



Ohio Revised Code

Section 4749.01 Private investigator - security services definitions.

Effective: September 30, 2025

Legislation: House Bill 96

As used in this chapter:

(A) "Private investigator" means any person who engages in the business of private investigation.

(B) "Business of private investigation" means, except when performed by one excluded under division (H) of this section, the conducting, for hire, in person or through a partner or employees, of any investigation relevant to any crime or wrong done or threatened, or to obtain information on the identity, habits, conduct, movements, whereabouts, affiliations, transactions, reputation, credibility, or character of any person, or to locate and recover lost or stolen property, or to determine the cause of or responsibility for any libel or slander, or any fire, accident, or damage to property, or to secure evidence for use in any legislative, administrative, or judicial investigation or proceeding.

(C) "Security guard provider" means any person who engages in the business of security services.

(D) "Business of security services" means either of the following:

(1) Furnishing, for hire, watchpersons, guards, private patrol officers, or other persons whose primary duties are to protect persons or property;

(2) Furnishing, for hire, guard dogs, or armored motor vehicle security services, in connection with the protection of persons or property.

(E) "Class A license" means a license issued under section 4749.03 of the Revised Code that qualifies the person issued the license to engage in the business of private investigation and the business of security services.

(F) "Class B license" means a license issued under section 4749.03 of the Revised Code that qualifies the person issued the license to engage only in the business of private investigation.



(G) "Class C license" means a license issued under section 4749.03 of the Revised Code that qualifies the person issued the license to engage only in the business of security services.

(H) "Private investigator," "business of private investigation," "security guard provider," and "business of security services" do not include:

(1) Public officers and employees whose official duties require them to engage in investigatory activities;

(2) Attorneys at law or any expert hired by an attorney at law for consultation or litigation purposes;

(3) A consumer reporting agency, as defined in the "Fair Credit Reporting Act," 84 Stat. 1128, 15 U.S.C.A. 1681a, as amended, provided that the consumer reporting agency is in compliance with the requirements of that act and that the agency's activities are confined to any of the following:

(a) The issuance of consumer credit reports;

(b) The conducting of limited background investigations that pertain only to a client's prospective tenant and that are engaged in with the prior written consent of the prospective tenant;

(c) The business of pre-employment background investigation. As used in division (H)(3)(c) of this section, "business of pre-employment background investigation" means, and is limited to, furnishing for hire, in person or through a partner or employees, the conducting of limited background investigations, in-person interviews, telephone interviews, or written inquiries that pertain only to a client's prospective employee and the employee's employment and that are engaged in with the prior written consent of the prospective employee.

(4) Certified public insurance adjusters that hold a certificate of authority issued pursuant to sections 3951.01 to 3951.09 of the Revised Code, while the adjuster is investigating the cause of or responsibility for a fire, accident, or other damage to property with respect to a claim or claims for loss or damage under a policy of insurance covering real or personal property;



(5) Personnel placement services and persons who act as employees of such entities engaged in investigating matters related to personnel placement activities;

(6) An employee in the regular course of the employee's employment, engaged in investigating matters pertinent to the business of the employee's employer or protecting property in the possession of the employee's employer, provided the employer is deducting all applicable state and federal employment taxes on behalf of the employee and neither the employer nor the employee is employed by, associated with, or acting for or on behalf of any private investigator or security guard provider;

(7) Any better business bureau or similar organization or any of its employees while engaged in the maintenance of the quality of business activities relating to consumer sales and services;

(8) An accountant who is registered or certified under Chapter 4701. of the Revised Code or any of the accountant's employees while engaged in activities for which the accountant is certified or registered;

(9) Any person who, for hire or otherwise, conducts genealogical research in this state.

As used in division (H)(9) of this section, "genealogical research" means the determination of the origins and descent of families, including the identification of individuals, their family relationships, and the biographical details of their lives. "Genealogical research" does not include furnishing for hire services for locating missing persons or natural or birth parents or children.

(10) Any person residing in this state who conducts research for the purpose of locating the last known owner of unclaimed funds, provided that the person is in compliance with Chapter 169. of the Revised Code and rules adopted thereunder. The exemption set forth in division (H)(10) of this section applies only to the extent that the person is conducting research for the purpose of locating the last known owner of unclaimed funds.

As used in division (H)(10) of this section, "owner" and "unclaimed funds" have the same meanings as in section 169.01 of the Revised Code.

(11) A professional engineer who is registered under Chapter 4733. of the Revised Code or any of



the engineer's employees.

As used in division (H)(11) of this section and notwithstanding division (I) of this section, "employee" has the same meaning as in section 4101.01 of the Revised Code.

(12) Any person residing in this state who, for hire or otherwise, conducts research for the purpose of locating persons to whom the state of Ohio owes money in the form of warrants, as defined in section 131.01 of the Revised Code, that the state voided but subsequently reissues.

(13) An independent insurance adjuster who, as an individual, an independent contractor, an employee of an independent contractor, adjustment bureau association, corporation, insurer, partnership, local recording agent, managing general agent, or self-insurer, engages in the business of independent insurance adjustment, or any person who supervises the handling of claims except while acting as an employee of an insurer licensed in this state while handling claims pertaining to specific policies written by that insurer.

As used in division (H)(13) of this section, "independent insurance adjustment" means conducting investigations to determine the cause of or circumstances concerning a fire, accident, bodily injury, or damage to real or personal property; determining the extent of damage of that fire, accident, injury, or property damage; securing evidence for use in a legislative, administrative, or judicial investigation or proceeding, adjusting losses; and adjusting or settling claims, including the investigation, adjustment, denial, establishment of damages, negotiation, settlement, or payment of claims in connection with insurance contractors, self-insured programs, or other similar insurance programs. "Independent adjuster" does not include either of the following:

(a) An attorney who adjusts insurance losses incidental to the practice of law and who does not advertise or represent that the attorney is an independent insurance adjuster;

(b) A licensed agent or general agent of an insurer licensed in this state who processes undisputed or uncontested losses for insurers under policies issued by that agent or general agent.

(14) Except for a commissioned peace officer who engages in the business of private investigation or compensates others who engage in the business of private investigation or the business of security



services or both, any commissioned peace officer as defined in division (B) of section 2935.01 of the Revised Code.

(15) Security personnel and contractors for a security organization under an approved physical protection program at a commercial nuclear power plant licensed by the United States nuclear regulatory commission, or its successor agency, while performing duties related to protecting the plant and nuclear material from threats, thefts, and sabotage.

(I) "Employee" means every person who may be required or directed by any employer, in consideration of direct or indirect gain or profit, to engage in any employment, or to go, or work, or be at any time in any place of employment, provided that the employer of the employee deducts all applicable state and federal employment taxes on behalf of the employee.