggested position: Yes

Adaptable wording

If integration continues, new Close Protection learners should receive the common safety-critical knowledge necessary for the other activities their licence permits. Duplicated learning should be removed and suitable knowledge-based elements should be capable of proportionate flexible or self-directed learning.

Question 36 - Close Protection first aid

Protocol 9 suggested position: Continue recognised FAW/FREC/FPOS or equivalent routes

Adaptable wording

Deployment-specific risk may justify higher clinical training in some Close Protection environments, but that does not necessarily mean every licence holder requires the same additional qualification.

Question 37 - Should trainers hold a current relevant SIA licence?

Protocol 9 suggested position: Yes

Adaptable wording

Trainers delivering licence-linked qualifications should normally hold a current relevant SIA licence for the sector they teach. This should complement rather than replace genuine operational experience, appropriate teaching and assessment qualifications and continuing professional development. A current licence demonstrates regulatory currency; it does not by itself demonstrate training competence.

Question 38 - Is top-up training required?

Protocol 9 suggested position: No to a blanket automatic requirement

The SIA says the review may result in top-up qualifications for most sectors, particularly where new common knowledge creates a gap for existing licence holders. Protocol 9 accepts that genuinely new safety-critical competence must be acquired. The question is whether course attendance must always be the only route.

Adaptable wording

I do not support a blanket requirement for top-up training simply because a qualification specification has changed. Where genuinely new safety-critical knowledge or skills have been introduced, existing licence holders should be required to demonstrate that they possess the required competence. The system should recognise relevant existing qualifications, recognised CPD and other appropriate evidence of current competence. Where an individual cannot demonstrate the new knowledge or skill, top-up training should then be required to address that identified gap.

Question 39 - Should refresher training remain mandatory on renewal and extend to CCTV?

Protocol 9 suggested position: No to blanket course attendance solely because time has passed

Adaptable wording

I support maintaining safety-critical competence throughout an individual's licensed career. However, the passage of time alone does not demonstrate that an experienced licence holder has lost competence. Practical safety-critical skills that may deteriorate should be assessed appropriately, and changes in law or recognised practice should be updated. Experienced licence holders should have an opportunity to demonstrate continuing competence through appropriate assessment, recognised CPD, current relevant qualifications and recent operational experience. Where a genuine competence gap is identified, refresher training should then be required.

The Protocol 9 position

Continuing competence without unnecessary repetition

Protocol 9 supports higher standards in the private security industry. We support effective entry-level training, maintaining safety-critical skills, realistic practical assessment, updating licence holders when legislation or threats change, and additional training where a genuine competence gap exists.

What we question is whether repeatedly attending prescribed courses should be the only acceptable way for an experienced professional to demonstrate competence.

**COMPETENCE SHOULD HAVE AN EXPIRY TEST,
NOT SIMPLY AN ARBITRARY EXPIRY DATE.**

A sensible continuing-competence model could recognise several forms of evidence before requiring additional training:

- current relevant qualifications;
- recognised continuing professional development (CPD);
- appropriate knowledge or practical assessment;
- recent relevant operational experience;
- documented employer or deployment-specific training;
- targeted refresher or top-up training where an actual gap is identified.

This approach is not about lowering the standard. It is about measuring the standard more intelligently.

Physical Intervention illustrates the point. A practical skill that can deteriorate should not simply be assumed to remain competent forever. But neither should competence automatically be assumed to have disappeared on a calendar date. If the skill is safety-critical, assess it. If the person demonstrates it safely and correctly, competence has been evidenced. If they cannot, require training.

New entrant

Teach the required knowledge and skills. Assess them properly.

Experienced operative with current competence

Recognise legitimate evidence of competence instead of automatically duplicating training.

Operative with an identified gap

Require targeted training that addresses the gap.

**MANDATORY COMPETENCE? YES.
MANDATORY REPETITION? NO.**

Make your response your own

Protocol 9 has produced this guide to help licence holders understand the issues and participate in the consultation. It is deliberately not a set of instructions telling the industry how to vote.

You may agree with Protocol 9. You may disagree. You may support one proposal and oppose another. Your operational experience may lead you to a completely different conclusion.

That is exactly why you should respond.

When completing the consultation:

- answer personal, licence and demographic questions truthfully;
- only comment on sectors you understand;
- use your own operational examples where they are relevant;
- distinguish between the quality of proposed course content and the way it may later be imposed on existing licence holders;
- consider safety, proportionality, cost, time away from work and accessibility;
- do not simply copy and paste this guide.

**YOUR EXPERIENCE IS EVIDENCE.
USE IT.**

The consultation closes at 11:59pm on 23 October 2026.

Questionnaire: www.smartsurvey.co.uk/t/SIAQualsReview

Source documents and disclaimer

This guide has been prepared from the SIA's August 2026 consultation material and the draft specifications supplied alongside it. Principal documents reviewed include:

- Consultation on proposed changes to standards and requirements for SIA licence-linked qualifications;
- SIA skills research results 2026;
- Draft Common Security Industry Knowledge specification;
- Draft Door Supervision specification;
- Draft Security Guarding specification;
- Draft Public Space Surveillance (CCTV) specification;
- Draft Conflict Management specification;
- Draft Physical Intervention specification;
- Draft Close Protection specification;
- Draft Cash and Valuables in Transit specification.

Important: The proposals are under consultation and are not final requirements. Respondents should read the SIA's own consultation and draft specifications before submitting a response.

This publication represents Protocol 9's independent interpretation and policy position. It is not produced by, endorsed by or affiliated with the Security Industry Authority.

The example responses are provided as drafting aids only. They should be adapted to reflect the respondent's own experience and views.

Protocol 9

Elite Training. Uncompromised Investigations.

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