

Policing Is Not the Whole Answer



Victor Cooper, CPP

Director of Facility and Stadium Security
Philadelphia Eagles

When the Philadelphia Eagles football team opens the 2003 season in their brand new, 1.7 million-square-foot Lincoln Financial Field, the complex's Director of Facility and Stadium Security will already have been on the job for the better part of four months. Victor Cooper, CPP, may be a new addition to the stadium's staff, but as a former New Jersey State Policeman, he's hardly a novice at security. "I know how the police world works," says Cooper, but he adds, "Knowing that science alone isn't enough."

"Since 9/11, the policing approach has not been the answer," reports Cooper. "A security practitioner is what's needed." That's where some good advice from a friend came in.

With encouragement from fellow N.J. State Trooper Greg Sanders, CPP, Cooper, a 14-year veteran of the force, got his Certified Protection Professional (CPP) designation last year. Just having the certification set him apart from the 800 other people applying for the new stadium's top security job. He was awarded that coveted spot only five days after retiring from the force.

"Security management is not the same science as policing," Cooper says. "Policing is reactive whereas security is proactive. But if you put the two of them together, you'll have a very well-rounded security practitioner."

"Having the broad-based knowledge that a CPP conveys made me a perfect fit," says Cooper. As a cop, he was "just a general road duty trooper." But today he has a staff of 30. "The CPP is about the protection of assets," he says. "It's also the training of security personnel who are a very important part of the overall security system."

He's been keeping his staff busy. Cooper says he assisted in the formation of the stadium's Emergency Response Plan, as well as the Stadium Control Policies and Procedures Manual. "The old stadium was city-owned," he says. Now, the owner is a private individual, and, as Cooper puts it, "He understands that the times demand a different approach, and he has taken very aggressive steps to ensure the safety of the fans. We have the naval yard, railroad, ship yards, oil refineries, an interstate, an international airport—right near the stadium." So Cooper invited some policemen from the NYPD's Counter Terrorism Unit to join him in doing a vulnerability assessment of the stadium. "CPPs live for vulnerability assessments, you know," Cooper laughs.

Of course, it's no laughing matter. The stadium seats 68,500 people—there are already carnivals, concerts, and soccer games happening virtually every day. "We're already planning for the Army-Navy game!" he chuckles.

Was it hard to get through the CPP exam? "Well," he says, "It's a different science. If you try and 'cop it' you'll fail." If you pass it, you're sure to succeed.