

Police department roles and functions



The principle roles of law enforcement organizations are to go after individuals that have committed a crime. However, they have other roles as well; they are to enforce the law from enforcing speed limit laws to civil and criminal laws. Law enforcement officers are able to write tickets give a mere warning or even arrest someone for a criminal offense. A law enforcement officer is the first to respond to a call that has been dispatched to 911 calls, to prevent a crime such as a domestic abuse call or criminal or suspicious activity that may be going on. There are different divisions within the departments in solving a crime that range from the detectives to the forensic division. An officer also makes sure that the public is safe by educating them about the laws and informing the public when there is criminal activity in the area.

A law enforcement officer has a set of responsibilities that all intertwine with each other. The police help to protect the peace by enforcing laws and helping to prevent crime. Their main responsibilities are to enforce the law, arrest a criminal offender, prevent crime from occurring, preserve the peace, and to provide service. To enforce the laws efficiently a police officer needs to know the laws and understand the community's priorities about the more important laws. When approaching someone that has broken the law, the officer has to apprehend the offender as safe as possible. When an officer of the law reduces crime and foresees a risk for crime, they improve the trust of the community and their safety. When there is an officer present it helps preserve the peace of the community. Services that law enforcement officers provide consist of but not limited to would be helping someone who is lost,

helping with a vehicle that is broke down, a medical emergency and also in times of victimization. (UOPX 2012)

In order for the police departments to accomplish all of their goals they have several operational strategies they need to use. These strategies consist of preventive patrol, routine incident response, emergency response, criminal investigations, problem solving, and support services. Having an officer present in the community helps in deterring criminal activity, gives an officer a faster response time and the citizens in the community feel safer. Routine incident response is an important service because it helps an officer get hold of information, disrupt any criminal activity, and to provide a sense of security in the community. Medical emergencies and natural disasters generally take precedence over other police duties. Law enforcement officers spend a very little amount of time on investigative activities. The first responders secure the crime scene, give emergency help, and gather up evidence. Being able to understand and predict criminal activity helps to solve or avoid many social problems.

There are various kinds of law enforcement agencies from local police departments to federal agencies. The local police consist of, county, municipal, tribal, and the regional police that gain their authority from the local judicial system. The leading reason for this is to uphold the laws in the community to prevent crime from occurring to preserve the peace and investigate crimes that have been committed locally. The duties of the state police generally include the highway patrol and investigations throughout the state. There are states that only have only highway patrol with the sole purpose of investigating crimes which is a different unit called the state

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bureau of investigation. The state police also aid with the local police in many investigations or emergencies that go out past the resources and jurisdictional limitations of the local police department. The Federal law enforcement agencies can enforce both federal laws as well as state laws all through the United States and they also have power of all police rights throughout the United States Code. The majority of the law enforcement officers that are employed by federal agencies are not typically called police officers; however they are officially selected as ' Special Agents'.

The Federal government has a vast amount of law enforcement agencies throughout the countless departments and divisions with a multitude of roles and responsibilities. There are some federal law enforcement agencies that are well known, such as the United States Marshal's service (USMS), U. S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) Federal Air Marshal

Service (FAM), Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) United States Secret Service (USSS), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Each one of the federal agencies has extremely diverse roles and responsibilities within law enforcement. (Terry, K and Grant, H 2012)

The USMS has an array of duties, which include protecting federal judiciary, Witness Security Program, confiscating property that has been obtained through illegal activities by criminals, serving warrants for the federal courts and transporting criminals and arresting fugitives. The FBI's core focus is to protect and defend the United States, to implement all of the laws of the

United States, as well as to offer leadership and criminal justice services to federal, state, municipal, and international agencies and their partners. The most important role and responsibility of the drug enforcement administration is to look into and get evidence ready for the prosecution of major criminals that buy and sell illegal drugs in the United States as well as internationally. The U. S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives main role is with the licensing, investigation, and control over Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. ATF works with the FBI when both sides of expertise are needed. “ A well-known case that came to the attention of the public was the involvement of the two agencies with David Koresh’s Branch Davidian cult in Waco, Texas. It was the ATF that was originally called to the Koresh compound, beginning the standoff that led to the death of seventy-one individuals” (Terry, K and Grant, H 2012).

There are a variety of patrol work which includes aggressive patrol, bicycle patrol, directed patrol, harbor patrol, high-risk traffic and horse patrol, integrated patrol, motorcycle patrol, proactive patrol, routine patrol, saturation and water patrol. It all depends on what type of area is being patrolled is to what kind of patrol is used. However, the two patrol methods that are used the most are vehicle patrol and foot patrol. The role and function of patrol work is to protect and defend the lives of citizens and their property, to repress criminal and offending behavior identifying and apprehending criminal offenders, to maintain traffic flow and reduce accidents, and to ensure the safety of the public. (Terry, K and Grant, H 2012)