



Thinking about hiring a private investigator and not sure where to start?

Here are a few tips to consider.



First Step: Check their license

It's imperative that your private investigator is carrying a proper license and is able to produce a copy of that license on demand. All states require **private investigators** to be licensed by the state government, in which they practice.

The steps a **PI** needs to go through to earn their license are quite rigorous. The **private eye** can have no criminal record and they have to take specific tests to get qualified in each state where they provide services. Some states such as California, **PI** applicants must have been working a minimum of two – three years in some form of law enforcement before going private.

After you've asked the **private eye** to show you their license, you should:

- Ask for the license number. If he/she refuses to give it to you, say goodbye.
- Check the validity of the license number. It's easy to verify that the number is legit by calling the licensing authorities in your state. Most of the time, this authority is the department of public safety, the state police or the state's licensing board.
- Check to make sure the license is up to date and that no complaints have been filed against the investigator.
- Check to make sure the **investigator** is bonded. Most **private investigators** have to be covered when applying for a license but some jurisdictions allow **PIs** to carry a license without being bonded. You can tell the amateurs from the real deal with investigators who have high coverage – and the bond is a public record so you can check to make sure it exists.

Second Step: The Interview

Each case is unique so make sure you ask if the **investigator** has done **investigations** similar to what you're hiring them for. It helps to consider his/her special skills as well, such as possibly specializing in **fraud, domestic abuse, background checks, asset checks** or **surveillance**.

Final Step: The Contract

The contract should specify all costs and payment terms and provide details of the investigative assignment.

And make sure you ask for an estimate along with a signed agreement between you the client and the **PI** on what you expect the **investigator** to do for you at the agreed pricing.

Most detectives work an hourly rate and require job-related expenses to be paid as well.

Samos Investigations, LLC provides investigative services for [attorneys](#) and [individuals](#) in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. [Contact Us](#) at or call 484-467-6911 for more information or to schedule an appointment.