

Introduction to Policing

Can you imagine a world without crime? What would our society be like without criminals? If we completely eliminated crime from our experience, would that be a perfect world? Most of us would say this is unrealistic.

Crime is a basic presence in our lives. Our society works hard to deal with crime and develop ways to suppress it. Historically, that's where police come into the picture.

To understand the role of law enforcement in this big picture, it's important to realize that substantive criminal law is just one of the tools we use to deal with crime. The state has created an entire system of judicial bureaucracies and police agencies to enforce and administer the law. Through this administration the state is able to carry out its objectives and protect its interests. As an "arm" of the state, law enforcement agencies are crucial to maintaining the established social and economic order, particularly at the local level.

It's at the local level where we see how effective, or ineffective, police agencies are. It's here we see the service provided by police in its true context.

OBJECTIVES

When you complete this lesson, you'll be able to

- Describe some of the dramatic societal changes that modern police organizations face
- Compare and contrast modern police personnel standards with those of previous decades
- Describe the standards a candidate must adhere to when becoming a police officer
- Explain how a conventional police organization is structured, organized, and administered



ASSIGNMENT 1

Read Assignment 1 in this study guide. Then read Chapter 1, “The Police in American Society,” on pages 1–84 in your textbook.

Law enforcement in the United States today, with over 500,000 people employed in approximately 40,000 law enforcement agencies, can't be treated as a unitary system. The duties vary, with at least five types of public law enforcement systems. These systems conform roughly to the major levels of government:

- The police agencies of the federal government
- The state police forces and criminal investigation agencies of the 50 states
- The sheriffs in more than 3,000 counties, plus a few county police forces that either duplicate the sheriff's police jurisdiction or displace it
- The police of 1,000 cities and more than 20,000 townships
- The police of 15,000 villages, boroughs, and a small number of special-purpose agencies serving public institutions

With each year, the responsibilities of law enforcement agencies expand and often take a different focus from traditional police duties. Regardless of the ever-changing nature of the business, the delivery of police services takes place within a very tenuous framework of social control and legal regulation. In fact, contrary to popular belief, few activities of the police are regulated by specific law, other than the larger restrictions found in the Constitution. Any regulation that *does* apply comes mainly from court decisions.

Structure of Criminal Investigation

Criminal investigation encompasses the processes, techniques, and methods that focus on solving crimes reported to or discovered by the police. It involves four specific objectives:

1. *Establishing the fact that a criminal offense has been committed.* This is often considered the *corpus delicti* or body of the crime, which includes all of the facts related to the commission of a particular offense, and the fact that a human committed the act.
2. *Identification of the elements of the offense.* Identifying the major components of a crime frequently reveals important leads in the investigation of a criminal case. These components include
 - Name and address of victim
 - Location where the act was committed
 - How the act was committed
 - Means by which the act was committed
 - Time the act occurred
 - Any particular methods or trademarks
3. *Detection and apprehension of the offender.* One of the major objectives of criminal investigation is to establish the identity of the offender and then apprehend that individual.
4. *The production of evidence.* This important phase of the process is concerned with the development of proof sufficient to sustain the conviction of the offender in a criminal court proceeding.



Self-Check 1

At the end of each assignment in *Police Studies*, you'll be asked to pause and check your understanding of what you've just read by completing a "Self-Check" exercise. Answering these questions will help you review what you've studied so far. Please complete *Self-Check 1* now.

1. What are the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution called?

2. Distributing powers and authority among local, state, and federal government is part of the political organization called _____.

3. _____ law refers to criminal laws that establish acceptable and unacceptable societal behaviors.

4. The written opinions of the courts are collectively referred to as _____.

5. What are the primary roles that police officers play?

6. Where is the FBI Academy located?

7. There are _____ U.S. Marshals.

8. Outline the responsibilities of the U.S. Marshal Service.

Check your answers with those on page 83.
