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HOW IS IT TO BE POLICE PATROL OFFICERS IN THE USA?

Police patrol officers perform general law enforcement duties such as responding to calls for service, enforce laws and ordinances, compile reports of incidents, control crowds, arrest law breakers and prevent crime. They patrol a particular area on board a vehicle or on foot. Police patrol officers also spend a lot of time doing paperwork. Some of the common job titles for the police patrol officers are a patrolman, a police officer, a patrol officer, a public safety officer and a law enforcement officer. Police officers employed in large cities often work as patrol officers assigned to either crime prevention or traffic control.

A patrol officer sometimes has to testify in court or act as a witness in criminal and traffic cases. A number of urban based police departments are involved with community policing – a system where police officers build relationships with people living in local neighborhoods and they also ask the public to help fight crime. The job can sometimes be dangerous and stressful. Many officers observe death and suffering. They typically work 40 hours a week, however paid overtime is common. Shift work is required since around the clock protection needs to be provided to communities. Junior officers often work nights, weekends and holidays. Police officers must work whenever they are needed.

Patrol officers should enjoy dealing with the public. Personal characteristics such as integrity, honesty, good judgment and a sense of responsibility are important for the occupation. The overall opportunities for employment in local police departments are excellent for individuals that meet the qualifications. Applicants with college training or military experience will have the best opportunities with local police departments.

Police officers are typically eligible to be promoted after a probation period which ranges from six months to three years. Some police officers are promoted to a detective position. A candidate's position on a promotion list is typically determined by written examination scores and on-the-job performance. Promotion to higher level positions such as a corporal, a sergeant, a lieutenant and a captain are typically determined according to a candidate's position on the promotion list.

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