Responsibilities Of Police Officers

Abstract

For my term paper I'm going to write about the responsibilities and the life of a police officer. I had a hard time deciding what I wanted to write about because there are so many different topics in the criminal justice field that interests me and that I would have loved to research and write about. In this essay I will be discussing a few different things about the life and responsibilities of a police officer. I will cover the skills and education needed to become a police officer, the risks and hazards of being in this field, the main duties of officers and some of their other obligations.

Skills and Education

Police officer careers are physically and mentally demanding in many different ways. Skills that are important to have as a police officer include good leadership skills, the ability to multitask, good judgment, strong communication, professionalism and physical stamina. All candidates must graduate from a police training academy, be at least 21 years old, have a high school diploma, be a United States citizen, have a valid driver's license, and have no prior convictions. Candidates do have opportunities to study in college. There are many federal and state agencies that require some kind of college work. There are many opportunities in colleges across the world to study criminal justice and topics related to it. Candidates are given training in the police academy. This training includes classroom learning as well as physical fitness exercises. Police officers must pass written exams that are comprehensive, designed to test how well the candidates have understood the curriculum. Finals scores are a major factor in the hiring process. Recruits later receive hands-on training from veteran officers, in skills such as firearm use, lifesaving techniques, emergency response and how to apprehend a suspect. They also receive training from how to operate a vehicle in a high-speed chase to the less exciting stuff like how to file a report. CPR training is also included in an officer's training. Some academies require foreign language training, stress management courses, or diversity training as well.

Risks and Hazards

The job of a police officer is very risky and dangerous. It can bring a lot of stress into your life. In fact, it has a higher rate of illnesses and injury than most other jobs in the world. Officers spend a good amount of time working with people and dealing with different scenarios, from filing a report to solving the latest crime. As a result, the possibility of conflicts and physical injury are high when dealing with many different criminals and conflicts. Many of the risks that come with a law enforcement career can be lowered by following proper procedures. Almost every day, we see news stories of a police officer somewhere in the United States who was hurt or killed. However, that is only one of the many dangers faced by these police officers every day.

Another danger that officers face is with traffic. Officers spend a good amount of time driving, which just naturally increases their risk of being in an accident. There can be dangers that come

from driving in emergency response or police pursuits that can put a high risk of traffic danger on these officers. On top of their own driving, many officers work outside of their vehicles on streets, whether at scenes of traffic accidents or traffic stops. Those officers are in extremely vulnerable positions and risk getting hit by other drivers. I'm sure most officers would tell you one of the things they fear most is traffic. If I was a police officer I would be terrified of traffic. I've seen how people around drive everyday and I've been in many of those traffic jams and stops where officers are out trying to direct traffic and I often feel bad for them. It can be one of the more difficult things to deal with.

Another risk for Police Officers is their own health. Not having set working hours, especially rotating shifts, can cause poor sleeping habits and fatigue. Along with that the stress that comes from working in an already dangerous job can cause poor eating and exercise habits. With all these you'll see that associated health issues become a significant danger to officers. It is important for them to properly take care of their bodies.

Core Duties of a Police Officer

The specific duties of a police officer largely depend on where they are located. The main duty of a police officer is to protect people and property. Other duties of police officers include controlling traffic, patrolling neighborhoods, responding to emergency calls, writing citations, delivering warrants, arresting violators and submitting incident reports in a timely manner. Police are also called sometimes to testify in court about a situation they witnessed or handled. Additionally, the duties of police include educational outreach to the public to help prevent and solve crime. Other not as common police officer duties may include crowd control, surveillance, child protection, VIP protection, and investigation techniques into major crimes, such as fraud, rape, murder, gang violence or drug trafficking.

Important traits that a police officer should have include decision making, legal compliance, handling pressure, deals with uncertainty, lifting, physical fitness, judgment, objectivity, dependability, emotional control, integrity.

Police officers rarely work a 40-hour week. Officers work late at night, on the weekends, and even on holidays. Most police officers work outdoors while on patrol and are likely to face all types of weather conditions. No matter what day it is or what the weather is like, they must continue with their responsibilities when on duty.

Moral and Ethical Obligations

Ethics, integrity, accountability and honesty are important values for a police officer to have. Police officers must follow the law and departmental regulations at all times. Police must not show favoritism or act in a discriminatory manner knowing that all citizens deserve respectful treatment regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, national origin or religion. The police code of ethics prohibits dishonesty and corruption. Police officers who engage in serious misconduct on duty or in their personal life can face disciplinary action. When assisting crime victims, police have a duty to be caring, compassionate and responsive by taking the report seriously, and pursuing the offender. I personally think that one of the hardest things that police officers have to deal with is the backlash that comes from some of the decisions they make. They have so many decisions to make each day that can affect them

personally and those around them. A big problem that we have seen is with race. It seems to me that officers can’t catch a break when it comes to this specific thing. If they arrest an African American, we often see that people get upset and declare that they weren’t treated the same because of the color of their skin.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we see that the life of a police officer definitely isn’t easy, and neither is the road to becoming an officer. I am grateful for the police officers that we have around us. As I have researched and read more about police officers I have gained a greater appreciation for them and all they do for us on a daily basis. I think we always need to do our best to respect them and appreciate the sacrifices they make.

Sources

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