

QUINTE INVESTIGATORS

terms of payment at a later date."

Stewart also works with insurance companies in inspecting suspected fraud. And then there are assignments from private industry involving suspected fraudulent work compensation claims.

There are also calls to assist lawyers in gathering and verifying pre-trial evidence.

Stewart says a private investigator has no more access to information than the general public. If he were convicted of a criminal offence in pursuit of information, he would lose his agency licence, his investigator's licence and the \$5,000 bond posted for his licence.

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Stewart says the bond is necessary to guard against licences being granted "fly-by-night" operations.

Obtaining those licences to set up in business means a thorough investigation by provincial officials.

And, under provincial statute, the Solicitor-General's office can investigate an agency any time—and without notice.

Stewart can usually set his own hours of work—but the amount is proportionate to the number and types of cases—which can last from a few hours to months. He usually concentrates on one case at a time.

"It's a matter of priority, how urgently the information is required. Some cases may be put on the back burner and dealt with later."

Since private investigators are not police officers they must have many contacts to be successful.

"A great deal of an investigator's success is based on his informants access to information," says Stewart.

He has numerous informants scattered throughout the area, he adds.

He also works closely with police and other agencies and—if information is needed—all try to help each other. The work of a private investigator is both challenging and rewarding to Stewart.

"Basically, each case is unique in the way you handle it. There is a standard format and you start off on square one. But, they don't all progress the same. They are very different. In that aspect I really like it, it's a challenge. It is rewarding in terms that you're able to help people, and rewarding in terms of self-satisfaction in being able to resolve a case. You don't make them all, but if you keep your averages up, it's very rewarding."

Stewart says if he does expand his agency he'd prefer to hire experienced staff—although he could take on a graduate of a college law and security program.

And trust would be a major factor. Stewart would have to be certain he could trust a worker. If an employee broke the law, the investigator could lose his agency licence and bond.

The Association of Investigative and Guard Agencies of Ontario, incorporated in 1969, acts to promote and maintain ethical and moral practices and principles in the profession, notes Stewart. It serves as an internal governing authority and investigative body dealing with any complaints of unprofessional practice, and the like. It also maintains

liaison with government agencies, police forces and other similar associations across Canada.

As for Quinte Investigations, Stewart says its stated policy is to

provide professional quality service of a "strictly confidential" nature to

meet clients' needs—"according to law."