

Read the passage. Then answer each question.

## What Police and Detectives Do

Police officers protect lives and property. Detectives and criminal investigators, who are sometimes called agents or special agents, gather facts and collect evidence of possible crimes.

Uniformed police officers typically do the following:

- Enforce laws
- Respond to emergency and non-emergency calls
- Patrol assigned areas
- Conduct traffic stops and issue citations
- Obtain warrants and arrest suspects
- Write detailed reports and fill out forms
- Prepare cases and testify in court

Detectives and criminal investigators typically do the following:

- Investigate crimes
- Collect and secure evidence from crime scenes
- Conduct interviews with suspects and witnesses
- Observe the activities of suspects
- Obtain warrants and arrest suspects

- Write detailed reports and fill out forms
- Prepare cases and testify in court

Police officers pursue and apprehend people who break the law. They then warn, cite, or arrest them. Most police officers patrol their jurisdictions and investigate suspicious activity. They also respond to calls, issue traffic tickets, and give first aid to accident victims.

Detectives perform investigative duties, such as gathering facts and collecting evidence.

The daily activities of police and detectives vary with their occupational specialty, such as canine units and special weapons and tactics (SWAT). Whether they work at a local, state, or federal agency also determines job duties; and duties differ among federal agencies, because they enforce different aspects of the law. Regardless of job duties or location, police officers and detectives at all levels must write reports and keep detailed records that will be needed if they testify in court. Most carry law enforcement tools, such as radios, handcuffs, and guns.

The following are examples of types of police and detectives who work in state and local law enforcement:

#### State and Local Law Enforcement

Uniformed police officers have general law enforcement duties. They wear uniforms that allow the public to easily recognize them as police officers. They have regular patrols and also respond to emergency and non-emergency calls.

Police agencies are usually organized into geographic districts, with uniformed officers assigned to patrol a specific area. Officers in large agencies often patrol with a partner. During patrols, officers look for any signs of criminal activity and may conduct searches and arrest suspected criminals. They may also respond to emergency calls, investigate complaints, and enforce traffic laws.

Some police officers work only on a specific type of crime, such as narcotics. Officers, especially those working in large departments, may work in special units, such as horseback, motorcycle, canine corps, and special weapons and tactics (SWAT) teams. Typically, officers must work as patrol officers for a certain number of years before they may be appointed to one of these units.

Some city police agencies are involved in community policing, a philosophy of bringing police and members of the community together to prevent crime. A neighborhood watch program is one type of community policing.

Some agencies have special geographic and enforcement responsibilities. Examples include public college and university police forces, public school police, and transit police. Most law enforcement workers in special agencies are uniformed officers.

State police officers, sometimes called state troopers or highway patrol officers, have many of the same duties as other police officers, but they may spend more time enforcing traffic laws and issuing traffic citations. State police officers have authority to work anywhere in the state and are frequently called on to help other law enforcement agencies, especially those in rural areas or small towns.

Sheriffs and deputy sheriffs enforce the law on the county level. Sheriffs' departments tend to be relatively small. Sheriffs usually are elected by the public and do the same work as a local or county police chief. Some sheriffs' departments do the same work as officers in urban police departments. Others mainly operate the county jails and provide services in local courts. Police and sheriffs' deputies who provide security in city and county courts are sometimes called bailiffs.

Detectives and criminal investigators are uniformed or plainclothes investigators who gather facts and collect evidence for criminal cases. They conduct interviews, examine records, observe the activities of suspects, and participate in raids and arrests.

Detectives usually specialize in investigating one type of crime, such as homicide or fraud. Detectives are typically assigned cases on a rotating basis and work on them until an arrest and trial are completed or until the case is dropped.

*[Via United States Department of Labor]*

### **Answer the Questions:**

1. Why do you think it is important for police officers and detectives to write detailed reports?
2. What types of evidence might a detective need to collect from a crime scene?
3. What is an example of community policing?
4. What advantages would a motorcycle have over a traditional police car during the pursuit of a criminal?
5. Why do you think local police in a small town or rural area would need the assistance of state police?
6. Who has a larger jurisdiction, highway patrol officers or deputy sheriffs?