

Know Your Investigator

Designation Program for Licensed Private Investigators



By: Nino Calabrese, CPIO-MI, CII

Pivate Investigators are used by insurance adjusters on a variety of claims. The services offered by a PI, include but are not limited to, surveillance, asset investigations for subrogation, locate of witnesses or insureds, motive investigations, statements, employment interviews, neighbourhood inquiries, open-source investigations, video pixelation and enhancement, background investigations, SIU handling and document services.

The skill level between investigators can vary drastically. Although many investigators may be very efficient at surveillance, they may not be as comfortable conducting some of the other services offered by our industry due to lack of training and experience. You may not know if you have an investigator on your file who is new to the business or one that has been in the industry for several years and is experienced.

A licence is required to be a Private Investigator in Ontario if you perform work, "for remuneration that consists of primarily conducting investigations to provide information on the character, actions, business, occupation, or whereabouts of a person" (Private Investigator Study Guide, Section 1 – Introduction to the private investigation industry, <https://www.ontario.ca>). The PI Licence is issued by the Ontario Ministry of the Solicitor General (SOLGEN). According to the Private Security and Investigative Services Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 34, s. 10 (1), the requirements to obtain a PI Licence include the following: must have a clean criminal record, must be 18 years of age or older, be legally entitled to work in Canada, and has successfully completed all PI training and testing (test score must be at least 77%).

The PI training involves 50 hours of either classroom or web-based instruction by a provincially approved facility. This training focuses on the legalities and practical knowledge of the trade and not on the specific nuances of conducting an insurance related investigation, which typically happens with on-the-job training, courses, and experience.

How do you know if the investigator on your file has the experience and the proper training to handle your claim? This issue has been identified by the Council of Professional Investigators Ontario (CPIO). In the About Us section of their website:

“The CPIO is a non-profit organization, which serves to ensure that the professional investigation sector in Ontario is comprised of investigative experts who are professional, trustworthy, and effective.

Additionally, CPIO is uniquely positioned to represent investigators and set the standard by strategically creating training, networking and legislative platforms all designed to provide the public with the most professional investigative services possible in the marketplace.”

In 2020, after discussions with SOLGEN, the CPIO went further by introducing a Professional Designation Program for Ontario Private Investigators. A Designation Committee was established and tasked with administering Designations according to the Designation Protocols developed by the CPIO Board of Directors. The Designations recognize achievements, qualifications, training, continuing education, and professionalism.

The three-tier system encourages new investigators to participate in the program, while also recognizing the accomplishments of more senior investigators.

Each tier is based on the completion of mandatory educational courses offered through the CPIO, holding a valid Private Investigator Licence, and being a CPIO Member in good standing.

The first tier of the Designation Program is for investigators with a minimum of 2000 hours (one year)

experience to be certified as a Professional Investigator with a post nominal of CPIO-PI. The second tier applies to those with a minimum of 7500 hours (five years) experience for them to be certified as a Senior Investigator with a post nominal of CPIO-SI. The third tier, applies to investigators with at least 15,000 hours (ten years) and will receive the designation of Certified Master Investigator, CPIO-MI. Each level requires continuing education to maintain the Designation. The CPIO offers courses such as Professional Ethics, OSINT Techniques, Social Media Intelligence and Investigations, Surveillance, Note Taking and Report Writing, Investigative Interviewing, Critical Thinking, Document Analysis, Relevant Legislation, and Deception & Body Language.

It is always a good idea to **Know Your Investigator** and ensure they have the proper qualifications and training to handle your requests.



About the Author

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Nino Calabrese sits on the board of the Council of Professional Investigator as Director, Strategic Planning. He is also a certified international investigator. A versatile professional, Nino brings over thirty-five years of experience in both Corporate and

Insurance Claims Investigations as well as extensive Intellectual Property Investigation experience. He is recognized for his exceptional litigation support to the legal community. Nino is the first Canadian to receive the prestigious Dennis A. Noggle Award which is awarded based upon several factors including response time, method and quality of reporting, flexibility, and consistent excellence and loyalty. He is currently the Director of Investigations with Xpera Risk Mitigation and Investigation.