

New York Security Company Startup Checklist

Every step to launch a licensed security guard company in New York, from your experience and exam to your first signed contract. Tick each item as you complete it.

1. Decide & plan

- Decide which services you'll offer (guards, patrol, events, etc.)
- Decide armed vs. unarmed
- Sketch a simple business plan and startup budget

2. Experience & licensing exam

- Confirm you (or a principal) meet the 2-year experience requirement
- Complete fingerprinting (DCJS + IDEMIA background check)
- Study for and pass the Watch, Guard or Patrol written exam (\$15)

3. Set up the business

- Choose and clear a company name (and grab the domain)
- Form your entity (corporation or LLC) with the NY Division of Corporations
- Get a federal EIN and open a business bank account
- Obtain any local city/county business license you need

4. Insurance & finances

- Buy general liability insurance (\$100,000 per occurrence / \$300,000 aggregate minimum)
- Set up workers' compensation (and commercial auto if you run patrol)
- Set up payroll and overtime tracking

5. Get licensed & staffed

- Submit the WGP Agency application to the NYS Department of State (\$400 + \$15 exam)
- Recruit your first guards
- Ensure each guard completes 8-hr pre-assignment + 16-hr on-the-job training
- Confirm every guard holds a valid NYS security guard registration card before their first shift

6. Run & grow

- Set defensible bill rates and a proposal template
 - Pitch your first local clients and sign your first contract
 - Set up scheduling, GPS clock-in, checkpoints, and reporting software
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