

A-LIST

There are few professions that are as misunderstood as that of a bodyguard. Glamourised in Hollywood movies as kung-fu kicking, chandelier swinging heroes, this myth is far removed from the actual reality. Consequently, when we receive an enquiry about some form of personal protection, it's rare that they really know what they're looking for.

There are a variety of reasons why a client feels they need a bodyguard. They could be the target of a hate campaign, a stalker or being harassed by a former partner. They may want someone to take their children to school or they may request an operative to accompany them on a business trip abroad.

The quiet, athletic and unassuming bodyguard or close protection officer is what we recommend to our clients and is a stark contrast to the twenty stone, man-mountain types that are often photographed by the paparazzi with the entourage of an A-list celebrity. The rationale here is that it's far better to blend into the crowd unnoticed as opposed to being the centre of attention.

EACH CLIENT IS DIFFERENT

Close protection is a particularly personalised service so, whether selecting a single personal protection officer or a team of bodyguards, it's important that you're comfortable with the company you choose to work with. The service being provided should be unobtrusive and have minimal impact on your personal and professional lifestyle. The company should appreciate that each client is different and there is never a one size fits all approach to any task. Quality service and customer focus is the key and the company should actively engage with you to deliver the exact service that you require.

When selecting a bodyguard, minder or any form of personal protection, a client must be confident and contented in the service they're receiving. Those who have used our services before tend to be repeat clients, whilst some have contacted us as a result of a recommendation. However, it is our personal touch and appreciation that no two clients are alike that gives them an assuring sense of comfort.



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PROTECT

When searching for the right close protection provider, like selecting any service, conduct your own research and due diligence. Scrutinise the company and ask the following questions:

- Track record – when was the company incorporated and what work have they undertaken so far?

- Who are the company owners and what experience do they have?

- Do they have the correct operating licenses? It's an offence in some countries to operate in the security industry without being in possession of the correct licenses. Ask to see the company's licenses to perform close protection services.

- What accreditations does the company have? For example, if the company is accredited in ISO 9001 Quality Management then you can be assured that their policies and procedures have met a recognised and credible international standard.

- Insurance – ask to see their insurance package and the full extent of their cover.

- Ask for a copy of their contract so that you can study it and know exactly what you're getting in to. If necessary, don't be afraid to ask for the contract to be amended.

- Selection of personnel - how do they select their personnel? Ask to see the company's recruitment criteria. Ask to see the CV's of their operatives. Do you require a bodyguard with additional skills such as certain medical qualifications, advanced driving skills or linguists? Would you prefer a female bodyguard?

- Will they respect your confidentiality? If the company has a specific Client Confidentiality Agreement, ask to see it.

- Most importantly, ask how much will the service cost. Be mindful of any additional costs so ask for an all-inclusive price.

If you're still unsure then ask to meet the bodyguards in person. This will give you an opportunity to meet the individuals who will potentially be spending a lot of time with you. Remember this is a particularly personalised service, trust is essential so it's important that it feels right. Your personal protection officer should be polite and unassuming with a calm demeanour, someone with a reasonable level of intellect who is attentive to your needs.

Ed Hill is Managing Director of London based security company Intrepid Risk Management. A former Royal Marines Commando, Ed has provided specialist security services to High Net Worth Individuals across the globe. He regularly writes and contributes to a variety of well-known publications on security matters and has spoken at a number of prestige events.