

Bodyguards



Occupational Brief Title Codes:

- D.O.T.: 372.667-014
- G.O.E.: 04.02.02
- S.O.C.: 33-9032
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Work Classification Based Related

D.O.T. Occupations:

- Airline Security Representatives
- Correction Officers
- Immigration Guards
- Security Guards

Interests Based Related

G.O.E. Occupations:

- Armored-Car Guards
- Disaster or Damage Control Specialists
- Security Consultants
- Security Guard Dispatchers

Skills Based Related

O*NET Occupations:

- Bailiffs
- Criminal Investigators and Special Agents
- Private Detectives and Investigators
- Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs

Noteworthy Quote:

"The new profession of Personal Protection Specialist is an exciting, challenging career for men and women. Homeland security and international travel concerns will continue to expand this occupation in the future."

– Dr. Richard W. Kobets, Personal Protection Specialist, Executive Protection Institute, Berryville, Virginia

Bodyguards (body-guards) escort persons to protect them from assault, bodily injury, kidnapping, or invasion of privacy.

Business executives, government officials, and celebrities in the entertainment field employ bodyguards to ensure their personal safety and security. By performing this service, bodyguards enable their employers, called principals, to go about their daily routine and social activities with as little inconvenience as possible.

Work Performed

Bodyguards, or *personal protection professionals*, do not simply defend their principal from assault. The key word in this profession is prevention. Most security work consists of foresight and planning to prevent incidents and avoid unpleasant surprises. By anticipating and forestalling attacks, bodyguards ensure the security and safety of their principal. They see that their principal is never in a position to be mobbed by over-eager fans, assaulted, or kidnapped.

Bodyguards may serve an individual or a family. Often the bodyguards perform other duties. They may serve as secretaries or chauffeurs, for instance. This kind of arrangement sometimes serves to disguise their real function as bodyguards.

When first meeting a person they will protect, these specialists gather information about the individual. They learn what the person is like: his or her lifestyle, work, family, associates, interests, attitudes, and beliefs. This interview should be candid and comprehensive. Information withheld from the protector may form a gap in the defenses set up to protect the principal.

Bodyguards use this profile of their principal to get an understanding of their employer's needs and to assess any potential risks or threats against him or her. They learn who might wish to harm their principal, the ways they might do it, and the opportunities to do it. Bodyguards may tape or record information about events,



Field experience and training under the lead of professionals is necessary to acquire competence in protective services.
Photo by Executive Protection Institute

circumstances, or happenings that may suggest a threat or have a bearing on some future development. These data are useful in forming a plan of action to prevent or to deal with any confrontation or assault.

To protect the principal at home, bodyguards may oversee the installation of a security system of fences, gates, communications and electronic surveillance. When callers intrude, bodyguards question them. They note strange vehicles or people loitering in the area and report them to authorities. Information gathered about these incidents goes on file for future reference.

By nature of their work, bodyguards are involved in the career activities of their principal. They may accompany their employer to work, to meetings, and public appearances. In these activities, the role of the bodyguards is known. Adjustments are made in seating or protocol to allow the bodyguards to be close enough to the principal to do their job.

For instance, at an executive conference around a table, the bodyguard sits next to the principal. In public, the bodyguard walks two or three steps behind the principal or alongside for low-profile purposes. In crowds, the job is to get the principal safely through to the building or other destination. In these scenes, the bodyguard may serve as a shield. Other persons hired serve as a buffer between the public and the principal.

Bodyguards may also be involved in the recreational activities of their principal. They may go swimming or skiing, play tennis, walk, or ride horseback with their principal. This is not play, however. The bodyguards maintain surveillance at all times. They keep a close watch on the actions of all people in the area, and at the same time discreetly monitor or direct the movements of their principal.

While on tour or traveling with their principal, bodyguards may arrange for and oversee transportation, meals, and hotel accommodations. They may arrange for the provision of things such as a special diet or medication their principal will need on the trip.

At hotels, bodyguards may conduct a sweep of the suite or rooms before occupancy. To avoid unnecessary intrusions by unknown persons, bodyguards see that all services and equipment are operative and convenient. They establish good relations with hotel staff to insure the comfort and convenience of their principal.

Bodyguards usually have a set of signals they and their principal use to communicate. In a social setting, for instance, a principal who wants to avoid a certain person or wants to end a conversation, may discreetly signal the bodyguard. The bodyguard then reminds the principal of "an appointment" or "a telephone call."

On the other hand, in a public gathering, if a stranger approaches the principal, reaction is immediate. The bodyguard shields the principal, removes him or her from the scene, and places him or her under cover. In a showdown with an attacker, the bodyguard uses speed and agility to subdue the attacker. They may grasp the attacker's weapon, if possible, and use whatever force is necessary to get the attacker to the ground. Bodyguards do not take these persons

into custody or arrest them. The police take over at that point.

Bodyguards seldom carry firearms. The laws for possession, use, and transport are so complex that it is difficult to carry concealed firearms and legally travel across state lines, on aircraft and abroad. If an event or occasion is dangerous enough to require armed protection, the usual policy is to hire law enforcement personnel or other locally employed bodyguards licensed to carry and use firearms.

To avoid carjacking, most public figures have powerful cars equipped with a communications system, anti-entry devices, and alarm systems. As chauffeurs, bodyguards may be responsible for maintenance and security of the car.

Bodyguards practice defensive driving. They know the most direct route to their destination, and they are aware of points where a forced stop, delay, or ambush might be possible. If they think they are being followed, they take evasive action. They know the location of safe places such as police stations and hospitals. They may use a cellphone or two-way radio to call for assistance.

Protection and security are often inconvenient. Persons being protected must accept the direction and guidance of the bodyguards. They must understand that a low profile makes them less vulnerable to attack. They must adhere to security routines. They must come and go according to prearranged schedules and predetermined routes. Principals may not go anywhere without an escort. They cannot stray outside the bounds of the protection perimeter. All these restrictions interfere with the lifestyle of the principal, who may resent it.

In this relationship, the bodyguards must remember that their employer is the boss. They must be respectful and tactful in spelling out the reasons for restrictions. They may not be overbearing or bossy in carrying out their duty. They must make protection and safety as painless as possible. To maintain a successful arrangement, both employee and employer must practice good manners.

Working Conditions

Bodyguards suffer a great deal of stress. Anticipating and preventing trouble is as stressful as experiencing it. The safety of their principal must always be their first concern. Bodyguards must be ready to suffer personal injury or attack to perform this duty. They must be sharply observant at all times.

Bodyguards often travel with their principal and are away from home and family for two weeks or more at a time. Hours of duty often interfere with rest or regular meals. Family and home life often suffer.

Hours and Earnings

Bodyguards seldom work nine to five. The hours of bodyguards are usually spelled out in the agreement or contract with the employer. They may work a stated number of hours a day, or they may be on call. Some bodyguards working for politicians during an election campaign may work long hours, day and night. Bodyguards may work in

teams and on different shifts to cover celebrities like actors or popular musicians. Bodyguards do get time off for meals and rest and personal needs. However, the hours and days off are those convenient for their principal.

Earnings vary with assignments and with the skills and experience of the bodyguards. Many are paid on a contract basis for each assignment. They may be paid by the hour or a set amount for the assignment. According to Dr. Kobetz of the Executive Protection Institute, bodyguards and other personal protection specialists generally earn \$15-\$25 an hour. However, more dangerous or high profile assignments often pay \$45-\$50 an hour. Additional fringe benefits such as health insurance, clothing allowance, and educational and training costs may also be stated in the terms of the contract between employee and employer.

Education and Training

Military personnel and law enforcement officers have a useful background for entry into this work. This kind of head start, however, does not offer all the essential experience and know-how needed for private protection services. Field experience and training under the lead of professionals is necessary to acquire competence in protection services.

Programs of instruction and training are available at several institutions and organizations nationwide. Most are short-term intensive sessions of classroom and fieldwork.

Outstanding among these schools is the Executive Protection Institute (EPI). Each year it offers instructional classes in several different specialties at various times and locations throughout the United States. EPI's most acclaimed course is "Providing Executive Protection," a 7 day program involving more than 100 hours of instruction. Under the guidance of acknowledged authorities in each field, and through practical hands-on learning assignments, students learn skills and techniques in armed and hand defense protection services.

Students practice defensive driving techniques. They plan risk management and threat assessment models and protection procedures. Other instruction includes emergency medical procedures, ballistics, radio procedures, chemical agents, and shoulder weapons. They engage in discussions on preventive strategies and operational guidelines, legal issues relating to weapons and deadly force, and armed and defensive tactics for close-in protection problems.

Bodyguards must also have a broad range of useful talents, social skills, gifts, and aptitudes gained in the process of living a well-rounded life. They must be individuals with the social skills to relate comfortably with their principal and with his or her associates. They must be able to arrange and see to the details of formal dining. They must be competent in making travel arrangements and hotel accommodations.

The ability to work with communications and surveillance technology is vital. Bodyguards must be trained in emergency medical techniques and CPR. They must be skilled in defensive and protective tactics. They must be excellent drivers. Proficiency in sports such as tennis, golf, or boating may be required. Fluency in a foreign language is a plus.

The education and training of bodyguards is always changing with the times. Although good training is the foundation of skills, training is not just a one-time shot. Throughout their career these professionals continually sharpen their skills and add new ones.

Certification and Professional Societies

The Executive Protection Institute (EPI) offers certification and the title Personal Protection Specialist (PPS) to security professionals who have completed its protection services program. It offers a special web page for communication and continuous part- and full-time employment opportunities; an annual conference for graduates; newsletters and special announcements; and continuing education programs for advancement.

EPI sponsors Nine Lives Associates (NLA), a fraternal group of qualified individuals who have successfully completed the "Providing Executive Protection" training program. NLA maintains a placement service and offers awards for heroism and achievements in executive protection. EPI also sponsors the Academy of Security Educators and Trainers, an organization of security professionals dedicated to exploring the large spectrum of issues confronting the security field.

Personal Qualifications

To perform well in this work requires a well rounded personality. Bodyguards should have the self-confidence and composure to blend in comfortably with their social surroundings and to relate well to their principal without outshining him or her. In all their dealings with their principal and others, the key word is finesse.

Discretion is a must in this business. Bodyguards must strictly observe confidentiality about the personal affairs and background of the persons they guard. Any leaks may be a source of danger, not to say embarrassment, to all concerned. Loyalty to their employer should be their first priority. On the other hand, bodyguards must not become personally involved with their employer. A certain degree of detachment is necessary for effective protection service.

Bodyguards must have common sense and a sense of humor. They must have excellent communication skills. In performing their job, bodyguards must remain alert at all times. They must be men and women of action. When a response is called for, they must do it right the first time. In this business, there are no second chances.

Occupations can be adapted for workers with disabilities. Persons should contact their school or employment counselors, their state office of vocational rehabilitation, or their state department of labor to explore fully their individual needs and requirements as well as the requirements of the occupation.

Where Employed

Bodyguards are employed throughout the United States. Most of them work for well-known or prominent people. Some bodyguards travel with their principal in other countries. They work in all kinds of surroundings. They may work in the

home of their principal, at their principal's work site, in social settings, in hotels, election headquarters, arenas, or theaters.

Employment Outlook

The job market for bodyguards is limited. Only persons famous enough, rich enough, or notorious enough to draw the attention, envy, or hatred of others need the full-time services of bodyguards. However, the demand is increasing owing to the spread of violence arising from terrorists and stalkers, attacks at abortion clinics, and demonstrations protesting corporate or government activities.

There is a modest demand for bodyguards to serve in both temporary and full-time jobs. Free-lance bodyguards may accept short-term assignments. They may accompany individuals facing risky or unpleasant circumstances. For instance, they may escort a politician to a meeting where he will face angry citizens. They may shield a well-known sports figure from autograph seekers at a tournament.

Competition for open positions will remain keen, however, as protection services attract greater attention of individuals with a background of physical fitness such as athletes. A growing number of men and women with a background of military or law enforcement service are also looking into this job market. A large pool of moonlighting police officers and retired military service personnel, for instance, are available for many of these assignments.

Entry Methods

This profession is difficult to enter. Those who need a bodyguard seldom hire anyone who is not experienced. Beginners in this work usually get the required skills and knowledge on the job. Little by little, in short-term assignments, they build up a portfolio of experience. They learn the job and the way things are done. They supplement experience by reading, attending seminars, and talking to colleagues. Networking through professional associations in the field adds to their knowledge and leads to contacts that may offer employment.

With some concentrated effort, job seekers may be able to meet and form a connection with an established protection specialist who will serve as a senior partner and mentor. This kind of partnership will help beginners become seasoned professionals.

Advancement

Like every profession, protection service offers recognition and reward to those who deliver excellent performance. Many bodyguards spend years as well-paid escorts to well-known figures. These individuals sometimes form close ties with the families of their principal. President Ford's daughter married one of her bodyguards. Others move on.

Some bodyguards with the required college education and other qualifications become members of the U.S. Secret Service or the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. These federal

officers guard the president, other government dignitaries, and officials from countries abroad. Former bodyguards may also become security employees of government agencies such as the Central Intelligence Agency or the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Some bodyguards go into municipal police work or become highway patrol officers. They may become private investigators or detectives with city law enforcement agencies.

For Further Research

Executive Protection Institute, P.O. Box 802, Berryville, VA 22611. Web site: www.personalprotection.com

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