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A Quarterly publication from the British Bodyguard Association

Back to Basics

The Arc of Influence

by KARL THORNTON

The following is a quick look at “Advanced Protective Formations”. Now the information will provide a spark to those old memory cells, or will enforce the need to undertake a refresher course in group formation.

Close Personal Protection is a complex profession. There are many facets to a Close Protection Operative’s success.

In this issue I will talk about the “Arc of Influence” also known as the Arc of Responsibility. No matter what assignment you are on, from a small security detail like a basic SET (Security Escort Team) or a full PSD (Protective Security Detail) assignment, you should know and adhere to your Arc.

Depending on the size of the team, and your appointed position will determine your Arc. A professional well trained CPO will not deviate from his Arc unless requested by his Operational and or Team Leader, or unless faced with an AOP (Attack on Principal). Your Arc is your responsibility. Sorry for all the “in brackets” information, but as stated this is a re-cap and you may have forgotten the acronyms.

Arc of Influence - (The CPO’s arc of responsibility)

Any CPP detail that requires Single CPO Formation, Open V Formations, Box Formations, Diamond Formations, and or Wedge Formations. The CPO must know their responsibilities within this environment.

AN ATTACK: when it strikes, an Operative with well trained skills in their arc of responsibilities within the given environment will deliver professional personal protection.

Unlike crowd control or basic security services, the CPO must be able to work within a team yet at the same time know their arc of responsibility, not falter in the event of an AOP (Attack On Principal). He/She must know their limitations, expectations, and variations.

In team formations there will be movement and changing of formation positions regu-

Sometimes even the most experienced bodyguard needs to re-cap on old information, techniques and strategies. It may be to understand previous information that was not fully understood at the time, but with experience under the belt, now allows a better understanding.

Or we may have just simply forgotten. We may have had a leave of absence from the industry, or have undertaken another roll within security such as a stint in crowd control and need to freshen up our knowledge base for an up coming CPP assignment.

larly throughout the escorting of a VIP from point A to point B. Variations on your arc of responsibility will change, you must adapt fast. Like with anything in life, training and reinforcement will create the natural and physical skills required to automatically react as required.

Never assume that basic theory will provide you with what you need to succeed.

There are many variations and approaches to implementing your arc. So it is important that you can adapt to change at a very rapid rate. As your arc is not defined by rules and guidelines when an attack is underway, your arc can change in an instant when faced with the rules of engagement.

This is where, like any area of physical training, you need to practice variations.

For example: Your arc will be defined by your roll in the SET (Security Escort Team) if you are front right of a box formation, your arc will be defined by that delegated position. If a directional change is called from North to South, your arc will once again change to the new delegated position. This can be an on-going process throughout the escort detail. You need to adapt to the change.

So what happens when you are under attack?

When under attack, this is where training and repetition of drills come into play. If you haven’t trained, failure is just around the corner. Training will develop intuition and reactions based on muscle memory and rehearsed scenarios.

As I have stated, your arc is not defined by set rules and guidelines (yes there are methods, techniques, procedures, and responsibilities) when an attack is underway. It will require instant response. If your team is down an operative or more due to dealing with an attacker, your arc may shift from a designated area of responsibility to a single protection responsibility, especially if the Primary Escort is taken out, and you have assumed that roll due to proximity. In other words you were the closest to the client

(Principal) and need to extract ASAP.

However, it may not even be that dramatic. It may simply be that during a VIP event, an unexpected crowd has gathered, and part of the SET team is required to advance to secure the area, and your responsibility once again has been changed and you may be part of a two man formation. Where the Primary Escort will still remain in his/her delegated position, and you will take up the responsibility as the point man. Your arc is now expanded to not only a wider arc, but a deeper arc. Your field of view is not only dedicated to what can come from left, right and center, but your distance has also now increased.

Overreact and your credibility can be bruised not your body. By this I mean that if the possibility of attack is minimal, and that the gathering of a boisterous crowd may be due to celebrity related issues, you don’t want to take down an individual simply wanting an autograph. However, if you are not well trained in SET formations and your arc of responsibility, overreacting is sometimes a habit not an option.

Always remember training is not just about what goes on in the classroom. Training is about taking mental notes and challenges in everyday life. When out shopping utilize mirrors, reflections from shop front windows, reflections from shiny tiled areas, assess what is going on around you. Use your environment.

You should train for single protection details, as well as group formations. Even if you are working with your regular formed team, or are allocated to a different team for an assignment, if you are well trained in SET formations you can adapt and fit in. If you are not well trained, you are not only putting yourself at risk, but your other team members, and more importantly the PRINCIPAL. Remember the old saying “there is no I in team”, but there are 2 in training.

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