

Police Fact Sheet



WHAT DO POLICE DO?

Police officers, law enforcement officers, security officers and people in related positions may be called to any number of work environments, and perform a variety of tasks.

The main duties of a police officer, among others, are to:

- Respond to emergency calls such as crimes, accidents/incidents/collisions, fire, violent situations, and natural disasters.
- Patrol assigned areas to maintain public safety.
- Enforce laws and regulations.
- Control traffic during emergencies, road work, etc.
- Investigate crimes and incidents.
- Perform first aid.
- Educate the public on crime prevention and safety.

What are some health and safety issues for police?

Police work is among the most dangerous and requires special training. The hazards of police work include:

- Violent attacks.
- Standing or sitting for long hours.
- Exposure to contagious and infectious diseases from people, animals, needles, and other sources.
- Exposure to various chemical or biological hazards.
- Exposure to opioids or other substances.
- Pain from physical overexertion and prolonged or awkward body postures.
- Exposure to extreme working conditions, extreme temperatures and UV radiation.
- Noise.
- Slips, trips and falls.
- Fatigue from shift work.
- Psychological stress or trauma.
- Working alone.
- Risk of injury from the various locations where police may be called to: fire, explosion, unstable structures and surfaces, falling objects; or working at heights or near traffic, water, confined spaces, large crowds, violent situations, etc.
- Danger of driving at high speeds, often in difficult traffic or weather conditions.
- Workplace violence or harassment, and harassment from the public.

What are some preventive measures for police?

- Have extensive safety and skills training.
- Exercise regularly to keep fit and reduce the risk of injury.
- Wash your hands frequently and follow other protective hygiene measures to reduce the chance of infection.
- Use personal protective equipment or other barriers for the task.
- Follow precautions for first responders when opioids or related substances are suspected.
- Learn safe lifting techniques.
- Always be aware of your surroundings and on the alert for dangerous people or situations.
- Take breaks, as appropriate, from awkward positions or repetitive physical tasks.
- Follow a recommended shift work pattern and protect yourself from the hazards associated with shift work.
- Follow or establish safety procedures for working alone, or for avoiding working alone wherever possible.
- Learn about stress and post-traumatic stress, and consider a debriefing session or counselling after a critical or traumatic event.
- Have first aid training.

Learn and follow company violence and harassment prevention policy and procedures.

What are some good general safe work practices?

Ensure that you are trained and informed on how to avoid the various health and safety hazards of your job. Read about these:

- Chemical hazards and WHMIS.
- Blood borne diseases.
- The importance of hand washing and good hygiene practices.
- Needlestick injuries.
- Proper selection, use, maintenance and storage of personal protective equipment.
- Safe lifting techniques.
- Preventing slips, trips and falls.
- Shift work.
- Working alone.
- Fire safety.
- Fall protection.
- Safe driving.
- First Aid.
- Violence and harassment.

Always:

- Follow the established safety procedures for your profession.
- Know how to report a hazard.
- Follow good housekeeping procedures.

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