

WORKING IN SUPERYACHT SECURITY: TOP TIPS

By: Ed Hill

For most close protection specialists, working on board a luxury yacht is one of the high points of their career.



There are few roles that are as prestigious as working on board a superyacht, with all the surrounding opulence and grandiose extravagance, while cruising around some of the world's most glamorous spots. Most would agree that working on board a superyacht is undoubtedly one of the most desirable positions in the security industry.

However, as highly prestigious as this type of work may appear initially, the potential for messing up and subsequently losing your job (and reputation) can be high. Each luxury yacht is different, as are its owners, but whether on an anti-piracy task or providing close protection to the owners or guests, being forewarned is forearmed, and some advance preparation and knowledge is advisable. Here are a few basic tips to help make sure you're well prepared for that coveted role.

1. Get the terminology right

Remember that you're now venturing into the maritime domain with its own terminology. To the uninitiated, left and right become port and starboard,

while front and rear are known as for'ard and aft. To earn credibility, it would be beneficial for you to familiarise yourself with some of the main terms before boarding. Moreover, to confuse matters even further, there are some terms that are unique to the yachting sector. For example, the gangway becomes the passerelle; while the owner's selection of jet skis, diving gear, submarines or whatever recreational equipment he or she has on board, is known as their toys. The toys are usually stored in the yacht's garage.

2. Bring your sea legs

Sea-sickness is a form of motion sickness in which a deviation exists between visually perceived movement and the vestibular system's sense of movement. With symptoms such as nausea, stomach cramps and vomiting, if not treated correctly, sea-sickness can bring the strongest man (or woman) to his or her knees. Not only will this leave your team mates taking on additional duties because they have a man down, it's also highly embarrassing when the yacht's crew are ►

carrying on regardless and the tough security guy is incapacitated. However, sea-sickness is preventable, so it's always a good idea to arrive prepared with a supply of medication, available over the counter at pharmacies, or alternatively you can use a wristband, designed especially for the condition.

3. Loose lips sink ships

You may inevitably be bound by a confidentiality agreement, but it's also an unwritten rule that you should never disclose the name of the yacht that you've worked on, or the names of the owners or guests. Once on board, and after meeting the crew, it usually doesn't take long to realise that there's often a fair amount of on board politics and assumed hierarchy at play. Similar to the family office environment, you may encounter a culture of back-stabbing and gossip. Superyacht crews may work exceptionally long hours within a cramped environment, they seldom get free time to themselves and not everyone will get on with each other. If you find this to be the case, don't get involved in any

gossip, instead try to remain impartial.

4. Steer clear of romantic relationships

This may sound corny, but for male security operatives, there's a strong possibility that you'll be greeted by some stewardesses who may welcome the arrival of alpha-male type "bodyguards." Keep in mind that many of these girls are hired purely for their good looks, sometimes making them hard to resist for some guys. However, getting involved romantically has the potential to lead to a complex entanglement, which may be detrimental to your professionalism and how it's perceived among your peers. Keep relations strictly professional, and don't jeopardise your job or your reputation.

5. Be prepared to muck in

One of the most important elements to working on board a yacht is crew integration. If the crew take a dislike to you then you're pretty much doomed from the outset. When you first arrive, you may be treated with suspicion, especially among a crew that is tight-knit and has

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already created its own dynamics. Therefore, it's your responsibility to endear yourself to them and gain their trust. Make a point of asking about any on-board procedures that you need to be aware of, and ensure you adhere to them. Be polite and respectful, avoid being over-familiar and always clean up after yourself. If the situation allows, offer to help with the washing-up after meals, assist with the loading of stores and help the deckhands wash down the boat. Take your ego down

a notch or two, get stuck in, and the crew will respect you for it.

Working on board a superyacht is one of the most enjoyable and rewarding roles in the private security industry. At times, the work can be extremely demanding; however, there can also be some great perks. As with all security tasks, etiquette and discretion are key factors to success. Remain respectful, maintain your professional integrity and you won't go far wrong.

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