

# How to Become a Bodyguard



First, this role and responsibility of a bodyguard is not just a tick box career move.

You will need natural skills and traits that no training centre give you such as integrity, commitment, discretion, a different type of personal lifestyle, and a whole lot of patience. Things like fitness and awareness can be a trained skill, but we will go into later.

Hello, my name is Criss Watts, and I have been in the close protection industry for over 30 years, starting my career back in the 1980s, In the years served I have seen my industry change in many ways, from the types of new threats from advanced technology to the operator themselves. The licencing (yes, I was there before 2001 when the sia started) now I see operators registered with a lack of skillsets, where before you would not get into this industry without. So, the awards and licencing albeit did tidy up the organised crime within this industry and brought out many prima donnas.

Most of the Close Protection courses I have instructed consisted of former military. These learners already had a basic natural skillset complemented by the time served in the army navy or air force. But since 2010, I have trained over 2000 individuals from the civilian world and have been very impressed with some and not so impressed with others, let me explain. Basic fitness seems to be the biggest issue together with punctuality and determination. So how do you become the “best of the best”?

If you have the natural elements discussed above, we can move onto 7 simple steps to become and stay a bodyguard.

### Step 1. Choosing yourself

You have looked in the mirror and decided you have the attributes to become a close protection operative – bodyguard – personal protection officer.

### Step 2. Funding the course

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There are many funding options out there from Military credits to personal funding. Ensure that the selected training provider can offer at least some funding even if its train to work programs whereby you pay 50% and work 50% through missions.

But be prepared to dig into your wallet for at least £2000 - £3000 for the basic course. Good instructors don't come cheap, and a good training provider will have the best instructors and the best academies that will have the UpToDate training equipment, so don't cheap out.

### Step 3. Finding and selecting a training provider



There are literally thousands of training providers marketing their course as the “best in the world” and longest-running, shortest-running and all the exaggerated promo videos and bait you can think of.

So, what should you look for?

Any provider with a good social media review and trustworthy in how long established and background of the instructors. Making sure they are registered, insured and assured as a training company with their own academy (not some hotel room)

If they are that good, they would have already been training from their own academy with all the training equipment ready and waiting.

The Executive Close Protection (EP) course or VIP Bodyguard or just CPO should contain the following modules.



Roles and responsibilities of the close protection officer Threat and risk assessment

Surveillance and counter-surveillance

Foot drills

Vehicle drills

Operational planning

Interpersonal skills (etiquette)

Law and legislation

Close protection teamwork

Conflict management

Reconnaissance (theory and practical)

Route selection (theory and practical)

IED search awareness (vehicles and buildings)

Incidents and dilemmas (practical examples)

Venue security (varied scenarios)

Communications

Kidnap for ransom

Team Medic

at least 2 live final exercises

lastly, find a course that is a good length, for example, 14-28 days, if the training centre is residential, it is a bonus.

and always remember in most cases “you get what you pay for.”

#### Step 4. Licencing



You have now found the TP (training provider), and you have passed the course to earn the award to take you through the licencing applications.

The UK has a sia licence (Security Industry Authority). Although this is a legal entity for all UK work and UK overseas security work, this sia licence has now become the normal reference for most international contracting companies to request the security operator holds this licence. It proves non-criminality and level 3 trained with level 3 medic awards from recognised bodies. (I mean why not) as an employer or HR department the work is half done)

The French version is CNAPS, and the Spanish are the Titulo de Escolta. In the USA you have to gain an award in the particular state and remit to work, all counties and countries are different, so make sure you book the right TP with the awarding body linked licence. Normal licence cost per annum is £220

### **Step 5. Working – employment, CPO Jobs, CP tasks and missions.**



You have the award, you have applied for the licence and received it, and now you are a licenced bodyguard (not licenced to kill just yet)

You have to sell yourself first.

CV, emailing and calling recruitment companies.

Start networking as well, things like close protection world and the British Bodyguard Association and the ASIS will help greatly.

Selling yourself is the most important so practice this unique skill and get on the YouTube seminars in (how to influence others) and gain that job.

Work locations

Let's face it, most of the UK work is based in London, so coming from the north of England or Scotland will mean you may have to move to the City of London. Travelling every day for more than an hour a CPO job is a no. the job itself is hard graft, 15 hours with full awareness, so no time for tiredness in this industry. There is work in all regions; for example, most premier footballers will have some form of security. There are wealthy businesses people in all counties and many businesses requiring staff protection and venue protection.

Remember the surveillance industry; this is a big industry and can be full time if you enjoy this remit.

Step 6. Staring work

Be ready 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Most commonly, bodyguards work within a team or at least 2 other people and complete 12 hours rotations. However, you never know when your service is needed. Some positions require long, irregular hours up to 24 in some cases. Ultimately, your job is to protect your client, no matter what time of day it is.

### **Step 6. Be adaptable and calm under pressure**



I always train my learners to find humour in adversity, and this can help them regain control and calm the Principal, making things easier for all.

Your job role will often change as a bodyguard. Be prepared for something new every day. You never know what you may have to protect your client from daily, and each client will be completely different.

One day you may be a personal assistant, while the next you may be a driver. Sometimes you may have to defend your client from a stalker.

For example, you may protect a famous movie star as they walk to and from sets.

You may watch over a single female client to protect them from a long-time stalker and abuse.

So, this industry is diverse, to say the least.

Step 7. Personal Time management

How does one find time for themselves?

You will be protecting the client on the ground for at least 12 hours every day you still need to find the time to prep tomorrow's plans such as route planning and bookings; then you need to keep up your physio and fitness. Phew!! Welcome to 5 hours of sleep. And this is the biggest industry problem. So, sleep management is critical. Imagine one night's sleep disturbance can have a roll-on effect.

Step 8. Don't get above yourself and become a narcissist

As in most industries, there is always going to be someone better than you and fighting this and trying to say you are the best in the world is just pure egoistical blabber.

After 10 years in the industry, you may think that you are the best; this is where you will lose your path to being a professional and slowly get pushed out of the industry.

Your reputation everything

There will be others out there determined to ruin your reputation, and these are the narcissists within and identifying these types of people is a job in itself. On the outside, they seem like the nicest humans, but their inner is full of a negative disease and will try to plan

your demise whilst sacrificing their own positive production and career. I have a full article about this in my other blogs.

### **Step 9. keep training and your CPD (Career Professional Development) or continuing...**



CPD is the holistic commitment of professionals towards the enhancement of personal skills and proficiency throughout their careers.

Your original training provider may well have many other courses for you to explore once you get your feet on the ground and working. These may include enhancing your preferred remit such as surveillance or firearms and going from level 1 to level 2 etc.

Whatever your choices and direction in the career path for the security industry, try to enjoy this global working environment which can take you to a professional executive and hostile environment close protection officer with skills more than James Bond has.

It's about longevity, reputation and positivity.

I personally wish you the very best if you are reading this and looking to work in the industry that has fed me for 35 years. For me, it's a life choice and doesn't come without personal scarifies and lifestyle changes.

Knowledge is the tools of a great CPO.

## **Good luck (Labour Under Correct Knowledge)**

