

## **Job Description: Police Officer**

### **DEFINITION**

During an assigned tour of duty, on foot, or in an automobile, patrols a designated area to provide assistance and protection for persons, to safeguard property, to assure observance of the law, and to apprehend lawbreakers; does related work as required.

NOTE: The definition and examples of work for this title are for illustrative purposes only. A particular position using this title may not perform all duties listed in this job specification. Conversely, all duties performed on the job may not be listed.

### **DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS**

Police Officers provide services to the public and enforce laws by issuing summonses, apprehending, warning, or taking into custody any lawbreakers.

Police Officers patrol designated areas in a patrol car, on a bicycle, or on foot to protect life and property, maintain order, assure the observance of statutes and local ordinances, and apprehend lawbreakers.

Police Officers receive dispatches via radio concerning complaints or disturbances which require immediate attention. They investigate complaints of misconduct, suspicious behavior, illegal activities, improper conditions, and other matters. They check the condition of occupied buildings and report anything which appears significant or suspicious. They investigate if signs of tampering are discovered and notify interested persons or headquarters. They also check out cars parked in restricted areas.

Police Officers maintain order at public gatherings by using crowd control techniques. They regulate and control pedestrian and vehicular traffic to ensure safe and rapid traffic movement with minimal interference. Often they are called on to direct and reroute traffic around accidents, parades, and other disruptions. At times police officers assist and protect children at street crossings near schools and playgrounds.

Police Officers take charge at the scene of an accident. Upon arriving on the scene, they administer first aid to the injured and call for ambulances if necessary. They then investigate the causes of the accident, evaluate the results, and file reports on the information gathered. They also issue summonses when the situation warrants.

### **EXAMPLES OF WORK**

#### **Preparation for Work**

Attends roll call in proper uniform, listening to information and assignments given orally, and reads "squeal sheet," bulletin board, and/or logs of previous shifts in order to establish presence, receive assignments, and to maintain continuity of service or action.

Gathers together necessary equipment such as shotgun, flashlight, summons books, and so forth, in order to be prepared for duty.

Inspects and maintains patrol car by visually checking and/or operating all equipment, by arranging for washing, waxing, and mechanical service, and by taking patrol car to service location in order to ensure that vehicle is ready for patrol.

Inventories and maintains equipment carried in patrol car such as first aid kit, oxygen supply, blanket, flares, and so forth, by utilizing an equipment check list, and by replacing missing or damaged items in order to ensure readiness for patrol.

Maintains issued uniform and weapons by arranging for cleaning and reassembling firearms in order to ensure their proper appearance and serviceability.

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### **Fights and Domestic Disputes**

Separates parties involved in a fight situation by physically intervening or escorting one party out of reach of the other in order to prevent injury to any of the parties involved.

Attempts to calm parties involved in a fight situation by asking each party to tell or discuss his or her side in order to gain control of the situation.

Discusses possible solutions with parties involved in a dispute by referring parties to appropriate services and explaining legal recourse in order to fully resolve the dispute or prevent its recurrence.

Arrests one or more parties in a fight situation by using standard procedures in order to restore peace.

### **General Patrol**

Patrols throughout assigned area either on foot or in patrol car, looking for anything unusual in order to increase patrol visibility and prevent crime, or to discover crimes in progress.

Maintains radio communications with headquarters by operating walkie-talkie or patrol car radio in order to facilitate patrol activities.

Assesses situations by utilizing information received from the dispatcher and by visually and orally inspecting premises and surrounding environment in order to make decisions concerning choice of actions and equipment.

Issues summonses for various violations of municipal ordinances and state laws by writing the required information on summons and delivering a copy to the accused in order to enforce the law.

Facilitates the remediation of miscellaneous hazardous conditions (e.g., road obstructions, malfunctioning signals, and so forth) by direct action or by notifying appropriate agencies in order to restore safe conditions in the assigned sector.

Maintains surveillance of persons suspected of unlawful activity and notifies supervisor or detectives of important information in order to facilitate the investigative procedure.

Reports, or receives description(s) of suspect(s) at large by radio transmission in response to, or backup for, criminal actions in order to aid or to enlist aid of fellow officers in the apprehension of suspects/perpetrators.

Following legal guidelines, stops suspicious people, asks them to show identification, and to explain what they are doing in order to detect or prevent a criminal action.

Attempts to disarm persons threatening others with a weapon by using calming conversation and obtaining assistance in order to neutralize a dangerous situation.

Secures the scene of a crime or emergency by blocking off the area with barricades, ropes, and so forth, and by standing guard in order to prevent damage, loss, or injury.

Records patrol activities by filling out log sheet after each call in order to account for actions, mileage, and time on a daily basis.

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### **Service Calls**

Promotes good will by talking casually with people, answering questions, referring citizens to other services, and learning of situations requiring police action in order to gain the confidence and support of community members.

Controls crowd at emergency scene following established procedures in order to ensure that emergency services can be performed quickly and safely.

Assists in evacuation of buildings or areas by orally ordering people to leave or by physically escorting them from the area in order to remove them from danger.

Examines ill or injured persons and administers the appropriate first aid treatment in order to prevent further injury or loss of life.

Guards dignitaries by continuously positioning self in a manner to most effectively provide protection in order to ensure safe passage through the area.

Escorts businessmen to and/or from the bank, and frightened citizens to their destination, by taking them in the patrol car, or by walking with them in order to provide protection.

Gives assistance to operators of disabled vehicles by repairing vehicle, or obtaining necessary repair service, or by transporting driver and occupants to a place where shelter or assistance can be obtained in order to alleviate a potentially dangerous situation.

Returns lost children by interrogating passersby, and responsible persons in the area where children were discovered in order to restore the children to the custody of their parents or guardians.

Transports or escorts intoxicated persons home or to the hospital in order to assure their safety.

Blocks suicide attempts by talking to persons threatening and/or attempting suicide, comforting and reassuring them in order to convince them to give up the suicide attempt.

Assists citizens in gaining entry to their vehicles or home when a lockout has occurred using improvised means in order to provide a necessary service.

### **Traffic Control and Enforcement of Traffic Laws**

Directs or reroutes vehicle and pedestrian traffic at emergency scenes at high volume traffic locations, and at school crossings, using hand signals, flares, and/or barricades, in order to ensure the safety of pedestrians and the smooth flow of traffic.

Drives patrol car in an unspecified pattern and at varying speeds in order to increase police visibility and to discourage traffic violations and other such occurrences.

Operates radar equipment in patrol unit in order to apprehend speeding law violators.

Pursues detected traffic violators by using patrol vehicle and equipment as required in order to apprehend violators.

Reports action after apprehending traffic violator to the dispatcher, using the radio in order to communicate the location, request backup (if required), and to request motor vehicle and warrant check.

Interviews or interrogates motor vehicle operators and visually inspects operator's license, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance card in order to obtain information and admission or confession to violations of motor vehicle codes.

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Evaluates statements, facts, and evidence to determine if a traffic ticket should be issued as a result of an operator's actions.

Warns motor vehicle operators of observed traffic violations by orally informing them of their actions and explaining related provisions of the motor vehicle code in order to discourage future violations.

Issues traffic summons to observed traffic violators by writing the required information on the summons, giving the violator his copy, and explaining the violation and procedure for compliance in order to enforce traffic regulations.

Observes behavior and administers appropriate test(s) to suspected violators in order to determine whether they are under the influence of drugs, narcotics, or alcohol.

### **Motor Vehicle Accidents**

Summons ambulance, wrecker, or other emergency equipment needed at an accident scene in order to provide the necessary services as quickly as possible.

Protects accident scene from disturbance by appropriately positioning police car and by lighting and placing flares at strategic locations in order to divert traffic and to prevent further destruction or removal of evidence.

Removes (or assists in removing) dead or injured from wrecked and/or overturned vehicles by manually lifting them.

Transports motor vehicle accident victims to the hospital when no other emergency vehicle is available in order to minimize time lost in receiving necessary medical treatment.

Identifies, protects, and documents any short-lived evidence found at the accident scene, using approved department procedures in order to prevent evidence from being overlooked or destroyed.

Inspects and/or operates devices (lights, brakes, steering, tires, and so forth), of vehicles involved in accidents to determine if their operating condition contributed to the cause of the accident.

At the scene of a motor vehicle accident, interviews operators, occupants, and witnesses, using simple interviewing techniques and writing notes of important information in order to help determine how, when, and why the accident occurred.

Explains procedures that motor vehicle operators should follow concerning insurance claims and filing accident forms.

Evaluates statements, facts, and evidence gathered at a motor vehicle accident scene in order to determine if a summons should be issued.

Measures the distance from the accident vehicles and markings made by the vehicles to fixed points (mile post markers, nearest intersection, city limits, and so forth), using a tape measure, or measuring wheel in order to determine the exact location and possible cause of the accident.

Sketches a rough diagram of the accident scene, showing movement of vehicles and pedestrians before and after impact, and location of physical evidence in order to record this information for future investigation.

Completes accident report forms by printing or typing data gained from accident investigation (including a short narrative and a diagram of the accident) in order to officially record the results of the investigation and to provide information to all parties involved.

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Transports blood or urine samples of motor vehicle operators to police labs in cases of suspicious auto accidents in order to obtain evidence as to whether the operator was driving under the influence of drugs or narcotics.

### **Investigations**

Locates and interrogates available witnesses after an incident by talking with people in the area in order to obtain information for further investigation.

Makes notes of activities and facts of initial investigations in order to record information for future reference.

Collects and labels evidence taken from the crime scene using approved department procedures in order to preserve evidence.

Relates suspicious activities and other important information to detectives by direct or written communication in order to facilitate the investigative process.

Takes photographs, or directs a photographer to take specific pictures at a crime scene in order to establish visual evidence.

Searches property involved in criminal incidents by visual inspection and by disassembling property items when necessary in order to discover dangerous objects, missing items, or other evidence.

Attempts to locate owners of damaged property by utilizing existing records and/or questioning area residents in order to inform the owner of the damage and to obtain information.

Assists victims in the use of the "mug book" in order to make identification of suspects.

Prepares property report on items to be used as evidence in order to document its existence, characteristics, and availability.

Prepares investigative reports or supplements for each phase of an investigation in order to provide an official running record of the investigation.

Completes request for examination of evidence forms, including a narrative description of the crime, and a checklist of evidence in order to ensure a thorough analysis of the evidence.

### **Arrests**

Apprehends and subdues suspects by chasing them on foot, or in a patrol car, and by using physical force and applying handcuffs, if necessary, in order to take suspect into custody and to prevent injury to the officer or others.

Searches the body and clothing of suspects for possible weapons, using visual and physical means in order to ensure the safety of the officer and others.

Transports arrested persons to headquarters or detention facility using handcuffs and other security measures necessary in order to book them according to proper procedures.

Advises parents of juvenile offenders in custody of procedures relative to the case in order to ensure that parents understand their responsibilities.

Refers juvenile cases to the Youth Officer (juvenile department) by submitting known details in order to have the case handled by appropriately trained personnel.

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Reads "Constitutional Rights" to suspect and obtains signature from suspect on the written statement of the rights in order to effect a lawful arrest.

Identifies suspect by inspecting his driver's license, or similar document(s), in order to assist in determining if suspect has a prior arrest on record.

Fingerprints and/or photographs violators or suspects using equipment at the I.D. station in order to process a standard arrest.

Operates a video recorder on persons arrested for drunkenness or narcotics use in order to have a record of behavior as evidence.

Completes reports necessary to substantiate an arrest by printing or typing all required information (including a narrative description) on appropriate forms in order to document an arrest.

Contacts appropriate court authority by telephone in order to determine the amount of bail or bond required to release the accused.

Transports arrested persons according to appropriate criminal code (juvenile, adult, female, and so forth) in order to situate detained parties at required locations.

### **Court Testimony: Preparation and Appearance**

Prepares to testify in court by collecting documents, reports, and other evidence related to the case, reading all reports and notes, and talking with other officers, supervisors, solicitors, and witnesses, in order to ensure accuracy and effectiveness of testimony.

Notifies and/or subpoenas witnesses and victims of crime before scheduled court hearings to ensure their availability to testify.

Testifies in court by presenting facts and/or evidence related to the case and by answering attorney's and magistrate's questions in order to help ensure the proper disposition of the case.

### **Supportive Duties**

Processes incoming calls by listening to caller and identifying important information determining what action to take (i.e., dispatching a patrol car to investigate, or referring caller to another agency) and initiating this action in order to ensure an appropriate response.

Dispatches patrol cars via radio by selecting and contacting available units and by transmitting the location and nature of problem to the selected cars in order to respond to incoming calls or to provide support for primary units.

Maintains log of all incoming calls and radio transmissions by recording information (i.e., time call is received, unit dispatched, unit arrives, unit leaves, and location and nature of emergency) on appropriate forms in order to provide documentation of activities.

Operates computer terminal by entering or reading information on screen in order to transmit or to receive data from N.C.I.C, S.C.I.C., or other central information source.

Guards prisoners and arrested persons by appropriately positioning self in relation to prisoners and by using handcuffs when necessary in order to prevent escape and to protect the prisoners from harm.

Makes checks of jailed prisoners by touring the facility at regular time intervals and by making a notation on each cell sheet in order to account for the presence and safety of all prisoners.

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Will be required to learn to utilize various types of electronic and/or manual recording and computerized information systems used by the agency, office, or related units.

### **REQUIREMENTS**

#### **EDUCATION**

Graduation from High School or Vocational High school or possession of an approved High School Equivalent Certificate.

#### **AGE**

Minimum of eighteen (18) years of age.

#### **Citizenship**

United States citizenship.

#### **Medical Examination**

As a prerequisite for appointment, appointees may be required to pass a thorough medical and psychological examination to be administered by the appointing authority. Any psychological, medical, or physical condition or defect which would prevent efficient performance of the duties of the position, cause the appointee to be a hazard to himself/herself, or others, or become aggravated as a result of performance of these duties, will be cause for rejection.

NOTE: Appointees will be required to successfully complete a training program mandated by the New Jersey Police Training Commission within 18 months of appointment.

#### **LICENSE**

Appointees will be required to possess a driver's license valid in New Jersey only if the operation of a vehicle, rather than employee mobility, is necessary to perform the essential duties of the position.

#### **KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITIES**

Knowledge of rules and regulations of the department.

Knowledge of personnel and equipment available.

Knowledge of the people in the assigned area.

Knowledge of public agencies and facilities.

Knowledge and awareness of national and local events and how they might affect the job.

Knowledge of one's own limitations in dealing with emergencies.

Knowledge of ways of handling crowd situations.

Knowledge of first aid.

Knowledge of traffic laws and ordinances.

Knowledge of and willingness to take proper action in preventing potential accidents from occurring.

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Knowledge of investigative procedures.

Knowledge of an officer's role in dealing with emergencies.

Knowledge of current laws, procedures, and trends governing search and seizure activities.

Knowledge of the proper procedure for obtaining a warrant.

Knowledge of the laws affecting arrest procedures.

Knowledge of the amount of force required to make arrests.

Knowledge of the criminal justice system.

Knowledge of the elements of state laws.

Knowledge of and ability to effectively use services and equipment available.

Knowledge of procedures to follow in dealing with an emergency.

Ability to communicate ideas with spoken words.

Ability to write clear and concise letters, reports, descriptions, or instructions.

Ability to find general concepts or rules which explain how a given series of individual items are related to each other; it involves the ability to logically proceed from individual cases to general principles.

Ability to apply a broad, general idea, or principle effectively to a particular problem or case.

Ability to follow rules and procedures.

Ability to gather, organize, and utilize information.

Ability to find practical ways of dealing with problems.

Ability to read with reasonable speed and understanding so as to absorb written information.

Ability to maintain a high level of muscular exertion for a minimum period of time. This involves the degree of muscular force exerted against a fairly immovable or heavy object in order to lift, push, or pull that object.

Ability to make repeated trunk and/or arm leg bending or stretching movements where speed as well as degree counts; it includes the ability of these muscles to recover from the strain and distortion of repeated flexing.

Ability to maintain physical activity over prolonged periods of time.

Ability to hold up or move body's own weight repeatedly or at one time without stopping using the force of arm and trunk muscles.

Ability to use the trunk, arms, and legs together in movement.

Ability to make gross, rapid, arm movements.

Ability to work fast and accurately in situations where there is pressure or emotional strain.

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Ability to put up with and handle verbal abuse from a person or a group.

Ability to work as a member of a group.

Ability to take the lead or take charge when working or dealing with others.

Ability to deal with people politely and helpfully beyond the giving and receiving of instructions.

Ability to learn to utilize various types of electronic and/or manual recording and information systems used by the agency, office, or related units.

Ability to read, write, speak, understand, or communicate in English sufficiently to perform the duties of this position. American Sign Language or Braille may also be considered as acceptable forms of communication.

Persons with mental or physical disabilities are eligible as long as they can perform the essential functions of the job after reasonable accommodation is made to their known limitations. If the accommodation cannot be made because it would cause the employer undue hardship, such persons may not be eligible.

This job specification is for local government use only.