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POLICE PATROL OFFICERS' REQUIREMENTS IN EDUCATION, CERTIFICATION AND LICENSING

The education requirements for police patrol officers can vary from a high school diploma to a college degree or even higher. Most police patrol officers learn on the job and in their agency's training academy. Civil service regulations govern the appointment of police patrol officers who usually need to be at least 21 years old, a US citizen, and meet physical and personal qualifications. Competitiveness, stamina and agility are important for police patrol officers and physical education classes and participating in sports is helpful for developing such traits. Some Federal agencies and urban departments also find the knowledge of a foreign language to be beneficial.

State and local agencies encourage police patrol officer applicants to take training or courses in law enforcement subjects after high school. Police patrol officers looking for entry-level jobs have usually completed some formal postsecondary education. Universities, colleges, and junior colleges offer programs in administration of justice as well as law enforcement. Some agencies will even pay portions of tuition for police patrol officers working towards degrees in police science, public administration and administration of justice or criminal justice.

Police patrol officers will go through training, sometimes through their agency's police academy, for 12 or 14 weeks. For those working in smaller agencies, police patrol officers will attend a regional or State academy. Police patrol officers looking to work at Federal agencies are required to have a bachelor's degree and related work experience. Qualifications for police patrol officers are honesty, integrity, responsibility, and sound judgment. Enjoying working with people as well as meeting the public are also important qualifications.

Advancement for police patrol officers can occur after a probationary period lasting anywhere from 6 months to 3 years. Advancement can include becoming a detective or specializing in one type of police work as well as promoting to captain lieutenant, or sergeant. The job performance of police patrol officers may be improved by continuing their training such as training in firearms, sensitivity and communication skills as well as self-defense tactics.

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